Student Experiences of Sexual Violence at the University of British Columbia Through a Trauma and Violence Informed Framework

by

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the thesis entitled:

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Trauma and Violence Informed Framework

submitted by   Ashni Gill   in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

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Abstract

This study explores the experiences of students who have been impacted by sexual violence at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Students identified their awareness, satisfaction and recommendations for support services on campus.

To recruit participants, posters were hung and advertisements were made on social media platforms such as Facebook. The Graduate Student Society and Alma Mater Society advertised this study. Eight students who were impacted by sexualized violence during their time at UBC participated in this study. Several key themes were identified which included: levels of awareness of resources, mental health support, victim-blaming and rape culture on campus, impact of marginalized identities on experiences with support, and recommendations for support services.

It was found that students had limited awareness of resources regardless if the student was an undergraduate or graduate student; thus students suggested that more educational programs be made available in orientation and resources be outlined on course syllabi. If the service(s) were accessed, experiences varied such that some students believed that their experience was positively impacted by their sex but negatively impacted by racism. Some students experienced institutionalized harm due to the existence of white supremacist and patriarchal frameworks that are embedded in the University. Overall, the students' experiences with support services were positive, except for the Investigations Office and Counselling Services.

Lay Summary

The goal of this study was to determine the extent to which students who have been impacted by sexualized violence were aware of the resources on campus and if they accessed them, how they felt supported. To understand the unique experiences of students, students were asked how marginalizing factors may have impacted their experiences of support. Students were asked about suggested improvements for UBC services.

This study contributes to the development and amendment(s) of support services offered for people who have been impacted by sexualized violence at UBC. Important contributions from a person-centered perspective have been made accessible in cIRcle which provides a foundation for ongoing discussions of trauma informed approaches to support. Beyond the specific location of UBC Vancouver, British Columbia, this research may provide a baseline and potential approach for other post-secondary campuses to assess their policies, programs and services through person-centered frameworks.

Preface

This thesis is the original, unpublished and independent work of the author, Ashni Gill. This study was conducted in accordance with Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) guidelines and within the parameters of the thesis proposed under H21-02193.

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Definitions

- Consent is voluntarily given through verbal or non-verbal communication to initiate or continue sexual activity (MacDougall et al. 2020). Consent cannot be obtained when an individual is incapacitated or unconscious.

- Hook up can be defined as a sexual interaction that may or may not result in further contact between the individuals participating in the sex act (Flack et al. 2016).

- Intimate partner sexual violence is defined as a sexual assault occurring between individuals who currently have or in the past had, a consensual sexual relationship (Bagwell-Gray, Messing & Baldwin-White 2015).

- Sexual assault includes any sexual contact or threat that is unwanted (Gagnon et al. 2018).

- Sexual coercion occurs when a sex act is attempted or completed via manipulative strategies such as verbal threats (Bagwell-Gray, Messing & Baldwin-White 2015).

- Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted sexual advances that may be verbal or physical which negatively impacts a person's work, school or living situation and leads to adverse outcomes (Tinkler 2008).

- Sexual violence is defined as a sexual act completed or attempted whereby there was a lack of consent (the act is unwanted and against a person's will; see 'Consent' below) granted and may be a result of social, interpersonal, threatened physical or explicit physical coercion (Bagwell-Gray, Messing & Baldwin-White 2015).

- Trauma and violence informed care considers the impact of the intersections of interpersonal violence, systemic violence and inequity and trauma experiences with the purpose of minimizing the risk of re-traumatization (Cullen et al. 2020; Levine, Varcoe and Browne 2021). This care supports the psychological, physical and emotional safety of the trauma survivor (Levine, Varcoe and Browne 2021).

Acknowledgements

Dedication

To the person that helped me heal.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Summary

Sexual violence is one of the most underreported crimes in Canada (Conroy & Cotter 2017). However, it is known that 71% of students experience or witness sexualized violence during their post-secondary education, but less than a quarter of those students know where to find support on campus (Burczycka 2019; Marques et al. 2020). Sexual violence myths often depict "stranger danger" although it is known that people who experience sexualized violence most often are well-acquainted with the person who used violence (Abavi et al. 2020). This is sometimes due to the misunderstanding of what sexual assault is and therefore, they do not consider themselves to have experienced sexualized violence (Abavi et al. 2020). Although some post-secondary institutions have education and training resources such as consent education, and bystander training, specific prevention and response measures that target people who identify with groups marginalized by racism, heteronormativity, and various forms of stigma and discrimination, are limited (Cotter & Savage 2019). The way in which interpersonal violence, systemic violence, and inequity and trauma experiences (Cullen et al. 2020) impact students' experience with overall support, is not well known.

1.2 Background

The University of British Columbia's (UBC) Sauder School of Business was under scrutiny in 2013 when students chanted rape condoning mantras during frosh week (Ellison 2013). Despite the backlash in the media, students in the undergraduate society voted against hiring a counsellor who would provide students with sexual violence education (Ellison 2013). When sexual assault complaints were brought against a male Ph.D. student in the history

department by several women, they were told to keep quiet; one woman specified that the conflict manager of the Equity Inclusion Office told her to stay quiet (Mayor 2015). These attitudes persist as one professor at UBC, Marina Adshade, tweeted that six female students had been drugged at the fraternities but the campus RCMP detachment claimed that there was "no evidence" of such occurring (Gul 2019). The University claimed to be surprised by the allegations (Gul 2019) which suggests that the University did not believe the students. A lack of empathy and belief in the students' claims may explain why they did not come forward. Statistics Canada found that one in ten women had been sexually assaulted in 2019 at Canadian post-secondary institutions; this is higher than in the general population (Crawford 2020). UBC's response to the allegations reiterates rape supportive attitudes which foster victim-blaming and silencing of people who have experienced sexualized violence (Kane 2016).

In 2016, the B.C. Green Party introduced Bill M205: "Post-Secondary Sexual Violence Policies Act" after a series of sexual assaults across campuses in B.C. This was initially not supported by the B.C. Liberal party, however, after some consideration, Premier Christy Clark announced that the Bill would be amended and proposed as Bill 23: "Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act". A former student of UBC had expressed concerns over the lack of language and content specificity in Bill 23 (Kane 2016). For example, Bill 23 states what "sexual misconduct" includes, acts such as sexual assault and stalking, but "sexual assault" itself is not defined. The Bill also does not explicitly state that due process is required by the university which may contribute to the large majority of students choosing against reporting any sexualized violence they experience to authority figures (Kane 2016; Crawford 2020). To minimize re-traumatization and eliminate victim-blaming, post-secondary institutions' policies must ensure that the students' rights and restitution are addressed (Lee & Wong 2019). Lee and Wong (2019)

found that in comparison with the Maritimes and Ontario, response procedures to sexual violence disclosure were less comprehensive in British Columbia and Alberta. This suggests that to adequately address the needs of students who have experienced sexualized violence, an examination between policy comprehensiveness and student satisfaction, must be conducted (Lee & Wong 2019) to determine if university policies are adequate.

1.3 Facts and Gaps

One in three women experience unwanted sexual advances in Canada in comparison to one in eight men (Cotter & Savage 2019). While social demographic characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality are often examined in studies such as that by Marques and colleagues (2020), white heterosexual women are most frequently participants despite disabled persons, lesbian and bisexual women, Indigenous women, young women and girls, and gay and bisexual men being more likely to experience sexualized violence (Marques et al. 2020; Cotter & Savage 2019). Although sexualized violence impacts these marginalized groups at greater disparities, 2018 was the first time that Statistics Canada's Survey of Safety in Private and Public Spaces, included gender identity and sex assigned at birth questions in a survey (Cotter & Savage 2019). As such, individuals who were fifteen years and older who identified as transgender, made up only 0.24% of those who took the survey (Cotter & Savage 2019). The experiences of Indigenous women are often neglected in research despite being three times more likely to be sexually assaulted in comparison to non-Indigenous women (Du Mont et al. 2017). This suggests that research may not be representative of the experiences of people impacted by sexualized violence who are marginalized by racism, sexism and other forms of stigma and discrimination, and requires exploration (Roskin-Frazee 2020).

Students identify a multitude of barriers to reporting and accessing sexual assault support services on and off-campuses. A common barrier that students who have experienced sexualized violence identify as the reason for not reporting are the feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment and the fear of not being believed (Marques et al. 2020). The students often wish to seek help but safety is thought to be compromised when they disclose to others, due to a lack of trust in the university (Marques et al. 2020). Similar to B.C., Ontario post-secondary institutions are required to have sexual misconduct policies and services for those impacted by sexual violence (Abavi et al. 2020). Abavi et al.'s (2020) study in Ontario found a large number of barriers for people accessing sexual assault support services such as availability, affordability, stigma and sociocultural power dynamics. On-campus resources such as counselling tend to have long waitlists which often result in students resorting to off-campus services that are financially burdening (Abavi et al. 2020; Harris 2020). Some resources have been identified by students to be racist and perpetuate stereotyping which is harmful in the disclosure process and hinders ongoing help-seeking (Harris 2020; Du Mont et al. 2017). Further, qualitative research has not discussed the experiences and barriers to services of those who have not disclosed their sexual assault experience(s) (Gagnon et al. 2018). There may be other barriers and reasons that people impacted by sexualized violence do not disclose to formal support services that have yet to be determined such as a lack of cultural competency (Roskin-Frazee 2020).

Sexual violence rates have remained stable over the past three decades on post-secondary campuses (Marques et al. 2020). It is known that 71% of students experience or witness sexualized violence during their post-secondary education (Burczycka 2019). Party and hook up culture on campuses are increasingly becoming problematic in perpetuating "riskier sexual and dating behaviour" such that just under half of respondents in a United States study reported

experiencing sexual assault during a hook up – with male students often being the person who used violence (Marques et al. 2020; Flack et al. 2016). Andrejek (2021) found that undergraduate students in Ontario identified non-consensual interactions during a hook up but were less likely to name it as sexual assault due to social norms of risky sexual behaviours. These encounters were both on and off-campus (Adrejek 2021); fifty percent of students report that they were sexually assaulted by a fellow student off-campus (Burczycka 2019). Despite B.C. post-secondary institutions' implementation of sexual violence awareness and prevention and response tools, students remain uncertain of what is classified as sexual assault such that only four percent of women disclose their experience to campus authority and one percent disclose to counsellors (Marques et al. 2020; Orchowski, Untied & Gidycz 2013). This may be the result of less than a quarter of students knowing where to find support on campus after experiencing sexualized violence (Marques et al. 2020). Even though some students may know that resources such as campus police detachments exist, their distrust in the police creates hesitancy to reporting their experience (Marques et al. 2020). Kirkner, Lorenz and Ullman's study (2017) found that people who experienced sexualized violence wanted professionals who specialized in sexual assault and interpersonal violence to support them rather than an individual untrained in the field. While Bill 23-2016 under Section 4 requires the post-secondary institution to consult with "prescribed persons or prescribed classes of persons" when reviewing its policy, sexual and interpersonal violence experts and mental health experts are not mandated to be consulted nor hired as permanent staff at the institution. This is a disservice to students who have experienced sexualized violence as a third of students report experiencing negative mental health outcomes post sexualized violence but only between two and seven percent of those students seek mental health care (Burczycka 2019). The prevalence of sexualized violence experienced by post-

secondary students is evident and the services provided to support these individuals require

greater regulation (Lee & Wong 2019). The barriers that prevent those impacted by sexualized

violence from accessing services such as mental health care, are not well known; hence, it is

important to research student experiences to work towards preventing and eliminating sexualized

violence on and off post-secondary campuses.

