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Breaking the silence : uncovering the gendered communication patterns before, during, and after instances of sexual assault at NESCAC colleges

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ABSTRACT

Sexual assault is a pervasive problem that many college women face. This study explores the gendered communication patterns employed by men and women prior to, during, and after instances of heterosexual sexual assault on New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) college campuses. It was hypothesized that gender plays a role in instances of sexual assault in that norms of masculinity and femininity influence the communication employed by men and women, with women's voices being silenced, muted, and ignored and men's voices being assertive and dominant. Nine mental health and sexual assault professionals, from eight different colleges, were interviewed to discuss the communication patterns they have observed in working with survivors and perpetrators. The results of this study indicate that communication patterns are gendered in that women's voices are muted and ignored during and after the assault, and their voices are silenced after the assault. The communication patterns of men appear to be either controlling in that they knowingly commit assaults, or unclear in that the perpetrators report acting on miscommunication. Most assaults occur after social situations of partying and substance use. This study demonstrates that internalized notions of masculinity and femininity play a role in sexual assault.

BREAKING THE SILENCE: UNCOVERING THE GENDERED COMMUNICATION PATTERNS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER INSTANCES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AT NESCAC COLLEGES

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine whether there are gendered communication patterns between men and women before, during, and after instances of heterosexual sexual assault on NESCAC (New England Small College Athletic Conference) college campuses, and if so what those patterns are. Because sexual assault is a pervasive, yet often silent issue in that not many survivors acknowledge, disclose, or report the assault, this study is important in bringing a voice to the matter. Raising awareness and talking about sexual assault begins with identifying and naming it as an issue of concern, for as Ward (1997) described, "in naming (describing) what is being done to us (and inevitably to children and men as well), we are also naming what must change. The act of naming creates a new world view" (p. 479). In naming and describing the gendered communication patterns involved in sexual assault, I will be able to not only explain what is happening, but also identify where change needs to occur. Consciousness raising is almost always the first step on the path for transformation.

Sexual assault does not just happen on college campuses, but across all communities. One mental health professional I interviewed reported that "college campuses are a reflection of the larger society. A lot of sexual violence". A society prone to rape and sexual assault is a culture with a belief system that:

> Encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture women perceive

> a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women *as the norm*. (Buchwald, Fletcher & Roth, 1993, p. ii)

A culture of sexual assault perpetuates masculine dominance and feminine submissiveness.

This culture of sexual assault is reinforced and reified in popular culture, particularly in videos and music lyrics that shape gender norms. A scene from Walt Disney's "The Little Mermaid" (1989) depicts the limiting norms of femininity that many young girls learn:

> *Ursula*: I'm not asking much. Just a token, really, a trifle. You'll never even miss it. What I want from you is . . . your voice.
>
> *Ariel*: My voice?
>
> *Ursula*: You've got it, sweetcakes. No more talking, singing, zip.
>
> *Ariel:* But without my voice, how can I -
>
> *Ursula*: You'll have your looks! Your pretty face! And don't underestimate the importance of body language! Ha!
>
> (Sings): The men up there don't like a lot of blabber
>
> They think a girl who gossips is a bore
>
> Yes, on land it's much preferred
>
> For ladies not to say a word
>
> And after all, dear, what is idle prattle for?
>
> Come on, they're not all that impressed with conversation
>
> True gentlemen avoid it when they can
>
> But they dote and swoon and fawn
>
> On a lady who's withdrawn

It's she who holds her tongue who gets her man.

In this scene, girls learn that notions of femininity include passivity, silence, and emphasis on "getting" a man. Music lyrics are another form of popular culture that sends messages about gender norms. Jon Lajoie's song "Show me Your Genitals" (2009) is popular among adolescent boys and contains sexist and disturbing lyrics such as:

Women are stupid, and I don't respect them,

That's right, I just have sex with them…

You're talkin' to me about stuff - why?

I'd rather see your titties…

I wanna see your bum, I don't care what you say…

Girls' brains are much stupider than men's are,

so they should always listen to us 'cause we're smart.

Women are only good for three things,

cooking, cleaning - and vaginas.

Such lyrics, which many adolescents describe as humorous, depict women's bodies as used for male pleasure, and helps perpetuate a culture of sexual assault.

Sexual assault is a cultural phenomenon, one that happens not only in our communities but also on our college campuses. This study examines the role that masculine and feminine communication patterns play in instances of sexual assault to better understand what is happening, in hopes of being able to reduce rates of assault.

Study Overview

In order to examine if there are gendered communication patterns before, during, and after cases of heterosexual sexual assault on college campuses and if so, what they are, I will

conduct a qualitative exploratory study. I aim to interview at least one mental health professional, or other professionals dealing with instances of sexual assault, from all 11 of the NESCAC colleges (Amherst, Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, Connecticut College, Hamilton, Middlebury, Trinity, Tufts, Wesleyan, and Williams). I will use flexible methods to collect my data through phone interviews. My interviews will be semi-structured using open ended questions to elicit narratives and in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon. As my study focuses around communication and voices, my data will be based on narratives and words. A qualitative study with the data in words will provide rich details of the communication patterns surrounding instances of sexual assault.

The paper is organized by the following chapters. The Introduction provides basic information and explains the purpose of the study. The Literature Review addresses contemporary theories and studies pertaining to gender socialization, communication, and sexual assault. The Findings chapter summarizes the data collected and discusses the information obtained from the interviews. The Discussion compares the results of my findings to the current literature, offers recommendations for communities and colleges, and concludes the report.

Background

Sexual assault in the United States has historically been an issue and continues to be a pervasive problem today, one that receives little attention. The United States, "has the highest rate of reported rape in the industrial world- about eighteen times higher than England's" (Kimmel, 2000, p. 255). While sexual assault and rape are issues many women have to face, college women are four times more likely to experience sexual assault than any other age group (Burnett, et al, 2009, p. 465; Lam & Roman, 2009, p. 19). The National Institute of Justice (2000) funded the National College Women Sexual Victimization study which conducted

telephone surveys of a randomly selected national sample of 4,446 college women and found that 15.5% of those women were sexually victimized during the 1996 academic year (Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000, p. 15), and prior to the 1996 academic year 10% of the women had experienced rape, 11% had experienced attempted rape, 36% had experienced unwanted sexual contact, 9% had experienced sexual intercourse with nonphysical threats/ bribes, and 6% had experienced any other unwanted/ uninvited sexual intercourse (Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000, p. 17).

Sexual assault happens, and it occurs far more frequently than most of us imagine, particularly for college women. Often many of these incidents go unreported and undisclosed, making it hard to even determine the actual rates of sexual assault (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 93; Burnett et al., 2009, p. 465). Sexual assault has been, and continues to be a pervasive issue for college women, one that is often not even discussed or reported.

Definition of Terms

In examining the gendered communication patterns surrounding sexual assault, I am using a broad definition of sexual assault to include any sexual acts done without consent, such as unwanted touching, fondling, kissing, oral contact, vaginal intercourse, and anal intercourse. I do not include sexual harassment or stalking in my definition of sexual assault, for I am only examining direct unwanted sexual contact.

Gender is socially constructed in that identities are a "fluid assemblage of the meanings and behaviors that we construct from the values, images, and prescriptions we find in the world around us" (Kimmel, 2000, p. 87). Gender is the product of interactions with others and the media, which is then performed in front of others, validated, and legitimated by others (West &

Zimmerman, 2000). Gender roles are also culturally and historically specific (Mirandé, 2008). Gender refers to the social definitions of masculinity and femininity.

The term "gendered", when applied to a phenomenon, means that "social processes have determined what is appropriately masculine and feminine and that gender has thereby become integral to the definition of the phenomenon" (Schwartz and Rutter, 2000, p. 3). Gendered communication refers to the different verbal and non-verbal communication patterns employed by men and women, and the understanding or assumed meanings of such communication. Communication is also gendered in regards to whose voices are heard, hold power, and whose voices are silenced, ignored, and muted in a patriarchal society.

Major Sexual Assault Policies

There are numerous laws and policies regarding sexual assault on college campuses. This section addresses two of the major policies, Title IX and the Clery Act.

Title IX.

Title IX is part of the Education Amendments of 1972. This civil rights law prohibits discrimination based on a person's sex, in schools that receive federal funds. Such discrimination includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. In 2001, the section on sexual harassment, the blanket term to encompass sexual assault and other unwanted forms of sexual violence, was revised. This law mandates schools to take immediate and effective actions to end discrimination, including sexual assault, and prevent it from happening. Schools are required to train employees on how to respond to, and report discrimination. In addition, schools need to take proactive measures to prevent discrimination from occurring in the future through the use of preventative training and educational programs. The law acknowledges how a significant number of students have experienced sexual harassment, "which can interfere with a

student's academic performance and emotional well-being. Preventing and remedying sexual harassment in schools is essential to ensuring a safe environment in which students can learn" (U.S. Department of Education, 2001, para. 9). The guidelines discuss how if schools find a sexual assault has occurred, they must end what they describe throughout the law as, a "hostile environment", prevent it from occurring in the future, and try to make amends or remedy the situation. Title IX mandates that schools deal with sexual assaults promptly and effectively and try to eliminate future occurrences.

The "Dear Colleague" letter written by Russlynn Ali (2011), the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, explains and reiterates the requirements of Title IX pertaining to sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual coercion, and sexual harassment. This letter discusses the troubling statistics of sexual assault on college campuses and the schools' responsibilities to take urgent steps to end and prevent sexual violence. "If a school knows or reasonably should know about student-on-student harassment that creates a hostile environment, Title IX requires the school to take immediate action to eliminate the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects" (Ali, 2011, p. 4). Schools are mandated to not only handle cases of sexual assault but also work to prevent assaults from happening. The letter also offers recommendations to implement preventative education programs and sexual violence resources. The letter ends with a vision of ensuring that "all students have an equal opportunity to learn in a safe and respectful school climate" (Ali, 2011, p. 19). Title IX is the major legislation mandating schools cannot have any students discriminated on account of their sex, which means that school must address and work to prevent instances of sexual assault.