The literature pertaining to B.C. post-secondary institutions' policies and support services

for people impacted by sexualized violence is limited. To address the gaps that have been

identified, a study must be situated geographically in B.C., explore the experiences of

marginalized identities, and identify students' satisfaction and recommendations of online and

offline support services (Abavi et al. 2020; Roskin-Frazee 2020).

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent are students who experienced sexualized violence, aware of the resources on-campus?

2. To what extent do students who experienced sexualized violence, access the support services offered and feel supported by those services?

3. To what extent do students who experienced sexualized violence, think that marginalizing factors such as racism and heteronormativity, impact their experiences of support?

4. What do the students suggest that UBC do to improve those services?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Sexual Violence in Canada

Sexual violence affects men and women of all ages across Canada. While almost 1 in 3 women experience sexual violence, the prevalence of adult male sexual violence is between 0.8% and 11% with some studies reporting up to 18% of men as people who have experienced sexual assault (Pemberton & Loeb 2020; Du Mont et al. 2013). This holds true across all provinces in Canada with greater incidence in urban areas than in rural areas (Cotter & Savage 2019). Across these regions, younger individuals are more likely to experience sexual violence such that women ages 15 to 34 are three times more likely to be victimized than women 35 years and older; meanwhile, men aged 15 to 34 are two times more likely than men 35 years and older to experience sexualized violence (Cotter & Savage 2019). The sexual violence experiences of women 16 through 24 years old are well-documented in literature which leaves out older women who acknowledge their experience of sexual assault more frequently (Marques et al. 2020; Donde et al. 2018). However, sexual violence remains as one of the most underreported injustices in Canada (Conroy & Cotter 2017).

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and a multitude of other identities (LGBTQ+) are at greater risk of sexualized violence, yet may experience greater barriers to support than cis-gendered people. One million Canadians identify as an individual in the LGBTQ+ community (Jaffray 2020). These folks are more likely to experience sexualized violence in the past year in comparison to heterosexual cis-gender counterparts (Jaffray 2020). When it comes to online sexual harassment, non-cis-gendered men face greater risk than those who identify as women (Cotter & Savage 2019). This may be a result of media influencing the stigmatization of LGBTQ+ men; they are one of the most stigmatized marginalized groups in

Canada that face discrimination (Morrison et al. 2021). Due to the dehumanization of LGBTQ+

persons in the media, especially transgender persons, people are hesitant to report sexualized

violence to authorities (Morrison et al. 2021). The factors are compounded such that the

prevalence of sexualized violence against gay men and women is three times higher than against

heterosexual men and women and while being disabled, the likelihood of victimization increases

further (Cotter & Savage 2019). Such is a result of patriarchal domination that fosters invisibility

of LGBTQ+ and dis/abled persons and creates social acceptance of victimization (Brownridge

2006).

Research shows that racial categorization contributes to various experiences amongst

people who have experienced sexualized violence. Racialized folks who have experienced

sexualized violence report fear of not being believed by service providers due to judgements

based on their racial/ethnic identities (Gagnon et al. 2018). First Nations and Métis women report

experiences of sexual violence at a much higher rate; three times that of non-Indigenous women

(Cotter & Savage 2019). However, Indigeneity is not the only significant risk factor in the

experiences of Indigenous persons; age and childhood abuse are two examples of factors that

independently increase the likelihood of experiencing sexual violence (Cotter & Savage 2019).

Sexual assault blame ascription has been found to be linked to the person's race (Donovan 2007).

For example, White folks are more likely to be believed when the perpetrator of sexual violence

is Black in comparison to when the perpetrator is White (Donovan 2007). Roskin-Frazee (2020)

examined the experiences of Black women and one individual reported that service providers

connected her perceived race to sexual promiscuity. This is due to the misconception that Black

women are inherently seductive which ties into the historical dimension of power exercised over

the slave population; in particular, the sexual availability of Black women (Donovan 2007;

Hartman 1997). Thus, literature demonstrates that people with various identities are differentially affected which necessitates specific prevention and response measures (Cotter & Savage 2019).

2.2 Myths

Sexual assault myths often depict a forced act committed by a stranger in a deserted place (Abavi et al. 2020). This myth is often shown on television; the more television that people watch, the greater likelihood they are to believe that it is true (Harris 2020). This is problematic because when individuals' experiences do not conform to this stereotypical depiction, people who have experienced sexualized violence misunderstand what sexual assault is and therefore, they do not consider themselves as having experienced sexualized violence (Abavi et al. 2020). Further, this hinders students from seeking help and fosters secondary victimization – exasperating PTSD and other negative mental health outcomes associated with sexual violence (Abavi et al. 2020; Pemberton & Loeb 2020).

2.3 Trauma and Violence Informed Care

Trauma and violence informed care focuses on understanding how individuals' health outcomes are impacted by the intersections of interpersonal violence, systemic violence, and inequity and trauma experiences in specific contexts (Cullen et al. 2020). The purpose of practicing trauma and violence informed care is to minimize the risk of re-traumatization by provisioning care that supports the psychological, physical and emotional safety of the person who experienced trauma (Levine, Varcoe & Browne 2021). While trauma informed care has been emphasized as focusing on safety, trust, support, collaboration, empowerment, control and cultural competency, violence informed care examines the effects of ongoing violence especially institutionalized violence (Pemberton & Loeb 2020; Elliot et al. 2005; Levine, Varcoe & Browne 2021). Through trauma and violence informed perspectives, the complexity of lived experiences

is met with inclusivity and provisions safety to support vulnerable populations (Wathen et al. 2020; Rodger et al. 2020). From an intersectional analysis, trauma and violence informed care requires commitments from all levels of power to understand how people who have experienced sexualized violence may be impacted by historical, cultural and structural violence (Elliot et al. 2005).

2.4 Support Services Offered

Specific supports such as counselling, medical care and sexual assault support centres are important services to be offered to people impacted by sexualized violence. Counselling services are important to the development of supportive relationships and self-care skills that contribute to the healing process for the folks accessing services (Elliot et al. 2005). It is imperative to consider how financial barriers may prevent people from accessing services especially those of low-income and vulnerable populations (Harris 2020). Thus, post-secondary campuses should offer inclusive, culturally competent and affordable or free counselling services to community members (Harris 2020). Du Mont et al. (2013) emphasized that accessible medical care is crucial because only a third of males who experience sexual assault, utilize these services which suggests that barriers such as stigmatization prevent them from seeking out care. Trauma and violence informed medical care, as discussed in Section 2.3, is required of health care professionals because psychosocial aspects of health are necessary to consider when supporting people who have been impacted by sexualized violence (Levine, Varcoe & Browne 2021). Hence, stigmatization and discrimination against groups are to be considered when provisioning care such as medical and psychosocial support. Further, sexual assault support centres are necessary services that often connects folks who have experienced sexual violence to counselling and medical care services. Lee and Wong (2019) found that less than fifteen percent of post-

secondary institutions in Canada have sexual assault support centres despite the prediction that sexual violence experts would provide comprehensive policy development and better regulate reporting options for supporting students. Often these centres provide court, hospital and other accompaniments for students which further reinforces a trauma and violence informed care approach to healing (Harris 2020; Lee & Wong 2019). Thus a multitude of supports are required to promote protection, safety and consistency through trusting relationships (Elliot et al. 2005).

2.5 Education and Training on Campus

Research to date shows that the lack of standardized consent education on post-secondary campuses reinforces the falsehoods of rape myths that maintain barriers for folks to report their experiences of sexualized violence. "Consent" needs to be clearly defined for members of the community as an accepted definition of sexual consent is not apparent in all legal, political, social and academic settings (MacDougall et al. 2020). Students indicate that sex education concepts such as consent, are poorly discussed in secondary education which does contribute to making healthy sexual decisions (MacDougall et al. 2020). Similarly, in post-secondary settings, students find that the media discusses sexual consent more than in the universities that they attend (MacDougall et al. 2020). This is often a barrier to reporting as many people who have experienced sexual assault do not feel that their experience was serious enough because what is classified as sexual assault, is unclear (Marques et el. 2020). An additional barrier to reporting and disclosing sexual assault is the fear of not being believed especially if they know or had a relationship with the person who used sexual violence (Marques et al. 2020). Students may have a false understanding of non-consensual activity which is that sexual assault only occurs if the person who used sexualized violence is not known (Patel & Roesch 2018). However, people who have experienced sexual assault usually know the person who used violence and have the same

social circle; often shame and embarrassment from social stigma, serves as a rationale for not disclosing their sexual assault experience (Pemberton & Loeb 2020; Marques et al. 2020). A program called "RealConsent" targets males' perpetration tendencies which sustains rape myths of males being the only ones responsible for obtaining consent (Beres et al. 2019). Institutions that do not address sexual violence effectively in their programs are less likely to challenge rape-supportive beliefs on campus (Beres et al. 2019). Hence, training and education on consent must be provided to all members in the university in collaboration with students.

Bystander intervention training may be effective in reducing the incidence of sexualized violence on post-secondary campuses. Men often receive more social pressure to intervene in sexual violence situations than others; however men who participate in bystander training report lower levels of sexual aggression than men who do not which reduces the instance of sexual violence perpetration on campus (Patel & Roesch 2018; Senn et al. 2015). Instead of focusing on the victim-perpetrator binary, a community approach to intervening in sexualized violence puts the responsibility on all community members to recognize nefarious behaviours rather than just men (Beres et al. 2019). While creating programs that focus on intervening sexual harassment and abusive behaviours, it is also important to consider how the bystanders are impacted by the situation. In this regard, teaching the participants how to stay safe, is just as crucial (Beres et al. 2019). Four steps in bystander training have been recognized as necessary in program development: identification of negative behaviours; empathizing with people who have been impacted by sexualized violence; intervening with safe and sustainable techniques; and follow-through with intervention (Beres et al. 2019). However, statistically bystander intervention is low (Janse van Rensburg 2020) so amendments to training programs are required to encourage students to support their peers.

The "Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act Sexual Assault Resistance" program focused on women at the Universities of Windsor, Guelph and Calgary (Senn et al. 2015). Unit 1 (Assess) worked on increasing women's awareness of perpetrator tactics that would provide the ability to move onto Unit 2: acknowledging the precarious situation and resist coercion (Senn et al. 2015). Unit 3 (Act) was the portion of training that relayed self-defense training and effective options for resistance (Senn et al. 2015). Senn et al. (2015) noted that Sexual Assault Resistance Education (SARE) was proven to be effective as it reduced the incidence of attempted rape. Although the control group was provided only brochures that were campus-specific, the incidence of rape was also lower; however, not as significant as that of the SARE group (Senn et al. 2015). Pemberton and Loeb (2020) discuss how SARE training provides students with an understanding of the power relationship inequities in society which can contribute to empowerment and increased confidence in women's abilities to resist sexual violence. It is crucial to note that SARE is a reactive measure, one that perpetuates victim-blaming as it proposes that sexual violence can be resisted. Researchers have recognized that institutional structural changes would be required to implement resistance programs in post-secondary institutions (Patel & Roesch 2018). However, to prevent the falsehood that one can resist sexual violence, post-secondary institutions require investment in short-term intervention programs (Patel & Roesch 2018). Thus, SARE training is more harmful than it is beneficial for the campus community.

2.6 Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) and Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC)

As per Bill 23-2016, in 2017, UBC created a sexual misconduct policy that outlines the responsibilities of SVPRO, the Investigations Office, disclosure and reports, and the associated

policy components such as definitions. When a UBC community member discloses their experience of sexualized violence to SVPRO, the office offers several supports: safety accommodations, academic concessions, workplace accommodation, reporting options and supportive networks to accommodate someone to the hospital, police, etc. Additionally, SVPRO offers several training and workshops for UBC community members but is not mandatory for all in the community ("Sexual Misconduct Policy" 2017). The programs that are offered focus on primary, secondary and tertiary prevention (SVPRO 2021). Primary prevention addresses the systemic inequities and power dynamics that perpetuate sexualized violence while secondary prevention works as an intervening process (SVPRO 2021). Tertiary prevention works to address empathy building and supporting people who have experienced sexualized violence (SVPRO 2021). Students are able to reach out to SVPRO and access modules and training on Canvas or in-person. Students may not identify their concerns with SVPRO support or educational materials due to institutionalized barriers that may be present for students of various backgrounds and identities; thus, a study that works with students is necessary to understand the complexities of their lived experiences.

The SASC has been a vital part of the UBC Alma Mater Society (AMS) initiative to support people who have experienced sexualized violence since 2002 (SASC 2021). It has been an important part of SASC's framework to provide crisis and emotional support in addition to safety planning where day-to-day activities are examined so supports can be used if one is in an unsafe environment (SASC 2021). SASC provides much of the same accompaniment to appointments and meetings as SVPRO including relaying information to a party on a person's behalf (SASC 2021). The SASC also offers accompaniment to The Sexual Assault Service (SAS) which is to assess and treat the injuries of anyone thirteen years or older that has been

sexually assaulted in the past week; these services are free of charge and a care card is not required (SASC 2021). Additionally, two important support groups are offered to folks of the UBC community from all backgrounds and identities called "Roots & Resilience" and "Peer Support Group" (SASC 2021). "Roots & Resilience" is arts-based and connects folks to their inner-strength both mentally and physically through promotion of safety and boundaries while the "Peer Support Group" addresses specific needs of the people who have experienced sexualized violence such as isolation and loneliness (SASC 2021). Similar to SVPRO, it may be difficult for students to identify any concerns they may have with the SASC's supports; hence, this study aims to work within the boundaries of safety that the students may set as they share their lived experiences.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Theoretical Stance

This study uses an anti-oppressive decolonial feminist framework that explains systemic, gendered, and colonial violence through the intersections of racialization, gender binarism and heteronormativity by resisting colonial white supremacy and normative practices (Mack & Na'puti 2019). The experiences of students who have been impacted by sexualized violence are examined through a trauma and violence informed perspective. Structural and systemic inequities and power relations are examined in this study to understand how historical and ongoing violence plays a role in the unique experiences of the students.

3.2 Participants

This study uses an intersectional approach which recognizes intersecting systems of powers and inequities such as race, sex, gender and class (McClaren 2021). Students of diverse gender, sex, sexual orientation, racial/ethnic, age, cultural and dis/abled identities were encouraged to reach out. Diversity was sought by advertising through organizations such as the Black Student Union of UBC, UBC Hong Kong Student's Association (HKSA), UBC Indian Students' Association, UBC Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, Muslims of UBC, and UBC Families. Students who wanted to participate were provided a consent form and demographic information sheet; all students that returned these documents were interviewed (please refer to 'Data Collection Tools').

Inclusion Criteria:

a. Participants must be students entering the third year of undergraduate level or above, or graduate students at year three or above, at UBC.

    a. (Students in first or second year of their undergraduate degree and graduate

students in year one or two, may not have had access to in-person campus

resources due to COVID-19).

b. Participants must be a person who experienced sexualized violence while attending UBC.

c. Participants may identify as any gender.

d. Participants may belong to any age group.

e. Participants may identify with any sexuality.

f. Participants may identify with any ethnicities and cultures.

g. Participants do not need to have accessed UBC resources, but they must still have been

able to access the resources in-person.

Exclusion Criteria:

a. First year and second year students (both undergraduate and graduate) as of 2021 Winter

Session will be excluded from this study to ensure that students have had access to in-

person UBC resources provided by the SASC, SVPRO and Counselling services.

a. (Students in first or second year of their undergraduate degree and graduate

students in year one or two, may not have had access to in-person campus

resources due to COVID-19).

b. Students who did not experience sexualized violence during their studies at UBC will be

excluded.

Recruitment

Students were recruited via advertisements in the SASC, SVPRO, the Nest and on

Facebook, and using posters (see 'Appendix'). A consultation with the communication team for

both the UBC Graduate Student Society (GSS) and UBC Alma Mater Society (AMS), allowed

for the distribution of the poster via student newsletter emails. As the Vice President of External

Relations for the GSS, I had direct contact with the communications manager; this provided easy access to advertise. Additionally, I had the contact information for the AMS communications team so I was able to arrange advertising through AMS channels.

3.3 Interview Format

A Zoom conference account through UBC IT that allows unlimited minutes was requested to enable the interview length to be flexible. Participants were provided the choice to turn off their cameras to promote their safety and comfortability in their own spaces (Pemberton & Loeb 2020); this minimized the risk of re-traumatization by attending to the students' psychological, emotional and physical wellbeing (Levine, Varcoe & Browne 2021). However, upon agreement to the study, students were required to provide informed consent to record the interview.

3.4 Data Collection Tools

In addition to basic information such as the email address of the student, a demographic information form was collected on age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc. The demographic information sheet was provided to participants upon first email exchange along with the consent form (see 'Appendix') prior to an arrangement of an interview. The next stage was interviews which were semi-structured with guideline questions (see 'Appendix'). As mentioned in Section 3.3 a Zoom account (UBC-hosted) was used to conduct and audio record the interview; transcripts were obtained.

3.5 Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to analyze the personal experiences of the students with sexual violence services so it was crucial to identify and examine the common themes discussed in the interviews. The interview transcripts were reviewed and key words were recorded.

Potential relationships in one transcript were considered in how they do or do not represent a widespread finding across the larger data set (Thorne 2016). This required active engagement with key concepts and participant characteristics such as social demographic characteristics to conclude themes or patterns that exist which answered the research questions (Thorne 2016) outlined in Section 1.4. The common themes identified in this study can be compared to that which is found in the literature to determine widespread concerns of students who have experienced sexualized violence. Open-coding through line-by-line examination was used initially to determine important diction choices by the students who have been impacted by sexualized violence (Thorne 2016). Axial coding – where relationships are considered – were used in a cross-examination amongst the various transcripts that enabled selective coding (Thorne 2016). This allowed me to further build the connections of subcategories that present reasoning and explicitly indicate linkages (Thorne 2016) between the students' experience with support services.

It was important to discuss what services if any were utilized by the students and why they chose them. This helped to identify the possible suggestions for improvements of UBC support services such as long waitlists that may present as a barrier to accessing supports (Abavi et al. 2020). Considering the trauma informed perspective, it was important to identify ongoing institutionalized stigma and sociocultural discrimination against various persons and how that might play a role in whether they accessed services (Abavi et al. 2020).

Another consideration was the support people to whom the students may have disclosed their experience(s). Whether a friend, professor, teaching assistant, etc. were amongst those who supported the student, helped to better understand interpersonal relationships and responses to disclosures. For example, if students felt comfortable, safe and trust those supports: what made it

different from those that are not viewed as trustworthy. This information provided an understanding of what relationships were considered safe and provided an inclusive, non-discriminatory environment for disclosure.

3.6 Reflexivity

I am a 25-year-old Brown cis-gender woman and I consider myself a visible minority. As an individual who has accessed the SASC's services and Counselling services throughout my undergraduate degree, I recognize myself as an insider within the community. In this regard, specific instances of personal experiences allow me to appropriately work within a framework that does not re-traumatize students and rather, provides a space to reflect on their experiences as experts. I believe that my experience provided a framework for building trusting relationships with the participants that increased the level of safety and comfortability necessary to disclose valuable knowledge. However, I do recognize that my personal experiences, values and beliefs may have impacted the outcome of the study. I continued to be reflexive about my position as the researcher in relation to the participants throughout the entire study.

3.7 Ethics

Several ethical considerations were taken into account during this research study. The study reviewed and abided by the Tri-Agency ethics of conducting research and a research proposal was provided to BREB UBC prior to recruitment of participants for approval of the demographic information sheet, interview questions, methodology and data analysis process. Initial consent was received and recorded from participants via a consent form; oral consent was obtained at the beginning and at the end of the interview. Additionally, as previously mentioned that people impacted by sexualized violence hold valuable knowledge systems, an honorarium of $50 was provided to each student through e-transfer upon connecting via Zoom. These steps are

important in maintaining a standard for future studies that may include students who have experienced sexualized violence.