Title IX mandates that faculty have to report any instances of sexual violence of which they become aware. As stated in the "Dear Colleague" letter:

> Regardless of whether a harassed student, his or her parent, or a third party files a complaint under the school's grievance procedures or otherwise requests action on the student's behalf, a school that knows, or reasonably should know, about possible harassment must promptly investigate to determine what occurred and then take appropriate steps to resolve the situation. (Ali, 2011, p. 4)

Therefore, even if a survivor shares the assault with her advisor or any other faculty member, simply to tell her story, and does not want the faculty member to do anything about it, by law the faculty member has to go against her wishes and report the case.

One of the mental health professionals I interviewed discussed the implications of Title IX, in terms of having faculty members required to report the case even against the survivor's request, "the college cannot follow her wishes, so then she loses control yet again" and "women get their power taken from them yet again". The survivor risks losing control of the situation in regard to how it is handled when she informs a faculty member about the assault, who then turns the information over to college administrators. The confidential resources on college campuses are the health center, counseling center, and chaplains' office, meaning that these three resources are not required to report instances of sexual assault. As this respondent said, "It certainly should funnel people towards those three offices but it may suggest to people that they shouldn't report. And I understand the reasoning for the law; it is more like wanting to make sure the colleges don't sweep it under the rug". Title IX mandates colleges to deal with instances of sexual assault to ensure that the school is trying to make campus safer for students; however, this also means that unless the survivor reports to a confidential source, the school is required to investigate the assault regardless of the survivor's wishes. Like most policies written with good intentions, Title

IX has other implications for survivors in terms of losing their voice or being silenced in disclosing the assault and the repercussions of disclosing it to faculty members.

Clery Act.

The Clery Act is a federal law mandating that schools that receive federal funding disclose information about campus crimes, including sexual assault. This act, originally known as the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act, was named after Jeanne Clery, a 19 year old student who was raped and murdered in her dorm at Lehigh University in 1986. The Clery Act requires that schools must collect crime reports and crime statistics and issue campus alerts whenever a crime has occurred, and warn of any criminal activity that may present as an ongoing threat (Fossey, 2010).

The Ramstad Act, otherwise known as the Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights was an amendment made to the Clery Act in 1992 to identify rights for sexual assault survivors. The provision mandates colleges to notify survivors of their right to file charges with the local police and also notify survivors about the available counseling resources and supports, as well as the option to change their classes or dorm. This act also mandates that both the accused perpetrator and the survivor have the same opportunities to have others present at the hearing and that both parties will be notified of the outcome of the disciplinary hearings (Mawdsley, 2010).

Implications of the Study

As sexual assault is such a widespread yet silent issue, it is an important matter to study to allow us to better understand this phenomenon. This knowledge will help advance the social work profession. Social work practice often deals with helping oppressed and underserved populations, and this study will help give a voice to female survivors of sexual assault. Through this knowledge of some of the communication patterns surrounding instances of sexual assault,

mental health and sexual assault professionals will be able to develop interventions that promote empowerment and healing for clients and communities, and also help improve prevention methods. This study will not only aid social workers, but also college educators, and college administrators in understanding, educating, and preventing sexual assault.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to examine the gendered communication patterns of men and women before, during, and after instances of sexual assault on NESCAC college campuses. While sexual assault has historically been a problem and continues to be a pervasive issue many college women face today, there is a dearth of current material on this subject, especially with regard to the communication patterns surrounding the assault. Not all men are the same, and not all women are the same, however for the purpose of this analysis, these genders are going to be presented in the generalized aggregate. While an exhaustive literature review is beyond the scope of this project, this chapter explores the current applicable literature surrounding theories of, and studies pertaining to gender socialization, communication, and sexual assault. For each of the following sections, I will first discuss the relevant theories and then the current empirical studies, both quantitative and qualitative, done on the topic.

Gender Socialization

Gender socialization begins when young children internalize notions of masculinity and femininity. As Kaufman (1997) states, "children do not simply learn a gender role but become part of that gender" (p. 37). Gender is a learned ideology that shapes behavioral actions. Butler (1988) was one of the first theorists to describe gender as a performance, a scripted act that is reproduced as reality. Gender, which is culturally and historically located, is a "stylized

repetition of acts" and understood as "bodily gestures, movements, and enactments" (Butler, 1988, p. 519). Children learn their gender roles at a young age and continue to act and reenact their gender through their actions and communications with others.

Theories on gender socialization.

There are numerous theories that help describe the gender socialization process and how young children come to discover, and act out their gender. Cognitive Development theory argues that children learn their stereotypical sex roles through socialization and interactions with others (Kunkel & Burleson, 1998; Martin, 2000) and learn to avoid acting in ways that are not appropriate to their gender (Fagot, Rodgers, & Leinbach, 2000). Social Learning theory further explains how children learn their gender through watching and imitating same-sex adults, and these gendered actions are then reinforced by others (Payne, 2001; Carli & Bukatko, 2000). Gender Schema theory describes how children form gender-related schemas, cognitive frameworks that organize and interpret information, to influence their thinking and behavior. Schemas are formed through basic socialization processes including interactions with families, peers, and the media. These schemas start forming by the age of five when, "children develop an impressive constellation of stereotypes about gender that they apply to themselves and others" (Martin & Ruble, 2004, p. 67). Children internalize the external social pressures to conform to their gender, influencing their verbal and nonverbal communication throughout the rest of their lives.

As children learn through their social environment, the family plays a crucial part in the reproduction of gender roles. Chodorow (1999) argues that as mothers are primarily responsible for childcare, this influences sex differences in personality development, with girls learning to focus more on relationships as they feel more connected to their mothers, while boys, who view

their mothers as unlike them, learn to become more independent. Chodorow (1999) claims that masculine developmental "processes stress differentiation from others", thus denying relationships, while feminine identification "processes are relational" (p. 176). The sexual and familial division of labor influences adult gender expressions and personalities, with women feeling more connected to others as based upon their close early relationship with their mothers and other feminine caregivers.

Growing up in a patriarchal society also influences gender development. Patriarchy, meaning the "rule of our fathers" creates sexism by asserting the inferiority of females and the superiority of males, with masculinity characterized by warrior traits of "aggression, control, emotional reserve, rationality, [and] sexual potency" (Sheffield, 1997, p. 112). Kaufman (1997) describes the dualism of gender, as masculinity is associated with activity, while femininity is associated with passivity (p. 41). In our current patriarchal culture, masculinity is closely linked to power, including sexual power. Men tend to view sexual encounters as a way to prove their manhood, as sex is seen as a form of success and achievement (Kimmel, 2000, p. 22). Schwyzer (2008) uses the term "homosociality" to describe the phenomenon of how men perform masculinity for each other, using their sexualized and objectified views of women as a way to form connections with other men. This patriarchal objectification of women allows men to maintain and perpetuate heterosexism, using women as pawns for men to prove their masculinity. Patriarchy influences gender development, and children learn the meanings of their gender through this power dynamic.

Studies on gender socialization.

In addition to the theories on gender socialization, there have been numerous empirical studies done on gender development. Hagborg (1993) studied 150 adolescents from a small high

school of middle socioeconomic class, located in a semi-rural community. Thirty students, with an equal number of girls and boys, were randomly selected from each grade and were given Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents that looks at nine different domains: scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, job competence, romantic appeal, behavioral conduct, close friendship, and global self-worth. The results showed that the boys rated themselves higher on athletic competence, physical appearance, and global self-worth, while girls rated themselves higher for close friendships. This study indicates that this small group of adolescent boys rated themselves high for measures focused on action and self-esteem, while girls focused more on relationships; however the small non-diverse sample size makes the results hard to generalize across all populations.

Lamb and Brown (2006) conducted research to find out what girls are listening to, reading, and watching to better understand girl culture and the social messages that girls receive. Lamb and Brown (2006) surveyed a diverse group of over 600 girls and then watched shows, movies, read books, magazines, listened to music, and shopped at a variety of stores to better understand these social messages. Their research concluded that girls are being sold stereotypical, demeaning, and limited messages on what it means to be a girl. These media messages encourage girls that their sex appeal is important, as is beauty, romance, homemaking, nurturing, and shopping. Brown, Lamb, and Tappan (2009) surveyed over 600 boys across the United States to determine what boys are watching, listening, reading, and doing, and then looked at those sources in the media to determine the social messages targeted towards boys. Their research concluded that the media uses negative stereotypes of boys as enjoying violence, being independent, jocks, slackers, and players, meaning they play the dating field to get as many girls as possible. This definition of manhood also included the notion of power as being in

control, often over girls and woman. Both of these contemporary studies with diverse and large samples concluded that the media sends stereotypical and limited messages of femininity and masculinity to girls and boys.

Kimmel (2008) interviewed a geographically, racially, sexually, and socioeconomically diverse group of 400 young men to describe what is happening in the lives of young adult males, a lifestyle he refers to as "Guyland". Kimmel (2008) reported on several themes of Guyland: pornography, violence, silence, and sex with women. Kimmel (2008) found that many forms of media targeted toward young men (such as video games, pornography, music lyrics, TV, and the internet) are sexist, denigrating, hateful, violent, and misogynist in their depiction of women. Such media is pervasive across all aspects of their lives; for example, pornographic pictures are one of the most popular screen savers for male college students (Kimmel, 2008, p. 9). Men feel the pressure to prove their masculinity by intimate relationships with women, as the sexual mandate of masculinity is to "have sex with as many women as possible, as frequently as possible no matter what" (Kimmel, 2008, p. 172). Kimmel (2008) reported that this impossibly high standard fuels men with a sense of entitlement, despair over not fitting masculine standards, and anger towards women for withholding sex, which then sets the stage for predation and violence against women. However the culture of silence protects men's excessive and violent behaviors from becoming public knowledge. Kimmel (2008) noted the men he interviewed spoke of women more with contempt than desire, using terms like "hos", "bitches", and "sluts", and often thought of sex as not to satisfy a desire of a woman, but as a way to "get even with them, or, even, humiliate them" (p. 182). Most of the men interviewed, believed that, "girls 'have to say no' to protect their reputations, they 'mean yes, even if they say no', and 'if she's drunk and

semiconscious, she's willing'" (Kimmel, 2008, p. 218). This contemporary study had a large diverse sample group; however it has not yet been replicated.