Data such as the audio recordings of the interviews and transcribed audio files have been stored on a secure encrypted hard drive and will remain stored for 5 years post thesis submission and approval. All identifying information was removed from the data and participants can only be identified with gender neutral names: Adlai, Rowan, Riley, Shiloh, Tanner, Ashton, Remi, and Charlie. A master list of the coded ID linked with names is being stored separately on an encrypted device. Only I, Dr. Colleen Varcoe and Dr. Saima Hirani will have access to this data.

I am ideally suited to carry out this research because of my training and work experience at Battered Women's Support Services. I completed a Violence Prevention and Intervention intensive 12-week training program in crisis intervention, counselling, group facilitation, theoretical frameworks of violence against women, and criminal, family and immigration law. While I have been responsible for providing safety plans, emotional support and suicide intervention, I recognize that this is beyond the scope of this research. I provided the participants with a resource list for support purposes (see 'Appendix').

Chapter 4: Findings

This study was conducted in accordance with Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) guidelines and within the parameters of the thesis proposed under H21-02193. The findings of the study were based on interviews with eight students who shared insights about support services offered on campus. The conversations with each student were guided by a series of questions with the purpose of answering the four research questions outlined in the Introduction of this thesis.

The students all identified as female, half of whom identified as persons of colour; the remaining identified as either White or did not disclose their culture/ethnicity. Three students identified themselves to be part of the queer community and one student did not disclose their sexual orientation. Only one student did not access support services on campus; seven students accessed one or multiple services. Several key themes were identified during the interviews which included: students had varying levels of awareness of campus resources; students who sought help had variable experiences such that mental health was not uniformly supported; victim-blaming and rape culture was identified as apparent in the UBC community and negatively impacted students' help-seeking; academic personnel did not uniformly provide adequate support to students; students experienced variable support from resources such as the Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC), Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO), Investigations Office and Counselling Services; students identified that being a female and White was likely less of a barrier in accessing resources and positive help-seeking outcomes than for people with varying identities; and, students expressed the desire to become involved in community efforts to raise awareness and educate the UBC community on sexualized violence due to a lack of trust or knowledge of UBC's current efforts.

4.1 Student Demographics

Each student who had experienced sexualized violence, documented their identifying characteristics using the demographic information sheet. I will be using gender neutral pronouns, they/them, when writing about the students. I also will be using gender neutral names: Adlai, Rowan, Riley, Shiloh, Tanner, Ashton, Remi, and Charlie. I chose to use gender neutral language for the purposes of limiting the normative biases and interpretations that one may hold for a person both by myself and the readers of this thesis.

4.1.1 Sex identity, Gender identity and Gender expression

Eight students from the University of British Columbia were interviewed. All participants identified their sex identity as female and feminine. Of those, seven identified their gender identity as being a woman while one person identified as gender queer.

4.1.2 Sexual Orientation

Five students identified themselves as being heterosexual while three individuals identified as being part of the queer community. One student stated that they "didn't realize [they were] asexual until afterwards"; when referring to their experience of sexual violence. Similarly, one person identified as pansexual but also did not identify as such until after they experienced sexual violence. Another person preferred not to state their sexual orientation.

4.1.3 Culture and Ethnicity

The students were asked to make note of their culture/ethnicity instead of choosing a multiple-choice option. This resulted in three students identifying as White and two identifying as Canadian. Two individuals noted their ethnicity as being South Asian; one also identified as Indian. The identifying South Asian Indian student commented in the interview that bystanders often attribute the perpetration of sexual violence to the individuals being "raised that way",

often "based off what culture, traditions" to which the person who used violence belongs. One student identified themselves as East Asian Chinese and another identified their culture/ethnicity as being Hispanic, referencing their Venezuelan background. One person preferred not to state what their culture or ethnicity was.

4.1.4 Age

All of the students were under the age of 31 years old with the majority (n = 6) being between the ages of 15 and 20 years old. One student was between the ages of 21 and 25 years old and another student was between 26 and 30 years old when they experienced sexualized violence.

4.1.5 Location of experience

Five students reported that they experienced sexual violence off-campus while three experienced sexual violence on-campus. One student's experience was online which was highlighted as an off-campus experience.

4.1.6 Disclosure

Seven students disclosed their experience to someone who was part of the UBC community, with some of them disclosing to multiple individuals. Four of the seven students disclosed their experience of sexual violence to a peer, two disclosed to an academic advisor and one disclosed to a professor. Two students disclosed their experience to people outside of the UBC community while only one person did not disclose their experience of sexual violence to anyone at all.

4.1.7 Seeking support services on-campus

Seven students chose to seek one or more support services on-campus but no students chose to seek medical attention after experiencing sexual violence. Four of the seven students

sought out the SASC and six participants used UBC Counselling Services at least once. Three students used SVPRO while two of those three also sought out the Investigations Office. One student also stated that they used Safewalk. A few students stated that at least one of the support services referred them to another service.

4.2 Level of Awareness of Resources

The level of awareness that the students had about support services and educational resources varied. Students reported that prior to their experience of sexual violence, they had little awareness of campus resources, regardless whether they were graduate or undergraduate students. Adlai noted that they were not made aware of campus resources during graduate student orientation which was similar to the observation of Rowan who noted that they "don't remember being educated on anything…" during undergraduate student residence orientation. However, other students such as Riley stated: "I lived on residence first year so we did have like a little presentation…like I heard SASC but I had no idea what SVPRO was" and Shiloh noticed "posters around the Nest". Ashton commented further on the posters, stating: "I do think it's funny…like up in the bathroom, it will be like a picture of like a poster…[that] will be like 'consent means yes' and it's like 'yes you go girl'…or like, you'll see…the [pictures of] text messages on like the floor of the Life building and it's like, 'dude, she was drunk then we had sex' [then]…'dude that's bad'. Like, you know…it's a good start." Due to the varying levels of awareness that students had about support services and educational resources, there was no consensus among participants on whether the distribution or advertisement of resources amongst the UBC community was effective or not.

4.3 Variable Experiences with Resources

4.3.1 Mental Health

All of the students indicated that their mental health had been negatively impacted by their experience of sexualized violence; however, resources such as the SASC and SVPRO helped students in their healing journey. Ashton stated that they had "like panic attacks" and "felt like sick to [their] skin" because they were in shock from their experience of sexual violence. Tanner felt a sense of a "roller coaster" which represented the highs and lows of their experiences as they continued in their healing journey. Charlie also experienced lows as they commented on the fact that their negative academic performance further deteriorated their mental health. The cycle of poor mental health outcomes was perpetuated when students did not have adequate support systems. However, while Rowan was "struggling for a really long time", they stated: "I sought out help from the SASC…that kind of helped me develop into the person I am now who I want to say is like really strong in mental health". These kinds of sentiments were profound amongst the students as Riley stated that it was a "long year process in itself…[but they] know now it was not [their] fault". Riley worked with SVPRO and the services provided by them greatly improved their mental health by utilizing a trauma informed framework that empowered them by emphasizing that the student is not to blame for their experience of sexual violence. This is important because the support provided is framed using a person-centered model which fosters healing through trust and clear boundaries.

4.3.2 Victim Blaming and Consent Culture on-campus

Students identified that victim-blaming and rape culture was prominent in the UBC community and this negatively impacted their healing journey. One student, Adlai, identified a strong sense of "rape culture" in the campus community as peers often tried to "reinforce that

nothing was wrong" which pushed Adlai to believe that they "didn't have [a reason] to be upset". This was one reason why Adlai did not disclose their experience of sexual violence to anyone in the UBC community. Riley identified sexualized violence as a taboo topic and said that "we are kind of embedded in a culture where it's like, very victim-blaming". This was a common response amongst students describing their individual experiences. Rape culture was also discussed by Shiloh: "I was talking to my supervisor about this…[and he] asked me about why I [didn't] bring up workplace harassment issue earlier, like why I didn't tell them like as soon as it happened". This reinforced the notion that the students must recognize sexual misconduct and be responsible for fitting a timeline of disclosure. The sentiment that persisted was that: "the University has done, like I am aware of sexual assault cases that have been pushed under the rug constantly" (Tanner). This pushed Adlai's lack of confidence in the University's efforts to end and respond to sexual violence as they stated: "So I think that the University, sure, like maybe it seems like they're trying, I personally don't know how that's working in practice". Students identified the harmful outlooks that many in the UBC Community, such as peers and faculty, hold, which perpetuate rape myths and deter students from reaching out for support. It is apparent that UBC's efforts as an institution to implement a trauma informed framework through the establishment of person-centered services, is not enacted in their outreach and education efforts in the UBC community.

Due to the rape culture on campus, some students believed that people who experience sexualized violence are to blame. However, this idea is a result of a lack of knowledge about consent culture within the UBC Community. For example, Riley stated: "like [in] first year I was going to frat parties, and we were seeing a bunch of things" and "at the time, I was thinking…all these people [at the frats] are so clueless but like, you know…it happened to me at one point".

This referred to their reflection on a time that they were given "half-filled water bottles" that were said to be filled with water but actually contained alcohol (Riley). Riley was unaware that their consent boundaries were violated at the time of this experience. The cycle of victim blaming results in people holding a person accountable for their experience of sexual violence due to alcohol consumption rather than holding the person who caused harm, accountable for their misconduct. However, UBC's SC17 Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy states that "an individual who makes a Disclosure or Report will not be subject to actions for violation of any applicable UBC policy, rules or regulations related to drug or alcohol use at the time the alleged Sexual Misconduct occurred" (2017). While the University espouses a standard that attempts to reduce victim-blaming bias, it is apparent that there is a lack of clarity amongst students about violations of consent when alcohol is being consumed. In the discussion, Riley hoped "with education, maybe some…people could stop behaving in such poor ways" because "people really just don't know anything about what consent is…they just don't think it's a valid idea". Riley recognized that the people who cause harm are responsible for their behaviour surrounding consent violations and that with education, the UBC community could move towards a place of healthy consent culture. Since Adlai stated their lack of confidence in the education provided: "whatever the University is doing…it's either not being taken seriously or not being internalized", it is apparent that the University must foster trust with students that the institution is disseminating consent culture education widely and to encourage UBC community members to engage in educational programs. Thus it is clear that students want to see a shift in consent culture on-campus and believe that educational programs will help to change the campus atmosphere.

4.3.3 Academic Personnel

The education and training that academic advisors receive in relation to sexual violence disclosure is inconsistent. Rowan and Remi both spoke with academic advisors and received dramatically different responses. Rowan stated: "I noticed that the only reason I got [SASC's] help was because my, I believe it was my student advisor…she knew that was an essential step" and "[her] response to me was so compassionate". They expressed the important role that the academic advisor had in their healing journey; without the advisor, the SASC's services may have not been used nor would have Safewalk which Rowan stated that the SASC referred them to. This experience was positive unlike Remi who stated, "I once…had an academic advisor laugh in my face…I can't even think about that particular individual without feeling triggered". When one individual discounts a student's experience of sexual violence, it deters them from feeling comfortable to speak to others in the UBC community. Due to a lack of empathy, Remi experienced harm; thus it is reasonable to conclude that this advisor was not utilizing a trauma and violence informed framework that works to support and provide safety to people who have experienced sexualized violence. It is unknown whether the students had the same academic advisor; regardless, the training and response to disclosure that the academic advisors had were inconsistent. In particular, the dismissive response that one student received, can foster re-traumatization.

The responsibility of professors in the disclosure and investigations process is not clear. Shiloh disclosed their experience of sexual harassment to their Master's supervisor and the supervisor conducted an internal investigation. During the meetings that Shiloh had with their supervisor, they stated that they felt: "a strong, sort of, disconnect between the two of us having to deal with the [sexual harassment]. And I didn't feel like I was…I felt unsafe". They continued

by stating: "…but you know I think [my supervisor] used a lot of language that is a scripted".

While Shiloh believed that their supervisor received some form of training on sexual violence

disclosure, the language that was used was not empathetic or genuine. The professors in the

department held an internal investigation but Shiloh stated, "that they consulted [the

investigations office]". However, "…what it sounds like…is that they went to [investigations]

with, you know, an issue and wanted feedback. And [the professors] made their own decisions".

Ultimately, the supervisor and fellow professors in the department declared the case to be

unfounded. It is unclear whether this protocol was one that is mandated under the Sexual

Misconduct Policy SC17 training for professors. After the internal investigation, the supervisor

told Shiloh that they could go to UBC Investigations or the police if they wanted to but

ultimately Shiloh "felt like…mentally and like emotionally, [drained]…with nothing to show".

There was a lack of transparency during the internal investigation such that the professors did not

inform Shiloh of the approved UBC protocol. This is harmful and is not trauma and violence

informed; a framework which utilizes a collaborative, informative, and transparent approach to

care.

Formal Services

4.3.4 Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC)

The SASC had a positive impact on the healing journey for the students who accessed the

services that the centre provides. Riley expressed that the SASC is "really important, especially

for those people that have people around them in their circle that don't have those same beliefs

about what had happened". Riley had discussed the prevalence of rape culture on campus and

how their peers often perpetuate victim blaming; "people were laughing about how [I] had gotten

a really bad date" rather than holding the person who assaulted them accountable for their

actions. The SASC was an important resource for many students, as other participants identified the importance of SASC's use of the app, Signal, as a secure communication channel between support specialists and students and two participants identified that the workshops and support groups have had a positive impact on their journey of healing (Ashton; Tanner). The supportive atmosphere that SASC provided to students promoted positive relationships that were built on trust, collaboration and choice; key themes in trauma and violence informed approaches to supporting people who have experienced sexualized violence. Participants identified the SASC as being "a safe environment" that "will…never make you feel uncomfortable" (Tanner; Rowan). The SASC was recognized as being composed of "badass accepting compassionate people" (Adlai) even by those who had not accessed the SASC's services. Only Remi had a "neutral experience" as they commented that "I just wasn't sure within that first interaction whether they were going to be able to support me" – referring to the "number of issues" they had in relation to their trauma (Remi). Remi stated that there was a multitude of resources that they required support to accessing and using which led them to believe the extent to which SASC could provide them the support, would not be sufficient. However, the overall consensus that the participants had was that the SASC was a positive resource that provided safe and compassionate responses when supporting the students.

4.3.5 Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO)

Similarly to the SASC, all of the students who used SVPRO, identified SVPRO to be a very important resource in their healing journey. Riley stated that "SVPRO [is] totally trauma informed" and that "it was amazing in terms of the type of counselling you could receive specifically from the support specialists". It is important to note that SVPRO does not provide formal counselling but they do offer emotional support. Charlie discussed how upon contacting

SVPRO, "I asked them about some counselling, but they actually recommended me to not go through UBC and to go through the B.C. Women's Hospital or like a private counsellor just because yeah they said UBC had a long wait time and also they weren't really specialized". SVPRO specialists, despite their association with the University, prioritized the student's healing journey by referring them to external counselling. This is a practice of trauma and violence informed care as the ultimate goal is to expand the support network of the person who experienced sexualized violence. Riley further elaborated on the topic of trauma informed approaches, specifying that their "support specialist always says, 'you could literally be running down the street naked, no one has a right to do anything to you'". This is important as it validates the student's experience while also promoting a non-victim blaming environment. SVPRO provided Remi with support "on short notice" as they do "their best to accommodate". The accommodating approach that SVPRO took was one that minimized re-traumatization as it highlighted a positive interpersonal relationship that promoted Remi to have control over their use of support and resources.

4.3.6 Investigations Office (IO)

According to the two participants in this study who accessed the IO, the IO was not a helpful resource as it did not work from a person-centered approach while conducting investigations of sexualized violence and misconduct. Of the two students who used the investigations service, one had received the final report at the time of the interview and the other was in the process of investigation. Both students had identified that the IO was "technically trauma informed" (Riley) but "it just doesn't seem like it's exactly trauma informed" (Charlie). Riley stated that "I just personally don't believe that trauma informed means not telling the person that reported…what happened to [the person who assaulted them]…like you will never

know". Their lack of confidence in the IO stemmed from not knowing what the repercussions might be for the person who caused harm if the IO documents that sexual misconduct occurred (Riley; Charlie). Trauma and violence informed services use transparent methods of conduct to avoid re-traumatization by providing consistent and predictable responses to promote safety. Additionally, the IO sent one student a 30-page report which included parts of the transcript of the person who caused violence without the student's knowledge. Riley stated that it "kind of [told] you that you're a liar you manipulated the situation" which "didn't help the healing process". The unexpected provision of the person who caused violence's transcript can be extremely harmful due to the power that not only did the person abuse, but the IO as well since they hold a position of power in determining whether sexual violence occurred according to their understandings. As a result, "there's sort of a lack of like safety measures and security throughout the investigation process" (Charlie). Thus both students felt that the IO was inadequate at protecting people who had experienced sexualized violence. Instead, the IO exacerbated violence by ignoring the power imbalance between investigations and students.

4.3.7 Counselling Services

Based on the eight interviews conducted, the participants had diverse experiences with UBC Counselling. According to the demographic information sheet, only three students identified that they used UBC Counselling Services but during the interviews it was discovered that three additional participants used the service at least once. Two of the students who chose not to indicate their use of the service, stated in the interview that with "UBC Counselling, I have not had the best experiences but…also my experiences with them are quite brief" (Tanner) and that "UBC Counselling…was somewhere between a negative and neutral experience" (Remi). Although these students had brief contact (a couple of visits) with UBC Counselling, Riley also

commented that the service "was just not helping" because they "felt like the type of treatment [UBC Counselling] was doing…was like very theory based". As a result, Riley stated that the counsellors "obviously…want you to get over [the sexual violence]" which explains why they felt like they were "just being talked up". This was not indicative of a person-centered and trauma informed framework as this was not recognizing institutionalized violence as a form of re-traumatization. In contrast to these three negative experiences, two students spoke about their positive experiences with counselling. Rowan mentioned that UBC Counselling was able to give them an appointment "within a couple days" while Shiloh stated that they saw multiple counsellors which was "good for grad students like me…[because] the insurance covers like [nothing]". However, support specialists at SVPRO had recommended that Charlie should "not go through UBC…[because]…they weren't really specialized [in sexual violence support]". The varied experiences that the students reported suggest that UBC Counselling did not provide safe and consistent support.

4.4 Marginalized Identities

All of the students identified a power dynamic that impacted their experience of sexualized violence. Students, regardless of ethnic identity, identified that persons of colour experienced a greater power inequity which negatively impacted their experience of sexualized violence and in some cases, the support they received. Each of the three students who identified themselves as White, acknowledged their privileged social position; Ashton stated: "I'm very white…super white and therefore…I've never had to worry about being mistreated due to my race in any environment". This is different from Shiloh's experience as an East Asian woman in which they stated: "we all view the world that we live…through our own perspectives. And you know, [my supervisor's] living through the world as a successful White male professor. And here

is…an Asian girl student". They emphasized their experience as a racialized student in which the prevalence of sexual violence and misconduct is a "systemic issue…[that] shouldn't…[be based]…on an individual basis" (Shiloh). Shiloh recognized that the intersections of race and financial power gave their "supervisor…even more so…a position of power in this department…[because] you know, [the perpetrator's] project was that of a bigger scale…there was a difference in potential grant funding for the professor's lab [so] there could have been some kind of conflict of interest" and "[the professors investigating] were all sort of older White [men]". Shiloh's experience of white supremacist ideologies impacted their experience of help-seeking. Due to the supervisor, department professors and person who caused violence's White identity, Shiloh experienced racial power dynamics that may have resulted in a negative investigation outcome.

As identified by students, the female sex identity and gender identity of a woman, lessened the barrier to accessing support resources as opposed to other sex and gender identities. Two students discussed how "as a female, I would think that I had a much easier time navigating resources" (Rowan) in comparison to "males…[because] they might feel more judged if they try to reach out for support" (Charlie). Charlie also stated that "there's still like the common ideas that males don't experience [sexual] violence". One student mentioned that societal gender roles such as for women "to be non-confrontational…[and to be]…people pleaser[s]" (Ashton) still exist which, is why they believe they "got mistreated a lot by men" (Ashton). While acknowledging their privileges, students were aware that marginalized identities impacted their experiences of sexual violence and access to supports.