To summarize, various theories on gender socialization indicate that gender is a performative act that children learn to mimic at a young age. Gender is internalized through socialization, growing up in a patriarchal society, and through interactions with others and with the media. Children form these gender related schemas that influence their own thoughts, behaviors, and communication. There have been numerous studies conducted to examine gender roles, and how girls and boys receive stereotypical and limited messages regarding their gender from the media. Children's' gender socialization and internalized social messages of masculinity and femininity influences their interactions and communications as adults.

Gendered Communication

In the current literature, there are numerous theories that help explain the various communication patterns of men and women, and numerous different studies to help demonstrate this phenomenon. Gender socialization influences how we internalize and understand gendered norms and stereotypes, both in broad terms, and also with regard to communication styles. Communication plays a large role in social interactions, both in the verbal interplay of what is being said and what is not being said, and in nonverbal actions. Many theorists argue that differences exist in the communication patterns of men and women due to the social construction of gender, and the sociocultural power structures that support patriarchy, and numerous studies support this phenomenon.

Theories on gendered communication.

Standpoint theory describes how a person's social status stems from cultural expectations and social interactions, which then shape a person's communication style (Payne, 2001; Wood &

Dindia, 1998). As men historically have held leadership roles, their communication is thought to be more assertive, and women historically have been socialized to emphasize cooperation, making their communication more passive. Similar to Standpoint theory, Social Role theory states that due to the historically different social roles and the sexual division of labor, men and women developed different characteristics that best fit their social roles (Aries, 1998; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). Men are more likely to work in positions of power such as law and business, while women are more likely to have occupations in the social services and education, thus perpetuating the gender hierarchy of power (Glick, 2000). As men have held, and continue to hold higher positions of social status, they are often regarded as more competent and women are seen as more easily influenced (Sagestano, Heavey, & Christensen, 1998). Standpoint theory and Social Role theory explain how communication is gendered due to the internalization of historical and stereotypical gender roles.

As communication is influenced by patriarchy and power, language and communication is not shared equally among all individuals. Muted Group theory describes how "group members do not have an equal share in formulating language… [in that the] dominant groups solely determine the appropriate communicative systems… [and the] subordinate groups become inarticulate because they are forced to use the language of the dominant groups" (Burnett et al., 2009, p. 469). In a patriarchal society, men are the dominant group, and therefore not only control the communicative discourse, but also have the power to have their voices heard. This muting of women's voices has occurred historically, and continues today when women are less likely to develop a public voice (Hopper, 2003). As women internalize their oppression, their voices often become muted, silenced, or simply ignored since they lack the social and political power to have their voices listened to and respected.

In addition to these theories on how patriarchy influences communication styles, Self-Categorization theory discusses how gendered norms and stereotypes can also influence communication patterns. Self-Categorization theory states that individuals are expected to conform to gender stereotypes and social categories, which then influences women to use more passive and tentative language, such as phrases like "I am not sure" (Reid, Palomares, Anderson, & Bondad-Brown, 2009). However, a passive style of speech is also seen as less credible by men. Women who are socialized to use a more passive communication style may have trouble being assertive in incidents of sexual assault.

Just as children form cognitive schemas that influence their gender development, they acquire cognitive gendered schemas regarding sex and relationships. "Nowhere else are cultural expectations of masculinity and femininity so salient as in romantic relationships" (Wood, 1994, p. 191). Gender plays a prominent role in heterosexual relationships, as individuals use their gendered schemas to determine their actions and understanding of another's actions. Cognitive Valence Theory refers to how individuals go through cognitive schemas to ascertain appropriate responses to another person's words or actions (Henningsen, Henningsen, & Valde, 2006). Individuals use their cognitive schemas in relationships to decide whether to make sexual advances based upon their perception of their partner's communication of willingness.

Men and women tend to have different cognitive sexual schemas, otherwise known as scripts, which may lead to miscommunication and misinterpreting another's actions or words. Traditional sexual scripts consist of the notion that men are the initiators and women are the gatekeepers of sexual contact (Krahé, 2000). Token resistance refers to the belief that women who say "no" really mean "yes". Some men believe women use token resistance because women, "do not want to appear too eager to engage in sexual activity… [for fear of] being judged

negatively for stepping out of the traditional passive feminine role" (Osman, 2003, p. 683). This degradation of a woman's words can be connected to the earlier discussion of how in a patriarchal society men control communication in terms of whose voices are heard and believed. Adams-Curtis and Forbes (2004) also argue that men may not respond to a woman's "no", in that women's more passive communication styles may make the "no" not very explicit, or be conveyed in nonverbal indirect ways (p. 100). This notion of token resistance is only one of the many rape myths, others include the belief that a woman can resist rape if she really wants to, the woman is often promiscuous, only strangers commit rape, and the idea that the woman makes up the rape to punish a man (Burnett, et al., 2009). This notion of rape myths and passive communications styles may impact how women's words or actions are perceived in instances of sexual assault, with men not believing or not listening to their refusal.

Communication not only plays a role in the events leading up to and during the assault, but also in the aftermath with regard to whom the assault survivor tells, or if she keeps the incident to herself. Numerous scholars have explored the post-assault communication patterns and argue that many survivors do not report the assault because they blame themselves, the perpetrator did not use strong physical force so they fear others will be skeptical about the assault (Lam & Roman, 2009; Burnett et al. 2009), or worry that others will blame them (Fisher, Cullen & Turner 2000). The notion of survivor blame helps explain how many survivors are ashamed of the attack and feel that others will not believe or sympathize with their experience, thus they remain silent. Disidentification, a reaction to stereotypes (Zenmore, Fiske & Kim, 2000), also helps explain why many women do not report their assault, because reporting it would indicate their victim status of being weak and powerless, thus confirming negative feminine stereotypes.

Studies on gendered communication.

To better understand the details regarding instances of sexual assault, I am looking at the communication patterns of men and women. Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the fact that communication is gendered in that men and women employ different language patterns. Payne (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of prior communication studies on television programming, public speeches, writing styles, conversations, and surveys. Payne (2001) found that females use more fillers, hedges, tentativeness, and interpersonal sensitivity in their conversations, and also appear more uncertain and less assertive as they interact with others, while males use more egocentric, controlling, direct, aggressive, and intense communication patterns. Mulac (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of 30 communication studies and determined that men's language is more direct while women's is more indirect and affective; communication patterns which are consistent with cultural expectations. Carli and Bukatko (2000) summarized other gender communication studies and found that females communicate more warmly, and are more responsive to others, while males communicate more dominantly, aggressively, and use status-asserting language. In addition to gendered differences in verbal communication patterns, there appear to be nonverbal differences as well. Hall (1998) reviewed other studies and determined that women smile more and are more sensitive to non-verbal cues than men. These meta-analyses and reviews of other studies are not as reliable as original data; however they indicate that communication patterns are different for men and women, as related to the gender differences in power and social roles.

Researchers have also conducted studies on the language and communication patterns of children and adults to determine if language is gendered, meaning there are different communication patterns for men and women. Johnstone (1993) conducted a qualitative study

regarding the personal experience narratives of 58 (33 women and 25 men ranging from the age of 14 to 75) white-middle class individuals living in Indiana and found that the stories the individuals told had gendered patterns. The narratives women told involved gaining social power through the community, included more details about people, and discussed themselves as powerless individuals who needed to work with others to overcome challenges. Men's narratives described more contests focusing on individual power with positive outcomes for themselves. Johnstone (1993) found that the personal experiences individuals described fit stereotypical gender norms of women as passive and communal, and men as powerful and independent, however this sample was not diverse or contemporary, making it more difficult to generalize the results.

In addition to the stories we communicate about ourselves, other studies have indicated that language is also gendered in group communication. Edelsky (1993) audio-recorded five committee meetings (of seven women and four men) within a university department to look at gender differences in group discussions. Edelsky (1993) reported that in all of the meetings, men's amount of time speaking were 1.25 to 4 times longer than women's when giving presentations or individual speeches, but in collaborative joint discussions, the speaking turns were more equal. These results indicate that men speak for longer periods of time when presenting information, but that communication times are more equal during a mutual discussion. Language and communication not only contain gender differences for adults, but also with children. Sheldon (1993) examined 12 triads of same-sex peer play of three to five year old predominantly white, middle-class children at a daycare in a large Midwestern city. During play, the boys were found to engage in more and longer conflicts, be more controlling, use language to assert dominance, use physical intimidation, and use threats of physical force, while the girls

communicated more collaboratively, used language to maintain relationships, and jointly constructed their play. These two studies indicate that individuals use language to fit and comply with appropriate gender norms. However, these studies are limited in their small sample sizes and lack of diversity within the sample.

Studies on voice and loss of voice.

Using the framework of patriarchy and dominance to understand gender communication as explained through the previous theoretical approaches, it is easy to see how women's voices are silenced in cases of sexual assault. Gilligan (1993) was one of the first theorists to discuss the notion of girls losing their voice in adolescence. Gilligan (1993) interviewed adolescents in all girls' schools, coeducational schools, and after school clubs, conducted a five year study of girls ages 7 to 17, interviewed 25 randomly selected college students in their sophomore year of college and again five years after graduation, interviewed 29 pregnant women ranging in age from 15-33 from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds who were considering an abortion, and interviewed a sample of 72 men and 72 women ranging in age from 6-60. Gilligan (1993) based her work on Erikson's theory (1969) of development, and through her studies and interviews found that adolescent girls proceed through identity development differently than boys, as girls have more of an emphasis placed on relationships and caring rather than the autonomy and independence of boys, and that these different developmental experiences influence boys and girls to have different understandings of their sense of self and voices. Gilligan (1993) found that when asked to define themselves, women referred to their relationships to others, while men defined themselves in separation of others. Gilligan (1993) began the discussion of gendered communication, although she did not use that phrase, by arguing that young women lose their voices in a patriarchal society. Despite using a variety of

diverse and different types of participants, Gilligan's research has not been replicated with more contemporary samples.