4.7 Motivation to be Engaged and Improvements

A majority of the students stated at one point during the interview that they would like to become more involved in community efforts to raise awareness about sexual violence. Participants identified an apparent lack of dissemination of awareness and efforts by the UBC community which prompted students' desire to be involved. Rowan had not formally engaged in community efforts but they did "advertise the SASC a lot" because they believed that "their services are amazing". Similarly, Ashton communicated by "word of mouth but no volunteering" with the hopes of "doing something in the future". Other individuals such as Riley had received "funding from…SVPRO" as they are "trying to connect to like culture at UBC" because they found that it had "kind of helped the healing process, just being part of a group…kind of fighting for [change]". The efforts made by students to participate in sexual violence awareness, education and training is important as Remi stated: "we have a real problem here, which I don't think folks are explicitly talking about yet at the organizational level"; hence students took it upon themselves to enact change.

Each student discussed potential improvements that they believed to be beneficial for the campus community. Many of the suggested improvements were in regards to the Investigations Office; of the three students who had "investigations" into their experiences, two were conducted by the IO, and one had their professor undertake an "investigation". All three were dissatisfied. Adlai stated that knowing the outcome of a sexual violence case "would be helpful" because right now, they do not know if there is "long term follow through". This was exemplified by Riley's experience because although Riley received the Investigations Office's report on the findings of their case, they stated: "not finding out what happened to [the person who caused violence]…[is over the] line for me with what…practices should be". Similarly, Shiloh

expressed discontent in investigation conduct as they stated: "I don't think [the professors] should be the ones investigating issues like this…unless their entire life career you know…[is on] criminology around sexual assault".

Some students discussed the need to have proactive responses to sexual violence on campus. The reach of UBC's efforts to offer awareness, education and training to the UBC community was limited which resulted in students' belief that resources did not exist. Rowan believed that "a good place to advertise [sexual violence] services would be…at the beginning of a lecture" and perhaps this is because, as Tanner pointed out, "usually only the people who have been affected…reach for these [services] when it's really something that everybody should have some knowledge of". Both Riley and Tanner believed that "compulsory courses for awareness of sexual violence on campus…[including] learning what consent is" and "normaliz[ing]…conversation around [sexual violence]", would be helpful. Ashton stated that: "not just doing sort of crisis response type work but rather, sort of more…sustained support…[is important] because the issue becomes when you only do crisis responses…you're only addressing what's happening in the here and now, and just kind of disregarding unfortunately, the bigger picture". They emphasized that "in terms of training [and education]…it has to be top down" and they "think Mr. Santa Ono himself" is responsible for making those changes (Ashton). Many other students stated that visibility and transparency from the university is needed because as Rowan stated: "I don't think…as an institution like at large…[UBC] has changed".

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Key Findings

Overall, the SC-17 Sexual Misconduct Policy does not adequately outline the procedures, education and services that are available on campus for the UBC Community to utilize. Campus climate surveys are necessary to determine what the campus culture is like for the community as the prevalence of rape culture at UBC may be a primary indicator of the lack of awareness of resources that students in this study had. This limited awareness was regardless of students being an undergraduate or graduate student which indicates that more educational programs in orientation and resources on course syllabi, should be implemented to facilitate awareness. Once the services were accessed, students had variable experiences; the students thought that their access and experiences with services was positively shaped by their sex, but negatively shaped by racism. In conclusion, this study indicates that the SC-17 Sexual Misconduct Policy procedures and guidelines are not consistently upheld through a trauma informed framework which requires clarification and adequate implementation across all services on campus.

5.1.1 Awareness of Resources

The findings of this study show that students' knowledge and awareness of resources on campus was variable according to the atmosphere at their university; rape culture being the primary indicator of students' lack of awareness of resources on campus. Five of the eight students only became aware of the sexual violence support services on campus after their experience of sexual violence. Conversely in a study conducted in Ontario, eleven of the fifteen women who were interviewed, already knew of the resources available on their post-secondary campus and where to find them (Marques et al. 2020). Campus culture often governs students' level of awareness of sexual violence resources on campus such that positive perceptions

increase the students' knowledge of resources that are available (Tredinnick 2020; Garcia et al. 2011). Several students' discussed the presence of victim-blaming culture at UBC; Adlai stated that there "is definitely strong rape culture" which was emphasized by their friend who questioned Adlai's level of intoxication at the time of their experience of sexual violence. Adlai was not aware of the resources on campus at the time of their experience.

The results of this study indicate that similar to literature, students at all levels of post-secondary education, were marginally aware of resources that were available on campus. Regardless whether students were graduate or undergraduate students, there was limited awareness of resources and educational programs related to sexual violence on campus. Bloom et al.'s (2021) study found that graduate students knowledge of sexual violence resources was limited which was the case for Adlai's experience during graduate orientation. Graduate students' marginal awareness of support services results in a lower confidence level when accessing the resources (Bloom et al. 2021); hence, students such as Adlai were left without access to resources. A student in another study stated that resources are "thrown" at undergraduate students during orientation and then are never spoken about again (Mitra et al. 2021). Similarly, Rowan discussed the lack of education surrounding sexual violence resources during residence orientation in their first year. It is important to prioritize the level of outreach that the university does with all students to ensure a safe campus environment (Bloom et al. 2021; Tredinnick 2020).

Three students of colour were somewhat aware of the resources on campus after their experience of sexual violence while only one White student was aware as a result of posters in the UBC Life building. This contrasts to Mitra et al.'s (2021) finding that White students are more aware of campus sexual violence resources than their non-White counterparts.

Marginalized populations such as those identifying as BIPOC, often face institutional betrayal and as a result, are less aware of resources and more often do not access them in comparison to their White counterparts (Mitra et al. 2021). However, since some of the students of colour in this study were more aware of the resources, the results suggest that there may be more influence on awareness level than marginalized racial or ethnic identities.

5.1.2 Accessibility of Resources

Seven of the eight students accessed sexual violence resources and associated services on campus; some of whom obtained resource information and support online. Other studies have found that post-secondary institutions across Canada do not adequately address sexual violence (as cited in Magnussen & Shankar 2019). The study found that students believed UBC's online resources were helpful which may indicate an alternative finding to previous studies as UBC provides adequate online resources. Several students identified that online resources were helpful especially during the COVID-19 pandemic period in which students were not in-person on campus. Some students accessed SASC's online support group which indicates that there were students who relied on Internet resources for both support and information related to sexual violence (Magnussen & Shankar 2019). Ashton discussed the app, 'Signal', and its accessible messaging system through the SASC. Ashton is one student who may have feared the stigma that is often associated with disclosure; this is reduced when students have the option to receive support anonymously (Magnussen & Shankar 2019). Anonymity and online access to resources can increase the likelihood for students to reach out to support services (as cited in Magnussen & Shankar 2019). Further, Riley indicated that SVPRO's website was important in the process of obtaining a support specialist to accompany them during the investigation process. This readily accessible information helps students who are in distress and are in need of clearly labelled

information (Magnussen & Shankar 2019). The findings offer important information about the necessity of online, easy-to-use resources that enable students to choose how they receive support. Elliott et al. (2005) indicated that a trauma informed approach utilizes an empowerment model that focuses on a person who has experienced sexualized violence's conscious choice and control over their healing journey. Here, SASC and SVPRO have provided an option for students to choose and navigate their healing journey through the mutual goal of providing adequate support to all students.

The students expressed that they had generally positive experiences with support services, and a few negative experiences with the Investigations Office and Counselling Services. This is not similar to the findings of Quinlan et al. (2017) who found that most students were dissatisfied with their post-secondary institution's sexual violence resources. Of the seven students, only one student labelled their experience with support services including SASC and Counselling, as ranging between neutral and negative. However, it is important to note that the seven students who used the supports on campus, were undergraduate students; the one individual who did not access support services was a graduate student. In comparison to graduate students, more often undergraduate students favour the support services that their post-secondary institution offers (Quinlan et al. 2017). In alignment with this, Adlai, as a graduate student, was unaware of the resources and as a result, did not find the resources to be accessible. Thus, their perception that "the university…focus[es] all of their energy on undergraduate students", suggests some students were not adequately supported via accessible means (Adlai). For all services to be considered as accessible, all students must be aware of the sexual violence services and resources that are available on campus.

The resources that were available to students were not well differentiated which results in students not knowing what each resource is and what is provided. Charlie stated that they did not know the difference between SASC and SVPRO which was "definitely stressful". Societal power dynamics that create differential experiences of privilege and oppression, determine the level of access to resources (Quinlan et al. 2017). In the case of students, relations of institutional bureaucratic power create and perpetuate a hierarchy that reinforces fear of not being believed (Gagnon et al. 2018). Due to SVPRO being a UBC service and SASC being a service provided by the student union, Alma Mater Society, a hierarchy may exist within the University that prevents equal advertisement of these resources. Through the provision of resources, it is necessary to use a trauma informed and feminist based framework that promotes trust and transparency which is done so by clearly denoting what the services offer, to allow the person who experienced sexualized violence, to feel safe (Pemberton & Loeb 2020). The finding of this study offers insights regarding the extent to which students feel safe to access resources based on power dynamics and transparency. However, studies within the University with more participants of diverse backgrounds are required for further analysis on student-to-student services power dynamics.

5.1.3 Marginalized Identities

Due to sexualized violence being viewed predominately as a gender-based violence issue, women are often the forefront of many studies. Stewart et al. (2020) specified that space needs to be provisioned for women to challenge patriarchal systems that subject women to sexual violence at university. Often, gendered language in sexualized violence studies subjugate minority groups such as those who identify outside of the heteronormative confines of the gender binary. For example, many studies such as that by Bergeron et al. (2019), include "Women",

"Men" and "Gender minorities" as identifying characteristics for participants rather than what the gender identity is of each participant which may include genderqueer, gender non-conforming, transgender or Two-Spirit identity.

In this study, all participants identified as female with seven identifying as women and one student identifying themselves as genderqueer. Although the study sample was small, the research is consistent with that in the literature which has found that women at the university level experience sexualized violence at higher rates than the general population (Stewart et al. 2020). Patriarchal systems of power are constructed within social contexts to further reinforce the subjugation of violence against women (Hunnicutt 2009). It is crucial to move beyond the false universalism of patriarchy as pertaining only to the binary of gender and sex. The singularity of woman identity constitutes oppressive systems amongst various identities. In this framework, violence against women is not the only patriarchal rendering as many other forms of oppression exist within the framework of male and men dominated conventions. For example with the intersection of sexuality, race, and gender, feminist discourses consider patriarchy as an institutionalized construct that subordinates those of all identities (Harris 2020). Hence the experiences of the students in this study cannot be understood in isolated terms of reference.

Some studies have shown that queer students experience higher rates of sexualized violence (Roskin-Frazee 2020). In this study, the three students who identified as being part of the queer community, did not discuss their experiences in relation to queer violence. Research has shown that due to the rigidity of heteronormative values and a gender-centered narrative of sexualized violence, anti-queer violence often focuses on homophobic implications rather than including the intersections of queer gender identity (Meyer 2012). This unidimensional analysis of queer violence creates an Othering of racialized queer folks by presenting a universal narrative

of what queer violence looks like and the experiences of those who are impacted by sexualized violence. A student in this study who identified as genderqueer was also South Asian which concerns the intersections of race and gender oppression. Their experience of sexual violence was not well understood through the lens of white supremacy which had equated the violence against all femme presenting folks as the same regardless of intersecting systems of oppression and privilege (Harris 2020). Furthermore, the two students who identified as asexual and pansexual, respectively, did not express these sexual identities as being at the forefront of their experience due to previously identifying as heterosexual at the time of their experience of sexualized violence. Bedera and Nordmeyer (2020) found that men who sexually assault queer women are connected to hegemonic masculinity in a way in which violence is normalized through gender performance of masculinity – reinforcing the success of acquiring unavailable women. The unavailability of femme presenting folks beyond the gender identity of woman, reproduces the notion that queer bodies are a threat to the existence of masculinity and heterosexuality (Bedera & Nordmeyer 2020). Hence sexualized violence against queer women is normalized and attributed to the harmful hypersexualization of queer bodies. The internalization of the students' sexualities being questioned can be related to the criticism that queer women must "choose" one side either being men or women (Bedera & Nordmeyer 2020).

The student who identified as East Asian noted the power differential that existed between themselves and their Master's supervisor which harmed their help-seeking process. Through systematic power relations regarding race and gender, the student experienced racialized sexual violence (Roskin-Frazee 2020). As a result of institutionalized systems of white supremacist ideology, the intersections of oppression and privilege constructed various barriers to help-seeking (Elliot et al. 2005). The Whiteness of the supervisor perpetuated the abuse of

power in a multitude of ways as the supervisor had the ability to influence the student's academic and work life within the research laboratory. Anti-racist discourses often neglect the patriarchal implications of Othering in which the student experienced sociohistorical stereotyping where "Asian…women [are seen] as hypersexual, [and] passive" (Harris 2020). In this regard, the White supervisor's implicit bias of the student's Asian identity may have influenced procedural unfairness. This perpetuates violence against Asian women and positions the student as being less believable (Harris 2020) which was presented through the failure to adequately address sexual harassment through the procedural outline of UBC's SC-17 policy. Through the unidimensional focus on women rather than through the systems of domination that Other the racialized student, the supervisor imposed the assumption that their Whiteness had no influence over the student's experience of institutional harm.

5.1.4 Students' Recommendations

The students had varied experiences with the support resources at UBC. According to discussions with some participants, both IO and Counselling Services did not uphold the tenets of trauma informed care and students indicated that communication and validation were two important areas of improvement for both services. Gagnon et al. (2018) found six major recommendations that survivors made, three of which included improvement of communication, believing rather than victim blaming and exhibiting a greater sensitivity to understating the trauma response to their experience of sexualized violence. The Investigations Office has been discussed as a harmful resource due to the failure to partake in a trauma informed framework as promised in the SC-17 policy. The IO did not utilize a framework that was centered on transparency which is essential when operating from a trauma informed lens (Pemberton & Loeb 2020). By not being clear that students would receive the transcript of the person who used

sexual violence or what the consequences were for that person, the IO was perpetuating ongoing structural violence which is against trauma and informed care (Levine, Varcoe & Browne 2021). This is exemplary of poor communication and a lack of sensitivity for the potential harm that the report caused the student which could have resulted in re-traumatization. Additionally, a student discussed how Counselling Services made them feel like they should "get over" their experience of sexualized violence which is not indicative of a trauma informed approach to care. This supports Gagnon et al.'s (2018) findings in which people impacted by sexualized violence recommended that service providers believe the person impacted by sexualized violence rather than victim blame; in this case, the counsellor was narrativizing that the student's trauma response was uncalled for. Services that do not provide a validating space for people who experience sexualized violence contribute to the re-traumatization of the individual due to feelings of being emotionally unsafe (Elliott et al. 2005). The lack of consistency of student experiences with this service showcases that counsellors were not uniformly specialized and trained in supporting students impacted by sexualized violence. Both IO and Counselling Services did not adequately ensure that the tenets of trauma informed care were upheld consistently for students in this study. This was undoubtfully harmful in the healing journey of the students who accessed those systems of support.

5.2 Implications and Recommendations

The study contributes important knowledge on how UBC students perceive the dissemination of resources and education that the University provides to its community members to adequately and proactively address sexualized violence. UBC's SC-17 Sexual Misconduct Policy indicates that the approach to supporting students impacted by sexualized violence works within a trauma informed framework however, this required that all students need to be aware of

the sexual violence resources on campus (Elliott et al. 2005). Based on the low level of awareness that students had on the resources and services that the university offers, the participants have not found these resources adequately supportive for individuals impacted by sexualized violence. A higher level of awareness or knowledge of resources available on campus is indicative of positive perceptions of campus climate (Tredinnick 2020). Students discussed their experience of victim blaming by fellow students, staff and academic personnel which promoted the understanding that rape culture was very prominent on campus. Despite the University putting out statements in support of those impacted by sexualized violence and condemning those who enact sexualized violence, the perception of staff and faculty being trained in disclosure and response procedures was unconvincing. Previous studies in the United States have found that less than five percent of students who experience sexualized violence, disclose to university authority which may be due to the perception that staff and faculty are untrained in response to disclosures (Orchowski, Untied & Gidycz 2013; Tredinnick 2020). This lack of trust in the capacity of the University to support those who have experienced sexualized violence requires addressing. Hence the students that participated in this study have experienced ongoing institutionalized violence due to a victim blaming campus environment and neglectful training of staff and faculty at UBC.

Students provided several recommendations that the University could implement to improve their prevention and response to sexualized violence. As some students recommended, the University can begin the process of widespread education and awareness on campus by holding educational programing during student orientation. However, in order to provide more education on campus, increased funding for resources and education is required. SASC and SVPRO have educational resources but the capacity to provide extensive education by smaller

services such as SASC, is limited. Garcia et al. (2011) found that students want to have more readily access to resources and knowledge on sexualized violence which includes prevention programs, support services and disclosure and reporting mechanisms available on and off campus. An example of a prevention resource that could be mandated by the University includes online Canvas modules such as 'Responding to Disclosures', 'Consent Culture', 'Rape Culture and Victim Blaming', 'Bystander Intervention' and 'Resources on Campus'. These training modules could be accessible on a variety of platforms as part of orientation each time students, staff and faculty arrive at the beginning of a school year; updates could be made each year as there are important studies and information being discovered regularly. To determine what updates are required, campus climate surveys would be able to provide the prevalence of rape myth beliefs and persistence of victim blaming behaviour on campus. To notify students of the existing resources, course syllabi should include a section on sexualized violence resources and education available just as the plagiarism policy is listed.

Importantly, this study exemplifies that the procedures and outline of UBC's Sexual Misconduct Policy, SC-17, was not widely, consistently or adequately distributed and educated to UBC faculty and staff. In the discussions held with students, it was identified that many University staff such as counsellors, investigators, academic advisors and professors, were not well aware of how to respond to disclosures and provide helpful support for students who have been impacted by sexualized violence. It is the responsibility of the University including its highest positions, to oversee the development and implementation of SC-17 to foster a prevention-focused environment for UBC community members. Statements released by individuals such as the President and Vice-Chancellor, are not enough to facilitate the safety of students through condemning sexualized violence. Rather, the act of publicity as students have

expressed, does not result in a cultural shift to promote a culture of consent. In order to take full responsibility for the training and education of all staff and faculty at the University, SC-17 procedures need to be adequately communicated on an annual basis with sufficient response protocols outlined for UBC community members to follow if a student or another community member, discloses an experience of sexualized violence. Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that the disclosure, report and investigation process of SC-17 was not well communicated to these students who have experienced sexualized violence.

5.3 Limitations and Strengths

This study was limited by a small sample size of eight individuals, one campus and included mostly cis women. The small group of students who participated in this study provide invaluable contributions to this work. It would be beneficial for future studies to include a larger sample size that can obtain information on a larger scale for UBC to utilize in its improvement of sexual violence support services on campus. Additionally, UBC has both a Vancouver and Kelowna campus but only the Vancouver campus was included in this study. I believe that a future study which compares and contrasts both campuses would be beneficial to examine the services that are offered for people who have experienced sexualized violence. With more time and funding, this project would be helpful for understanding how the campuses prioritize sexualized violence prevention and response. Additionally this study mostly included the experiences of cis women. This reduced gender diversity which is important for the understanding of how the UBC Vancouver operates from an inclusive gender diverse standpoint. In this regard, this study's findings do not include the diverse identities of the campus community and is therefore not representative of the entire UBC Vancouver Community.

This study has several strengths that contribute important information for UBC to use in the future. The communication of the participant's experiences using direct quotes rather than interpreting the language that was used by each student, was important. This allowed for a more transparent approach to the communication of the findings for the general population to use as a source of how to improve campus resources and services. As a result, this study offers insight into the experiences of people who have been impacted by sexualized violence and their expressed concerns and/or satisfaction with a variety resources on campus that they used in their healing journey. Using a person-centered approach to the research, this study contributes to the literature by showcasing how participant experiences are invaluable to the expansion, modification and implementation of sexualized violence support services and resources.

5.4 Conclusion

This study has identified the unique experiences of UBC students who are impacted by sexualized violence. Varying levels of awareness of campus resources due to a culture of rape myths and victim blaming was identified as nefarious in the help-seeking process for students and if students chose to seek help, they were often confronted with UBC community members who did not consistently provide trauma informed support. Institutions such as UBC are embedded in a patriarchal and oppressive framework due to colonial strategies that uphold dominant ideologies. Despite UBC's efforts to deconstruct institutionalized harm, the failure to uphold the tenets of trauma informed care contributes to the perpetuation of rape culture and indifference to sexualized violence. It is the responsibility of the University to protect all community members through the consistent training and education of all members of the University beginning with those who are required to implement and disseminate those trainings as per the SC-17 policy. The establishment of resources and training for the University

community needs to be clear and widespread to facilitate a culture of consent, support and

denunciation of sexualized violence that will result in an inclusive and supporting environment

for all students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Social Media Post

Hello UBC students. My name is Ashni Gill and I am a Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice Master's student. I am working on a project that works with student survivors of sexualized violence at UBC. I will be inquiring about survivors' experiences with the support services at UBC such as the SASC, SVPRO and Counselling services under the supervision of Dr. Colleen Varcoe. I will be the primary contact for this study. If you are interested in participating in this study, please email me at_____– read below for more information. To participate:
1. You are a student who experienced sexual violence while attending UBC Vancouver
2. You do not need to have accessed support services on the UBC Vancouver campus
3. You must be entering your 3rd year of study or above for 2021W (undergraduate or graduate level)*

*Due to COVID-19, 2nd years students as of 2021W may not have had access to in-person campus resources. 1st year students may not have been on campus prior to September 2021W.