Several other studies have focused on the voices and communication styles of adolescent girls. Brown (1991) conducted open ended interviews with 100 girls, mostly white and middle class, ages 7-16, and found that girls develop a care-orientation towards maintaining and preserving relationships, often at the loss of voicing their own thoughts and feelings. Girls feel the pressure to be "nice" and "perfect" and accordingly self-silence themselves in an attempt to avoid conflict with others. Rogers (1993) conducted numerous studies over the course of five years at a private all girls' school, two coeducational public schools, coed acting workshops for adults, a group of 21 socioeconomically and ethnically diverse girls ranging from fourth through sixth grades, and a group of 12 adult women. Rogers (1993) found that in adolescence, girls try to create an image of always being nice and kind, and these girls self-silence themselves to maintain that image. These girls also reported feeling unable to know or name their thoughts and feelings clearly. Marshall and Aarvay (1999) interviewed 13 adolescents at a private school in Canada using the same fixed questions for all students, and found that boys self-silenced in situations to prevent their punishment or ridicule, and girls did not speak up in situations where they risked losing a relationship or for fear of being seen as mean. While these qualitative studies range in size and diversity of the samples, the studies are not as recent, making it hard to generalize for contemporary adolescents, indicating a need for such studies, especially as it relates to sexual assault.

Studies on printed communication.

Several studies have been conducted on the printed communication in magazines and newspapers regarding descriptions of sexual assaults and perceptions of women. Horvarth and

Hegarty (2011) studied whether sex offenders and "lads' mags" (British magazines targeted towards men) use the same language to describe women and sexual acts done to women. In the first experiment, men ranging from the ages of 18 to 46 were presented with a range of quotes originating from either men's magazines or from convicted rapists, and the researchers then gave the men incorrect information about the origin of the source of the quote. In the second experiment, a separate group of men and women between the ages of 19 and 30 were asked to rank the quotes in regards to the levels of being derogatory and were asked to identify the source of the quotes. The results of both experiments indicated that most of the participants could not distinguish the source of a description of women as coming from a magazine or from a convicted rapist. In the first study, the participants indicated that they identified themselves more with the language used by rapists than magazines when the source of the quotes was unknown. However, the men reported that they identified more with the quotes that were said to come from men's magazines rather than the convicted rapists, even if the source was incorrect. In the second experiment, men and women rated the descriptions from the men's magazines as being more derogatory than that of the comments made from convicted rapists. The results indicate that men's magazines may be normalizing hostile and violent sexist attitudes towards women. The limitations of this study are that the sample size was not clearly described, and the study was done using British men's magazines and British participants.

Benedict (1993) studied how the press covers sex crimes through examining newspaper articles on sexual assault. The results of this study indicated that the newspapers described female survivors of sexual assaults through words such as, "pretty, hysterical, attractive, flirtatious, bright, bubbly, petite, pert, vivacious, girl" (Benedict, 1993, p. 104). Benedict (1993) argued that this language of rape portrays women as sexual, childlike temptresses, and depicts

rape as pleasurable or comical and not as an act of violence. Benedict (1993) did not describe the extent or details of her research, making it hard to ascertain the validity of her study. The magazine study done by Horvath and Hegarty, in addition to Benedict's study on press coverage have implications on the role that written communication can play in perpetuating sexists attitudes and beliefs that allow for sexual assaults to be normalized.

Studies on nonverbal communication and cognitive schemas.

In addition to several studies done on the written aspects of communication, some studies have focused on nonverbal communication. These schemas and scripts are unspoken assumptions or beliefs that influence our actions and our interpretations of another's actions. A study done by Henningsen, Henningsen, and Valde (2006) examined 222 college students, pairing the participants with a cross-sex partner for a short conversation. Afterwards, the participants took a survey to assess their perceptions of pursuing a sexual relationship with their partner in the study. The study found that most men believed that their female conversation partner was more sexually interested in them than the women reported they were (Henningsen, Henningsen & Valde, 2006, p. 827).

There have been numerous statistical studies done surveying college students regarding some of their beliefs and perceptions of sexual relationships. Feigenbaum, Weinstein, and Rosen (1995) surveyed 1,825 college students and reported on a variety of measures that indicated men and women hold different schemas surrounding relationships: more women (66%) compared to men (31%) believed that sexual intercourse should occur only in a relationship based on love; more men (64%) than women (14%) reported that physical attraction was a good enough reason to have sexual intercourse; and, more men (64%) than women (32%) indicated that casual sex is acceptable (para. 25). Cohen and Shotland (1996) surveyed 242 college students and found that

men expected intercourse to occur earlier on in a relationship than women (after 8.14 dates compared to 11.86) and that more men (66%) than women (20%) indicated expecting sex in relationships without emotional closeness. Mongeau, Carey and Williams (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of studies based on questionnaires and self-reported measures to find that men are more likely than women to engage in casual sex, and men are also more likely to view a female initiated date as a sexual invitation. These studies, although varying in size and generalizability, indicate that men and women have different assumptions and meanings surrounding sex, which may lead to sexual misunderstandings. Again, quantitative methods simply explain the facts, and not the details. The decontextualization of surveys makes it hard to interpret specific events and behaviors without understanding the actual context.

Several quantitative studies have been done to better understand cognitive schemas with regard to how individuals communicate and perceive other's communication in heterosexual interactions. Sawyer, Desmond and Lucke (1993) examined sexual communication patterns of college students. In this study, 332 female and 214 male students completed a questionnaire measuring their perceptions of a variety of issues involving sexual communication, such as boundary issues, gender stereotypes, and nonverbal communication. The results of this study indicated that both men and women believed that men are more likely to want to have sexual intercourse after the first date, and that nonverbal cues are more accurate than verbal communication to indicate an individual's desire to engage in sexual activity. Women were more likely than men to indicate that they could accurately determine the sexual intentions of a person they had recently met, while men were more likely than women to believe that women are dishonest in communicating their sexual intentions as they often give misleading information.

This study indicated that men and women appear to have different sexual schemas, however it has not been recently replicated to determine if these results are still valid today.

Several other quantitative studies have been conducted regarding sexual scripts and how individuals experience and view dating, sex, and sexual aggression. Alksins, Desmarais, and Wood (1996) looked at whether men and women have different views about what constitutes a positive, negative, and typical dating situation. These researchers had 50 male and 70 female, mostly Caucasian, undergraduate students rate the likelihood of sexually suggestive and nonsexual events as good, bad, or typical dating contexts. This study found that for good and typical dates both men and women identified many of the same events as likely to occur, however women were more likely to consider sexually charged events as being a bad date, while men viewed such events as part of a good date. This study, although small in size and limited in diversity, indicates that men's dating expectations are more sexually orientated while women's are more focused on emotional intimacy.

Kahn, Mathie, and Torgler (1994) asked 205 female undergraduate students at James Madison University to answer some questions regarding their sexual experiences and then write a rape script after reading an article about a woman grocery shopping. These researchers found that participants who acknowledged themselves as being a rape survivor were more likely to have experienced rape involving physical restraint, attack, or force than the women who did not label themselves as a rape survivor but were survivors as evident by their answers to questions regarding experiences with sexual assault. The rape scripts for unacknowledged survivors were more likely to occur outdoors, with physical force, and had the survivor actively struggling and protesting. Most of the acknowledged rape survivors wrote about an acquaintance rape, and not a violent stranger rape. This study, although not contemporary and with a small non-diverse

sample, indicates that many women view rape as something done by a stranger that involves violence and these stereotypical rape scripts inhibit some survivors from labeling their own experience as assault.

Littleton and Axsom (2003) also studied rape and seduction scripts of students at a large Southeastern university to understand how sexual scripts are used to understand, interpret, and enact sexual relationships in a two part study. In the first part of the study, 42 women and 8 men described either a rape script or seduction script in an open-ended response. In the second part, 97 women and 33 men were given a questionnaire and had to indicate how much they thought the specific aspects of sexual scripts were either part of a typical rape or seduction script depending on which category they were assigned. The results of both parts of the study indicated that both rape and seduction scripts involved the man using manipulative tactics, such as flattering the woman, intoxicating her, or using verbal persuasion to engage the woman in sex. Both rape and seduction scripts involved the woman participating in sexual activities she may not have wanted. The major difference was that in the rape scripts, the man used overt violence and the woman actively resisted his advances. All of these studies on sexual scripts and schemas indicate that many individuals have traditional sexual scripts with the man as the initiator who has to overcome the woman's preliminary resistance and that rape occurs between strangers and is violent. This indicates that many college students are confused with how to label nonconsensual sexual activities, for many women do not label their nonconsensual experience as rape or sexual assault if there is not any physical violence or active resistance. These studies have several limitations in that they do not provide many details on the social identities or demographic information of the samples, therefore these studies may not have high generalizability across diverse college populations.

Studies on token resistance.

Mills and Granoff (1992) surveyed an ethnically diverse sample of 106 male and 113 female students at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. The results indicated that 28% of the women acknowledged they were survivors of rape and/or attempted rape, often reporting multiple victimizations; 17% of the men admitted to committing acts that qualified as sexual assault; 29% of the men admitted to making sexual advances even after a woman refused; and 51% of the men reported believing that women often say "no" to sex when they mean "yes" (token resistance), and that a woman must say "no" an average of three times before they believe she actually means it. Osman (2003) conducted a survey of 131 male undergraduates and found that men who do not believe in token resistance had a better understanding of rape as occurring when women say "no". Men who had stronger beliefs that women use token resistance did not consider "no" as a true sexual refusal and their classification of consensual sex did not differ if a woman gave explicit verbal consent compared to when she did not say anything at all. These studies, although limited in size and diversity, indicate that some men understand "no" means "no" and some men do not, and even consider silence as sexual consent, as some men seem to apply their own meaning to a woman's words, ignoring her true intent.

O'Sullivan and Allgeier (1994) studied 108 male and 199 female students, mostly white, with an average age of 19.5, at a midsized western college. They used a questionnaire to find the rates of students that use token resistance and discovered that more men (43%) than women (25%) recently had used token-resistance and they used it for the purpose of game-playing, concerns about their image, or for relational/ emotional concerns, and that 30.9% of all the students reported using token resistance in the past year within a dating situation. Sprecher, Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova, and Levitskaya (1994) also studied token resistance. They gave a

self-administered questionnaire to 970 students at five different universities: Illinois State University, Southern Methodist University, The University of Hawaii, Bradley University, and Millikin College. Out of all the participants, 63% were female, the average age was 20, and the students were mostly white, middle class. They found that 41% of the students reported using token resistance, again with more men (46%) than women (38%) using it. This study also discovered that more women (39% at The University of Hawaii, 59% at Illinois State, and 50% at Texas) than men (27% at The University of Hawaii, 34% at Illinois State, and 41% at Texas) reported consenting to unwanted sex. These two studies dispel the stereotypes that women use token resistance, as these results indicate that more men, not women, are using token resistance; however more women are saying "yes" to sexual acts when they mean "no". These studies have large diverse sample sizes; however have not been repeated with a contemporary sample, making it difficult to generalize to today's students.

Muehlenhard and Rogers (1998) also studied token resistance by having 65 female and 64 male students in the Introduction to Psychology class at the University of Kansas write narratives describing their own experiences of using token resistance. The results indicated that more men (82.5%) than women (67.7%) reported using token resistance, most often used in an ongoing relationship to serve a variety of purposes: moral concerns/ discomfort about sex (mostly used by women); adding excitement to a relationship; not wanting to be taken for granted; testing a partner's response; power and control (mostly used by men). However, this study also found that the majority of the students did not understand the definition of token resistance as some wrote about saying "no" and meaning "no", some wrote about changing their mind during the act, or saying "yes" but feeling reservations about it afterwards. This study had a small sample size, making it hard to generalize. However the results of this study matched the

results of other studies done on token resistance, indicating that most women are not saying "no" to sexual acts that they want, but that when women say "no", they usually mean "no".

Studies on the importance of clear communication.

Winslett and Gross (2008) examined the impact of verbalized sexual boundaries on college students' determination of when sexual contact should stop during a date rape scenario. The participants in this student were a diverse group of 80 men and 88 women from a Southeastern public university. Participants heard one of two audio recordings of a date rape vignette, one in which the woman in the date verbally establishes her sexual boundaries prior to any contact and the man agrees to the boundary, while in the other recording the members of the date did not discuss their sexual boundaries prior to any contact. The participants in both groups had to signal when during the recording the man should stop making sexual advances. The results of the study indicated that for the vignette in which the female articulated her sexual boundaries prior to sexual contact, participants indentified the inappropriateness of the male's behavior earlier and indicated he should stop earlier than the participants who listened to the recording in which sexual boundaries were not discussed. There were not any significant differences between the response time of the male and female participants. The participants in this study were also asked about their own sexual experiences. The results indicated that for the male participants, 16.3% reported committing at least one act of sexual aggression towards a woman; 12.5% reported participating in unwanted sexual contact; 10% reported engaging in sexual coercion; 2.5% reported completing rape; and, 1.3% reported attempting a rape. Out of the female participants, 59.3% reported experiencing at least one sexually aggressive experience; 50% reported engaging in unwanted sexual contact; 30.2% reported experiencing sexual coercion; 20.9% reported experiencing an unwanted rape; and 15.1% reported experiencing a

completed rape. The limitations of this study are the small sample size; it was limited to only one college and has not been replicated with a larger sample size.

Gross, Weed, and Lawson (1998) studied the perception of the intensity of a woman's sexual refusal behaviors in a date rape scenario through two different experiments with college students from a Southeastern university. In the first experiment, 22 men and 22 women listened to several 15 second segments of an audio recorded date rape in a random sequence without any context. In the second experiment, 22 men and 21 women listened to a date rape recording that was presented sequentially following a story-line. In both experiments, participants had to rate the desire level for the female to stop her date from making any further sexual advances. The results indicated that the male and female participants did not differ in their ratings of refusal intensity of the woman on the date. The results also indicated that the natural story-line sequence did not produce different perceptions of refusal intensity, as participants seemed to center the refusal intensity on the most immediate refusal without being impacted by past refusals. This study had a small non-diverse sample size, making the results hard to generalize. These quantitative methods do not explain the phenomenon in rich details within a specific context.

In sum, numerous theories on gendered communication help explain how men and women develop different communication styles based upon the gendered social roles and the sexual division of labor. In a patriarchal society, men have the power to have their voices heard and tend to dominate the communicative discourse while women are thought to have more passive communication styles. The studies reviewed on gendered communication indicate that communication patterns are indeed gendered as men and women communicate in different ways. Other communication studies indicate that some men believe women use token resistance and that a woman must say "no" multiple times before he believes she means it, however other

studies have dispelled the stereotype that women use token resistance as men actually report using this more than woman. Several other studies demonstrated that men and women have different nonverbal communication patterns in forms of the sexual scripts and assumptions of sex and dating. Women who have sexual scripts of stranger rape are less likely to acknowledge their own sexual victimization as they believe that rape should involve violence and force. The research and studies done on gendered communication help better explain some of the communication that is happening before, during, and after instances of sexual assault.

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is an issue that many college woman face. The literature surrounding sexual assault explains some theories on why some men commit assaults and some theories on how women survivors react to this traumatic event. Scholars have completed a wide range of studies on sexual assault, ranging from the prevalence of assault to students' attitudes towards it.

Theories on sexual assault.

There are multiple theories on why men are more likely to commit sexual assault than women, with most of the theories focusing on the premise that men are more sexual and have higher sexual desires than women. Schwartz and Rutter (2000) argued that there are three main theories regarding sexuality: according to the Biological theory, men have higher levels of testosterone which triggers their sexual interest and arousal; the Sociobiology/ Evolutionary theory states that humans have an innate impulse to pass on their genes through reproduction, therefore men seek to maximize their progeny by having as many partners as possible; and, the Social Construction theory of sexuality is based on the premise that social institutions and social interactions influence gendered norms, with men and women having different social definitions of sexuality. Schwartz and Rutter (2000) explained that an integrative approach combing all

three theories provides a more complete understanding of sexuality by examining how desire is both contextual and physical. These theories on sexuality can help explain the sexual assaults of women by looking at sexuality and rape in a social context.

Numerous theorists have studied social factors and cultures that are conducive to sexual assault. Schur (1997) indicated four specific social factors that contribute to the prevalence of sexual assault: depersonalization that leads to sexual indifference; the devaluation and sexual objectification of women; prevalent social inequality, and; a cultural definition of masculinity as one that embodies violence and aggression as well as a definition of femininity that includes submissiveness. Schur (1997) argued that sexual assault happens in contemporary American culture because of the occurrence of those factors. Sheffield (1997) studied sexual assault and theorized that gender roles contribute to the occurrences of sexual assault with females socialized in silence and passivity. This socialization contributes to women's further self-silencing following the assault when many survivors do not report the incident due to the fear that they will not be believed and that others will judge them due to the commonly held belief that women are responsible for the sexual behavior of men. Sheffield (1997) concluded that the, "right of men to control the female body is a cornerstone of patriarchy" (p. 110). Several theorists have indicated that our contemporary gender norms in a patriarchal society influence social conditions that are conducive to men committing sexual assault against women.

Trauma theory and sexual assault.

Burgess (1983) was one of the first scholars to describe rape as a form a trauma by explaining that rape trauma syndrome is the stress response pattern of a survivor after experiencing forced, non-consenting sexual activity. Burgess (1983) argued that rape and sexual assault is a traumatic assault against the body and sense of self. Moscarello (1991) described how

sexual assault induces symptoms of posttraumatic stress and for many survivors, evokes enduring post-traumatic psychological symptoms. During sexual assault, the survivor experiences terror, fear of death, and a sense of helplessness, leading to the development of typical posttraumatic symptoms of intrusive memories, the numbing of feelings, and an increased sense of fear or danger. These reactions can lead to long term symptoms of anxiety, depression, phobias, a sense of low self-worth, impaired sexual or social adjustment, and a loss of pleasure in life.

Moscarella (1991) described how there are several stages of trauma during instances of sexual assault: in the anticipatory/ threat phase, the individual comprehends the dangerousness of the situation and may employ defenses to avoid the assault, such as fighting back, or use coping strategies (freezing, surrendering, or dissociating) during the assault; the impact phase occurs when the sexual assault begins often lasting for several days or weeks, and is when survivors feel shock, disbelief, denial, fear and helplessness, as well as physical symptoms of headaches, nausea, bodily aches and fatigue; and, the final phase is the resolution, when the survivor can think of the sexual assault without anguish. Trauma theories indicate that sexual assault is a form of trauma and this helps explain some of the communication patterns women employ during and after the assault.

Trauma theory is useful to better understand the communication patterns and responses of women that happen during sexual assault, such as why many women do not physically fight their perpetrator to defend themselves. Allen (2001) studied trauma theory and argued that trauma is an event that is uncontrollable and unpredictable. Typical responses to trauma are often thought of as the fight-or-flight response in which individuals either fight or flee from the danger. However in many instances of trauma, individuals often feel helpless, not in control of the

situation and unable to escape, therefore the reaction to fight or flee is deemed useless or dangerous. In such situations, many individuals tend to freeze and use passive defenses. Freezing is an unconditioned response to danger as a way to cope with the stress and is linked to dissociation, feeling detached from the body and disengaged from the environment, otherwise understood as a mental flight when a physical flight is not possible. Herman (1997), also a trauma scholar, argued that when a person is powerless and feels as if any form of resistance is pointless, surrendering is a common defense, such as during sexual assault. She also theorized that in order to escape accountability for his crimes, perpetrators promote secrecy and silencing in their victims. Women who experience assault rarely fight back, and are more likely to use passive defenses of freezing (Nijenhuis, Vanderlinden, & Spinhoven, 1998). These theories on trauma indicate that freezing and not fighting back is a typical response to a situation where one feels disempowered and out of control.