I invite students of the LGBTQ+ community, all ethnic backgrounds and cultures, all ages and gender identities, to participate in this study.

Please note that if you choose to interact with this post by giving it a 'like' or 'comment', you will be identified publicly with the study. If you would like to participate, please directly contact myself, Ashni, via email:_____.

Thank you for considering your participation.

Appendix B: Poster

Appendix C: Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
School of Nursing

The University of British Columbia
School of Nursing
T201-2211 Wesbrook Mall
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 2B5
Phone: 604-822-7417

LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT
Student Survivors of Sexual Violence's Experience at the University of British Columbia Through a Trauma and Violence Informed Framework

Principal Investigators:
Dr. Colleen Varcoe, RN, BSN, MEd, MSN, PhD, University of British Columbia (supervisor)

Co-Investigators:
Dr. Saima Hirani, MScN, PhD, University of British Columbia (co-supervisor/committee member)
Ashni Gill, M.A Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice student, B.Sc Biology, University of British Columbia

Contact Information:
Ashni Gill (BC), Co-Investigator – (email)

Name of Funder:
This research project is funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (CGS-M)

Conflict of Interest:
None to declare.

Letter of Information

Introduction:
Ashni Gill invites you to take part in a research study to explore your experiences with sexualized violence support services at UBC. Ashni Gill plans to interview 10 to 15 students from UBC, Vancouver, British Columbia who have experienced sexualized violence while attending UBC. This letter gives you information to help you decide if you would like to take part.

Background:
Experiencing sexualized violence has many negative impacts on students' health, safety and the quality of their lives. This study has been structured to work from a survivor perspective to learn whether UBC can improve the sexualized violence support services on campus such at the Sexual Assault Support Center (SASC), Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) and Counselling Services. As a student who may take part in this study, you would be given a demographic information form to fill out if you choose to participate in an interview. Ashni Gill also wants to learn more about potential barriers to support services on campus, to help improve how supports are provided to survivors of sexualized violence from different backgrounds.

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of student survivors of sexualized violence with support services, whether they used supports or not, how they were useful or affected their lives, and the changes that are needed to improve those supports.

Who is Eligible to Take Part?
You can take part if you:
1. You are a student who experienced sexual violence while attending UBC Vancouver
2. You do not need to have accessed support services on the UBC Vancouver campus
3. You must be entering your 3rd year of study or above for 2021W (undergraduate or graduate level)*

   *Due to COVID-19, 2nd years students as of 2021W may not have had access to in-person campus resources. 1st year students may not have been on campus prior to September 2021W.

What Taking Part Means:
If you agree to take part, Ashni Gill will contact you using your safe email address to arrange a Zoom interview at a time of your convenience. If you choose to participate using Zoom, you can protect your identity and increase the protection of your personal information if you do not use your actual name in Zoom. You can do this by using only a nickname or a substitute name. You may also protect your identity by turning off your camera. A secure UBC-hosted Zoom link will be used.

The interview will normally take 30 to 45 minutes. Ashni Gill will ask you about your general experiences with sexual assault services on campus, and whether or how it was useful. Ashni Gill will also ask about how we can improve support for student survivors of sexualized violence. If there is any interview question that you don't want to answer, just say "pass." With your permission, Ashni Gill will audio-tape the interview. Ashni Gill will make a written copy (transcript) of what you tell her. The transcripts will not contain any names or identifying information.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal from Study:
Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer specific questions. You may decide not to be in this study. At any time, you may leave the study, or ask to have your information removed by contacting myself using the study email. It will not be possible to remove your information after the analysis has started. By taking part in this research study, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Possible Risks:
The risks of taking part in this study are small. During or after an interview, you may become upset if some of the questions you are asked remind you of painful experiences of abuse. If you become upset, the interviewer will stop the interview. You can decide whether you want to answer these questions. You can take a break if you feel upset. You will be given a list of resources that you can call if you need support.

Possible Benefits:
You may not benefit directly from taking part in this study. You might become more aware of actions you can take to manage your health or other challenges. What Ashni Gill learns in this study may help UBC improve how supports are provided to other student survivors of sexualized violence who may or may not access support services on campus.

Confidentiality of the Information You Provide:
The information you tell Ashni Gill will be kept confidential. The only exceptions are if you tell her about current abuse of children or if you are at risk of harming yourself or others. If at any point in the study Ashni Gill becomes aware of actual or potential child maltreatment, by law the researcher must report this information to the appropriate authorities. Let the interviewer know if you have any questions about this.

If you take part, you will be given a study ID number. Your answers to interview questions will be saved using this ID number. When Ashni Gill makes a written summary (transcript) of your interview, she will remove your name/nickname or any other identifying information.

All study information will be stored in an encrypted external hard drive. Only Ashni Gill, Dr. Colleen Varcoe, and Dr. Saima Hirani, will have access to these files. Audio-recordings will be destroyed after a written copy (transcript) has been made. Copies of these transcripts will be password protected and sent by secure electronic transfer to Dr. Colleen Varcoe and Dr. Saima Hirani for reference. Transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years so that Ashni Gill may use them for future studies. After that time, files will be deleted and paper files shredded.

What Ashni Gill learns in this study will be shared with the University community. Open access requirements come from both funders and journals. Researchers may be required to make their data accessible in a research repository (for other research purposes). Funders also generally require researchers to make their findings available. No names will be used in sharing the findings.

Costs and Compensation:
There is no cost to taking part in this study. To thank you for your time, Ashni Gill will send you an e-transfer of $50. You may keep this money even if you do not complete the interview.

Questions about the Study:
If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

This letter is for you to keep. If it is not safe for you to keep this letter, you can request a copy at any time by sending an email to _____.

Consent:
If you agree to take part in this study, please review the form attached. Ashni will keep the consent form on a secure device.

Consent Form

Project Title: Student Survivors of Sexual Violence's Experience at the University of British Columbia Through a Trauma- and Violence-Informed Framework

Investigator's Name: Ashni Gill

☐ I (the participant) have read the letter of information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

☐ I agree to be audio-recorded

☐ I agree to the use of quotes provided by me but that do not identify me in sharing the results of this research

☐ I understand that I am not waiving any of my legal rights as a result of signing this consent form.

☐ I have read this form and freely consent to participate in this study.

☐ I understand that the findings of this study, that do not identify me, will be kept for a period of at least 5 years and may be used in future studies

Participant's Name (Please Print):   Date:

_____   _____

Person Obtaining Informed Consent (Please Print):   Signature:

_____   _____

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Definitions

- Sexual misconduct includes sexual advances, interactions and/or behaviours that are unwelcomed such as remarks or touching and may be regarded as sexual harassment, sexual assault or any form of sexualized violence perpetrated (Tinkler 2008).

- Sexual violence is defined as a sexual act completed or attempted whereby there was a lack of consent (the act is unwanted and against a person's will; see 'Consent' below) granted and may be a result of social, interpersonal, threatened physical or explicit physical coercion (Bagwell-Gray, Messing & Baldwin-White 2015).

- Sexual assault includes any sexual contact or threat that is unwanted (Gagnon et al. 2018).

- Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted sexual advances that may be verbal or physical which negatively impacts a person's work, school or living situation and leads to adverse outcomes (Tinkler 2008).

- Intimate partner sexual violence is defined as a sexual assault occurring between individuals who currently have or in the past had, a consensual sexual relationship (Bagwell-Gray, Messing & Baldwin-White 2015).

- Hook up can be defined as a sexual interaction that may or may not result in further contact between the individuals participating in the sex act (Flack et al. 2016).

- Consent is voluntarily given through verbal or non-verbal communication to initiate or continue sexual activity (MacDougall et al. 2020).

This study aims to learn about students' experiences of sexual violence services on campus with a goal of improving services and experiences for students. I am wondering if you would like to start off by telling me about your overall impressions of the services that the university offers related to sexual violence prevention and responses?

Follow up questions to be used if not covered in the conversation:

1. Prior to experiencing sexual misconduct, in what ways did UBC educate students such as yourself about sexual violence on campus?

2. What is your perception of consent education and sexual misconduct culture on campus?

3. Which services did you use at university, and were you comfortable accessing them?

4. How would you describe the support you have received from the university?

5. Do you feel that your gender, race, ethnicity, culture or sexuality may have impacted your

experience?

6. How was your mental health impacted by the responses you received?

7. How has your perception of UBC's involvement on sexualized violence changed since your experience?

8. Other than this interview, have you participated in improving the campus responses to sexual misconduct? If yes, how has your participation in the university's efforts to reduce sexualized violence on campus, changed since your experience of sexual violence?

9. What would you tell UBC about the services they provide on how to better support survivors of sexual violence?

10. Is there anything that you would like me to know that we have not already spoken about together?

Appendix E: Resource Sheet

On-campus

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office
6363 Agronomy Road, ROOM 4071
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1T2
604-822-1588

Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC)
AMS Nest, Room 3130
6133 University Blvd
https://www.amssasc.ca/
604-827-5180

Counselling Services
1874 East Mall
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z1
604-822-3811

UBC Hospital
2211 Wesbrook Mall
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 2B5
604-822-7121

Off-campus

Vancouver General Hospital Emergency Department
920 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, BC Canada V5Z 1M9

WAVAW
Crisis Line: 604-255-6344
Office: 604-255-6228

BWSS
Crisis Line: 604-687-1867
Office: 604-697-1868

BC Male Survivors
3126 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC Canada V6K 2H3
604-682-6482

Ending Violence Association of BC
1404 – 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 1L8
604-633-2506

Metro Vancouver Indigenous Services Society
2732 E Hastings St Suite 100
Vancouver, BC Canada V5K 1Z9
604-255-2394

Trans Lifeline
1-877-330-6366

LGBT Youthline
Phone: 1-800-268-9688
Text: 647-694-4275

Q-chat
Online chat: www.qchat.ca
Toll-free: 1-855-956-1777
Text: 250-800-9036

BC Crisis Centre 1-800-SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433

Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789