Studies on sexual assault.

In addition to theories on trauma and sexual assault, there have been numerous studies that help better explain the phenomenon. Basow and Minieri (2011) studied how the perceptions of date rape is applied to Sexual Social Exchange theory, the premise that female sexuality has an exchange value, as linked to the notion of traditional dating with the man paying for the date and the woman reciprocating with sexual favors. The participants in this study were 188 students, 60 men and 128 women, from a small private liberal arts college in the Northeast United States. The students were given one of four written date rape scenarios varying with the cost of the date and who paid for the date. Participants were asked to determine the sexual expectations of both members of the date, the degree of blame and responsibility assigned to the man and the woman for unwanted sexual acts, and the justifiability of the forced sexual

interaction. The results of this study indicated that when the man paid for an expensive date, male participants agreed more than female participants that both characters should have expected sexual intercourse, and when the cost of an inexpensive date were split, both male and female participants assigned the most blame to the perpetrator, while more female participants than males believed that sexual expectations were not warranted. While male participants assigned less blame to the perpetrators in all the scenarios than did female participants, the level of the participants' rape myth acceptance was the highest predicator of rape perceptions.

Earnshaw, Pitpitan, and Chaudoir (2011) studied how emotions, attitudes and attributions of fault predict students' responses to rape. In this study, 105 female and 74 male college students from the University of Connecticut read a short account of a female student's description of being raped and then answered some questions regarding their perceptions of and reactions to the account. The results of the study indicated that the female participants scored higher on feminist beliefs, rates of fear and anger, desire to engage in anti-rape action, and attributing fault to society, while they scored lower than the male participants on rape myth acceptance attitudes and attributing the fault to the rape survivor. There were not any differences among the male and female participants for reports on the likelihood of helping the survivor. The desire to participate in anti-rape collective attitude was best predicted by gender, feminist beliefs, rape myth acceptance, attributions of fault to society, and feelings of fear. The limitations of this study included that the rape scenario may not be typical for all college students and the study was small with limited diversity.

Studies on women and sexual assault.

Studies conducted through interviews and surveys using quantitative methods of fixed questions and samples have tried to determine rates of sexual assault among college women. The

first survey of this kind was completed in 1957 by Kirkpatrick and Kanin who found that 55.7% of the 291 college women they surveyed had experienced forced sexual activity (p. 53). Since then, few other studies have been done on this issue. The study that is most commonly cited in current articles dates back to 1987, reporting that 53.7% of the 3,187 college women surveyed had experienced unwanted sexual contact (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987, p. 166). Humphrey and White (2000) surveyed 1,569 women and found that from the time of high school through the end of their four years of college, 69.8% of them had been sexually assaulted, with 31.3% of women being sexually assaulted in their first year of college, 26.8% in the second year of college, 25.7% in their third year of college, and 24.2% in their fourth year (p. 422). While this specific data was not clear in regards to the total number of women sexually assaulted just during their college experiences, as some may have been assaulted multiple times, it is evident that this is an issue impacting a large number of women.

Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, and McAuslan (1996) surveyed 1160 economically and ethnically diverse women representative of students in a large urban university to examine risk factors for sexual assault. They found that over half of the women surveyed, 59%, had experienced a form of sexual assault and 95% of those assaults were committed by someone the woman knew and almost half, 46%, of the assaults involved the man, woman, or both consuming alcohol. These studies, although not very current, indicate the high prevalence of sexual assault of college women demonstrating a need to further understand this phenomenon. For the most part, these surveys had large sample sizes, however it is not clear how diverse the samples were and surveys also make it difficult to interpret the specific events and behaviors within the socio-historical context. Therefore, while these studies have high generalizability due to the structured

questions and large sample size, they do not describe what is actually happening before, during, and after instances of sexual assault.

Lloyd and Emery (2000) conducted in depth semi-structured interviews with 40 predominantly European-American, middle-class, single women from the ages of 18-38, in hopes of uncovering the meanings female survivors apply to understanding their experience of sexual assault. These researchers concluded that many women experienced shock and difficulty with labeling the incident as assault and felt like sexual aggression was a typical part of dating. The survivors experienced silencing at all stages of the assault, from being denied a voice during the process and afterwards when they did not share the assault with others due to shame, self-blame, ignorance of labeling it as assault, or inexperience with how to deal with such an issue. The study also found that many of the survivors experienced long term side effects following the assault such as insomnia, withdrawal from family and friends, feelings of worthlessness, anger and rage, repression of the event and depression. This qualitative study closely examined the stories of survivors following their sexual assault; however this sample had limited diversity and were not fully representative of the contemporary college population.

Kelley, Weathers, McDevitt-Murphy, Eakin and Flood (2009) compared women's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, symptom patterns in three types of trauma: sexual assault, motor vehicle accidents and a sudden loss of loved one. The researchers collected data over the course of four years on 1,059 female undergraduates attending a large Southeastern public university who had experienced a traumatic event. The research indicated that sexual assault is associated with a greater risk for developing a PTSD diagnosis, and with higher levels of PTSD symptom severity compared to the other types of trauma. Zinzow, Resnick, McCauley, Amstadter, Ruggiero, and Kilpatrick (2010) conducted a qualitative study through phone

interviews from a national sample of 2,000 college women from 253 colleges, and 47 different states, to assess risks for depression and PTSD following experiences of forcible rape, incapacitated rape (when the survivor was under the influence of substances), and drug-alcohol facilitated rape (when the perpetrator deliberately induced drugs or alcohol to incapacitate the survivor). Among the woman in the sample, 18% of them met the criteria of PTSD, 16% met the criteria for depression, 4.2% reported a history of incapacitated rape, 2.7% reported a history of drug-alcohol facilitated rape, 8.7% reported a history of forcible rape and 4.8% reported multiple rape experiences. The results of this study indicated that all three forms of rape were associated with increased risk for PTSD, and depression. A history of forcible rape was linked to the highest risk for PTSD and depression; however a history of the other types of rape also increased a woman's risk for developing these disorders by two to four times compared to women without a rape history. These studies, although large in size and contemporary, did not contain a very diverse sample.

Several studies have been conducted on the feelings of college women regarding sexual assault, their fear of it, and their desire to seek help. Hilinski (2010) studied college women's fear of rape and sexual assault. A sample of 224 college women participated in this study through completing an internet survey identifying their levels of fear of sexual assault, their victimization experiences, their perceived risk, and perceptions of crime. The results of this study indicated that the self-identified perceived risk of rape and crime predicated the female participants' fear of rape, even across a variety of temporal situations and varied relationships between the perpetrator and survivor. Amstadter, Zinzow, McCauley, Strachan, Ruggiero, Resnick, and Kilpatrick (2010) studied emotional help seeking behaviors among female college student rape survivors. A national college sample of 228 female students with a history of rape were

interviewed to determine if they ever sought help for emotional problems and what type of services (medical, religious, or mental health) they utilized. The results of this study indicated that 52% of the survivors obtained help, and of those 93% went to a mental health professional, 48% went to a medical doctor, and 14% obtained help from a religious figure. Experiencing PTSD symptoms were directly related to help survivors' help-seeking behaviors. These contemporary studies had small sample sizes, and did not fully address all the factors that might impact a woman's reaction to sexual assault.

Other researchers have studied why some women do not acknowledge or label their experience as sexual assault and the role that rape myths play in that process. Bondurant (2001) examined the individual, situational, and social predictors of university women acknowledging their rape experience. The 109 women who had survived a rape as assessed by a sexual experience survey given to an Introduction to Psychology class at a mid-sized Southeastern university, were given a questionnaire. This study concluded that the majority of the women, 64%, did not acknowledge their experience as rape and that those who did acknowledge it as rape were more likely to report experiencing higher levels of violence and more verbal or physical resistance during the rape. These self-identified survivors were also more likely to have acquaintance rape sexual scripts than stranger rape scripts. Peterson and Muehlenhard (2004) also looked at women's acknowledgement of their rape by surveying 86 women, from the University of Kansas in the Introduction to Psychology class, whose sexual experiences met the legal definition of rape. These participants described their experience, indicated how they labeled their experience and completed the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. These researchers found that the women who accepted rape myths, such as the belief that rape is conducted by strangers, involves force, the victim actively resists, and the victim is left with bruises or injuries,

were less likely to acknowledge their unwanted intercourse as rape. These studies, although small in size and with limited diversity, indicate that many women do not acknowledge or label their nonconsensual experience as sexual assault due to the pervasive discourse that indicates sexual assault is violent and that the survivor must fight back for it to be called rape.

Van Wie and Gross (1995) also examined how women perceive date rape and token resistance. They studied 101 white female students with an average age of 20, at a Southeastern university. The students were randomly assigned to one of four condition groups (perceived resistance to sex with genital contact, no resistance to sex with genital contact, perceived resistance to sex without genital contact, and no resistance to sex without genital contact). The participants in these groups were told that the couple had gone on five dates, and on the last date the man handled the woman's breast or genitals, depending on the condition group, and participants were told the woman did not object or initially objected but eventually stopped resisting this contact, again depending on the condition group. The students then listened to an audio-taped date rape and were told to signal when the man should refrain from any more sexual contact. The results indicated that the participants who had been told on the previous date the woman initially resisted but then gave in, otherwise known as token resistance, took longer to signal when the man should stop his sexual advancements (141.96 seconds for genital contact and 139.24 with breast contact) than participants who had been told the woman did not resist on the previous date (122.5 seconds with genital contact and 119.67 seconds with breast contact). This study, although small in sample and limited in diversity, indicated that women who knew token resistance had been used previously were more hesitant to stop further unwanted sexual contact.

Studies on men and sexual assault.

While some studies have looked at sexual assault survivors, others have examined male perpetrators. Lisak and Miller (2002) surveyed 1,882 students at a medium sized commuter university with a diverse student population in terms of age and ethnicity. They offered men a small amount of money, $3-4, to participate in a study described as childhood experiences and adult functioning. The results of this study indicated that 6.4% of the men met the criteria for committing rape/ attempted rape, with an average of 5.8 rapes each and for a total of 1,225 individual acts of interpersonal violence including rape, battery, child abuse, and sexual abuse. Out of those men meeting the criteria for rape, 80.8% of them reported raping women who were under the influence of drugs or alcohol, 17.5% of them reported using threats or overt force in attempted rapes, 9.2% of them reported using threats or force in raping women, and 10% reported using threats or over force to coerce oral sex (Lisak & Miller, 2002, p. 78). While this study was done with a large diverse sample, it has not been replicated in recent years to assess its validity; however it indicates that many rapists are going undetected on college campuses committing multiple assaults and other forms of interpersonal violence.

Voller and Long (2010) conducted a study on examining personality traits of male perpetrators of sexual assault, looking at Neuroticism (anxiety, anger, impulsivity), Extraversion (warmth, assertiveness, positive emotions), Openness (open to experiences, ideas, and values), Agreeableness (altruism, sympathy and trust), and Conscientiousness (order, achievement-striving, self-discipline). A diverse sample of 521 college men completed an internet survey on their personality inventory and sexual experiences. Of the men, 7.29% reported committing rape and 5.95% reported committing sexual assault. The results indicated that rape perpetrators reported lower amounts of Extraversion compared to non-perpetrators and lower amounts of

Agreeableness and Conscientiousness compared to sexual assault perpetrators and non-perpetrators. Rape perpetrators also reported lower levels of warmth, positive emotions, altruism, competence, dutifulness and tender-mindedness, as well as higher amounts of egotism. Sexual assault perpetrators displayed more similar personality types to non-perpetrators than to rape perpetrators, with the only difference was that sexual assault perpetrators displayed higher levels of depression than non-perpetrators. The limitations of the study were the small sample size and that the measures were self-reported. O'Sullivan (1993) studied group sexual assaults on college campuses and found that "the majority of gang rapes were perpetrated by fraternity men. Men who don't like to live around women, who have difficulty accepting women as equals and relating to them, may be more likely than other men to choose to join a fraternity" (p. 23). O'Sullivan (1993) also found that athletes, particularly basketball, football, lacrosse and rugby players, were also more likely to commit sexual assaults. O'Sullivan (1993) argued that men in fraternities and in athletics participated in these highly masculinized sub-cultures that may foster sexual aggression. This study did not provide many details on the sample demographics, making it hard to replicate the study and ascertain its validity. Einschlag (2008) described his own personal experiences of being on a Division III basketball team. Einschlag (2008) reported that he found that athletic sub-culture of competitive sports as hyper-masculine, where women are objectified and sexist attitudes are dominant. These studies all had small sample sizes, making the results hard to generalize across all college men.

Studies on sexual assault at colleges.

There have been several extensive qualitative studies done on sexual assaults on college campuses. Bohmer and Parrot (1993) interviewed a wide range of people, from administrators, survivors, to parents and attorneys of survivors involved with the issue of sexual assault on

college campuses, and looked at campus sexual assault reports from 50 different types of colleges in all regions of the country. Their research indicates that a typical instance of sexual assault on campus includes women drinking at a party or playing drinking games, who are then most commonly assaulted by a fraternity brother or an athlete. This study found that many cases of sexual assault are not brought to trial or reported to campus authorities, and some colleges will even charge a female survivor with underage drinking if she presses charges for the assault with the campus judicial process. Many of the survivors interviewed reported feeling blamed by campus police, administrators, and medical personal for their assault. Bohmer and Parrot's (1993) research also demonstrated numerous faults in the way many colleges handled cases of sexual assault either by attempting to diminish the severity or occurrence of such crimes, by ignoring the plight of the survivors, or by not punishing the perpetrators despite clear and convincing evidence the attack occurred. The study also concluded that many students, hall residents, faculty, and staff reported not knowing how to properly handle instances of sexual assault. This was a large study with a diverse sample, although not very contemporary, thus making the results hard to generalize to today's college students.

The Center for Public Integrity (2010) conducted a stratified random sample to survey 152 crisis service clinics on or near college campuses across the country, interviewed 50 current and former college student survivors of sexual assault, interviewed students accused of sexual assault, and interviewed dozens of college administrators, judicial hearing officers, victim advocates, and sexual assault scholars and lawyers, as well as examined ten years of the database of complaints filed with the Department of Education in regards to the sexual assault of college students. The results of this study indicated that there is a culture of silence surrounding sexual assault on college campuses with many survivors not reporting their cases, and that the 33% of

the survivors that do report their cases indicated that the administration discouraged them from filing sexual assault complaints. Over 20% of the students who brought their case to college disciplinary proceedings experienced confidentiality edicts with the occasional threat of punishment if the survivors were to disclose information about their case and 50% of the students interviewed reported being unable to obtain criminal charges and were forced to use school-run disciplinary proceedings that resulted in light or no punishment for the alleged perpetrator (Witkin & Donald, 2010). From this study, Lombardi (2010) reported that many college administrators viewed sexual assault as negative publicity that may result in decreased enrollment and/or tarnished reputations, and that a lack of outside scrutiny on college disciplinary hearings results in a lack of accountability for colleges. From the results of this study, Jones (2010) concluded that the college counselors surveyed indicated that institutional barriers on campuses acted as the largest deterrent in discouraging survivors to pursue sexual assault complaints and that the colleges do not spend enough time educating students on how to respond to friends and peers who have been sexually assaulted.

Lombardi and Jones (2010) reported that this investigation by The Center for Public Integrity found that limitations and loopholes, as well as confusions over the definition of sexual assault led to problems in colleges accurately reporting the numbers of sexual assaults, as 49 out of 58 crisis service clinics gave higher figures, sometimes as much as twice the amount, of sexual assaults than those given by the colleges. The average ranking of the response of their local college to sexual assault survivors by the 141 surveyed clinics was 3.5 on a 1-5 scale, with 1 as poor and 5 excellent. Using the information obtained on the database of sexual assault proceedings from 130 colleges and universities Lombardi (2010) concluded that colleges only expelled 18% of male perpetrators found guilty for sexual assault; instead the common discipline

consisted of suspension, probation, a letter of apology, and a research paper on sexual assault or attending classes on assault. This data matched the interviews of survivors, as over 50% of them claimed their perpetrator was found guilty during disciplinary hearings but only four of the survivors said their perpetrator was expelled. This study of a contemporary, large, and diverse sample indicates that sexual assault continues to occur at high rates on college campuses and that many colleges have flaws in the way the cases are handled.

Several other qualitative studies have examined instances of sexual assault with smaller sample sizes. Pratt (2011) examined sexual assault at Colby College and interviewed 11 sexual assault survivors as well as over 30 students, faculty and staff. Pratt found that sexual assault is silenced at Colby College in the sense that the community and administration dismiss survivors by not punishing the perpetrators despite clear convincing evidence and question the accuracy of the survivors' stories, as well as cover up the prevalence of such violence. This study also concluded that many of the survivors felt extensive shame regarding their assault, with the fear of being blamed for what happened to them. Only four out of the eleven survivors interviewed reported their assault to school authorities and out of those, only one survivor was able to successfully have her perpetrator punished for the assault. Although this study had a small sample, the results matched the research done by previous studies.

Phillips (2000) interviewed 30 women at a small progressive liberal arts college that is more racially and socioeconomically diverse than most private schools. Even though the study initially was not targeted towards sexual assault survivors, Phillips found that 27 out of the 30 women interviewed met the classification of having been sexually assaulted, however only two of these women labeled their own experience as sexual assault because many of the women did not want to think of themselves as a victim that is powerless, as they would rather view

themselves as a strong woman who is responsible for her own fate. The results of this qualitative study indicated that most of the women who had been assaulted attributed the experience to their own behavior and that many of the women had internalized messages that, "privilege male pleasure, that stress the importance of preserving relationships, and that normalize a certain amount of male aggression in hetero-sexual encounters" (Phillips, 2000, p. 21). Phillips (2000) found that many of the women she interviewed reported saying "yes" to sexual acts when they wanted to say "no" because of the pressure to be seen as a "good" woman that is pleasing and subordinate to men. Phillips (2000) reported that other common discourses held by these women were the belief that normal male hetero-sexuality is aggressive, therefore coercion or manipulation is viewed as typical male behavior, and the belief that "real" sexual assault survivors were victimized through physical threat or violence and did everything they could to fight back to prevent their victimization. Phillips (2000) noticed that the loss of women's voices occurred during the attack when the women would not or could not speak up to voice their refusal or hurt, and also after the attack when women would not or could not express what happened to them. Both of these studies, although smaller and less diverse, match some of the results found in the research done by The Center for Public Integrity.

Studies on culture and sexual assault.

Additional studies have focused on the characteristics of societies where sexual assault against women is prevalent. Sanday (1997) looked at research done on 156 tribal societies from the years 1750 B.C. to the late 1960's ranging in location from Africa, the Mediterranean, Eurasia, Pacifica, North America, South America, and Central America, to examine rape prone and rape free societies. Sanday (1997) found that 47% of the tribes could be classified as rape prone, meaning that the sexual assault of women is culturally allowable or ignored, with rape

linked to male dominance; 18% of the tribes were classified as rape free, with the belief of sexual equality and complimentary sexes; and, 35% of the tribes were classified as intermediate between rape prone and rape free. Sanday (1997) concluded that "rape is the playing out of a socio-cultural script in which the expression of personhood for males is direct by, among other things, interpersonal violence and an ideology of toughness" (p. 65). Anderson, Cooper, and Okamura (1997) completed a meta-analysis of 72 studies and found that men, older people, and people from lower socioeconomic classes, in addition to people who held traditional gender role beliefs, felt the need for power and dominance, and held conservative political beliefs were more accepting of rape. These studies although not as reliable as original data or original research, indicated that certain social characteristics and social beliefs may influence how men view or accept rape.

To summarize, the various theories on sexuality and the social factors conducive to sexual violence help explain sexual assault. Kaufman (1997) reported that there is, "a social context to every individual act of violence" (p. 33). Trauma theories are helpful to understand the communication patterns that happen before and during the attack, as freezing is a common reaction to trauma when one feels disempowered and out of control. The studies done on sexual assault indicate that a large number of college women are survivors of assault, and that a small number of men report committing assaults, but have committed multiple offenses each. The studies done on sexual assault on college campuses shared some similar themes of the silencing of assault and indicated that colleges have flaws in their response to handling instances of assault. This literature on sexual assault helps explain some of the phenomenon of sexual assaults happening on college campuses.

Conclusions about the Literature

The literature reviewed helps inform the ways that gendered communication can play a role in sexual assaults on college campuses. Gender socialization theories explain the ways that individuals learn to behave in more gender stereotypical ways through interactions with others. Communication theories explain that communication is gendered due to the internalization of gender social roles and the history of patriarchal power. Gender also is played out in heterosexual interactions, as theories surrounding sexual schemas explain how men and women shape their own actions, communications, and perceptions of another's behaviors or words. Trauma theory helps describe the communication that occurs during the assault when many women tend to freeze and not fight back verbally or physically. Theories on sexuality help explain why this phenomenon occurs. Combing all these theories together clarifies how gendered communication patterns in which women are more passive and men are dominant, work with our gendered schemas to influence our actions, words, and perceptions of another person's actions and words. These theories help to inform the studies completed regarding gendered communication patterns impacting instances of sexual assault; however these individual theories are limited in that alone they do not explain the complicated array of factors that are involved in instances of sexual assault.

The literature reviewed had several weaknesses and strengths. The weaknesses include the fact that the literature did not fully address the communication patterns employed before, during, and after instances of sexual assault. Most of these studies and theories examined did not address a diverse range of social identities, such as race or socioeconomic class. The individual studies looked at specific aspects of sexual assault but did not examine the larger cumulative

factors that play out before, during, and after sexual assault. There also appears to be a paucity of current studies regarding the instances of sexual assault on college campuses.

The quantitative studies reviewed focused more on measuring beliefs, leaving a void in the understanding of what really happens with regard to the communication surrounding instances of sexual assault. Many of the studies had biases in the methodology, represented by a dearth of details on the demographics of the participants and descriptions of how the data was obtained and analyzed. Many of the studies had omissions in that the researchers did not state their own background or identities that might influence the interpretation of their findings. The strengths of the literature examined include the fact that it portrayed a broad range of topics that help inform a basic understanding of assault and communication. However not many of the studies have really explored the topic using qualitative methods, indicating a need for such research.

The literature reviewed indicates that verbal and nonverbal gendered communication appears to play a role in sexual assault. The literature suggests that women have more passive voices that are silenced, muted, or ignored. Nonverbal gendered communication also appears to play a role in sexual assault as men and women employ sexual schemas that are used to interpret another's words and actions, in addition to influencing their own behaviors. The literature reviewed demonstrates a need for more studies conducted on the gendered communication patterns of men and women that pertain to instances of sexual assault.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The research question for this study was: Are there gendered communication patterns of young men and women, prior to, during, and after incidents of heterosexual sexual assault on NESCAC colleges, and if so, what are those patterns? I studied NESCAC college campuses due to my personal experiences and greater familiarity with these schools. I have lived in New England all my life and completed my undergraduate studies at Colby College. As a member of the Colby crew team, I competed against other NESCAC schools during our regattas.

To uncover the gendered communication patterns surrounding instances of sexual assault on NESCAC campuses, I set out to complete an exploratory qualitative study by conducting semi-structured phone interviews with mental health and sexual assault professionals who work at those 11 colleges (Amherst, Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, Connecticut College, Hamilton, Middlebury, Trinity, Tufts, Wesleyan, and Williams). I only was able to obtain interviews from eight of those schools as Bowdoin, Tufts, and Williams refused to participate in the study. I interviewed nine professionals from the remaining eight schools.

A qualitative method allowed me to obtain the rich details of the communication patterns to gain a better understanding of the subjective experiences and meanings of this phenomenon. As my study focused on voices and communication, a qualitative study of narrative research with data in the form of words, provided me with the most vivid details of this phenomenon. I asked

open-ended questions to elicit responses that provided rich, clear details on the communication patterns surrounding sexual assault, and I asked several closed-ended questions to further clarify the details of this phenomenon. I used a semi-structured approach with an interview guide containing an outlined list of topics I discussed with my participants (please refer to Appendix C a copy of this guide). This approach gave me the flexibility to adapt the style of the interview as needed to follow the participant's insight, and not limit the possible responses I heard, while making sure I covered the same topics during each interview.

Sample

I conducted brief 30-45 minute audio-recorded phone interviews with mental health and sexual assault professionals working at these eight NESCAC colleges. These participants came from a non-probability, non-random purposive sample picked for their expert ability to provide a deeper understanding of the communication patterns surrounding instances of sexual assault. My participants were not randomly selected as I had a specific set of criteria I looked for to choose my participants. The participants I interviewed were not representative of all mental health and sexual assault professionals working at all colleges, as I interviewed only individuals within specific settings and I did not take diversity into account when I was recruiting my participants; however my participants all had a strong expert understanding of sexual assault on their college campuses. I interviewed mental health and sexual assault professionals because they were aware of some instances of sexual assault on their college campuses and could report on the experiences of multiple survivors and perpetrators. While interviewing actual survivors and perpetrators would have provided even clearer details on the communication patterns surrounding sexual assault, due to my own student status and because the topic is so sensitive and emotional, I did not want to risk re-traumatizing any students in discussing this topic.

My sampling frame was the counselors listed in the NESCAC counseling centers and the professionals who deal with sexual assault. My study population included mental health and sexual assault professionals within the 11 NESCAC colleges that met my criteria. These participants were all professionals who have worked with women who have been sexually assaulted and men who have been perpetrators of sexual assault at these specific colleges. The exclusion criterion included individuals who did not have any experience working with sexual assault at these 11 college communities.

I interviewed nine participants. My participants ranged in age from 30 to 65. Seven of my participants identified their race/ ethnicity as White/ Caucasian, one identified as Black, and one identified as Latina. I interviewed eight females and one male.

Ethics and Safeguards

In order to protect my participants, I first had to gain approval from the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee to conduct this research (please refer to Appendix A for my HSR approval letter). I then contacted an administrative assistant or the director at each of the counseling centers to ask if I needed to obtain approval from their Institutional Review Board, IRB, at their college prior to conducting my research. None of the colleges required going through their IRB, however I did have to directly contact an IRB member at one of the schools and submit my approval form from Smith. Since I was interviewing professionals and not students, I was able to conduct my research without having to apply to the research committee at each of the colleges.

Upon contacting my participants and gaining their approval to participate in this study, I explained to them the purpose of this project and the nature, benefits and risks of their participation. I informed the participants that they would not be financially compensated for their

time, however they may benefit from their participation by gaining a better understanding of instances of sexual assault that will not only assist the students at their colleges, but also will help other mental health workers in dealing with instances of sexual assault. While this study had minimal risks, I informed the participants of the potential of having emotional distress in talking about the sensitive topic of sexual assault.

I sent my participants two copies of the informed consent form and asked them to sign one copy and send it back to me and had them keep the second copy for their own records (please refer to Appendix B for a copy of this form). I informed the participants that this interview was voluntary and that they could skip a question, choose not to answer a question, or withdraw from the interview at any time during the interview or up until April 30, 2012 and I would then destroy all of their information. In order to maintain confidentiality, I asked that the mental health and sexual assault professionals not name or give away any identifiable information of their own clients.

All of my interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants and I transcribed them myself. To ensure confidentiality as mandated by Federal Guidelines, I removed and/or disguised all identifying information from my transcriptions and other documents pertaining to my research. All documents related to my research were password protected on my laptop and I will store all information for at least three years in a secured location, after which all information will be destroyed if it is no longer needed.

Data Collection

I found my sample by going to the website of each of the NESCAC colleges and looking up the contact information for the counseling center. After determining if I needed IRB approval from their college, and gaining approval from the director of the counseling center, I directly

contacted all of the mental health and sexual assault professionals by email, with a follow up phone call if necessary.

I conducted 30 minute phone interviews in order to gain a better understanding of the rich details surrounding the gendered communication patterns of sexual assaults. As I did the interviews over the phone, I was able to schedule them at a time convenient to the participants. Phone interviews have several drawbacks in that I was not able to use any non-verbal communication such as body language, head nods, or smiles to encourage the participants to continue speaking and I was not able to observe the participants as they spoke. Also due to the limited free time of these professionals with their busy schedules, I tried to limit my interviews to 30 minutes. Taking these factors into consideration, I emailed my participants about the nature of the study so they had time to process their thoughts and think about the trends they have experienced in working with sexual assault survivors and perpetrators prior to the interview. This advanced planning of their responses allowed for better use of our limited time for the interview, as the participants did not have to spend as much time thinking before responding to my questions.

At the start of the interview, I asked the participants some basic demographic data (race, age, gender, years of experience, and licensure) to provide a context for understanding their interpretations of working with issues of sexual assault.

I used a semi-structured interview approach (please refer to Appendix C for a copy of the complete interview guide) that covered the following topics:

- What did the female survivors report on their interactions or communications with the perpetrator prior to the assault?

- What did the female survivors report on their interactions or communications with the perpetrator during the assault?
- What did the female survivors report on their experiences after the assault regarding their disclosure or acknowledgment of the attack?
- What did the male perpetrators report on how they interacted or communicated with the survivor prior to the assault?
- What did the male perpetrators report on how they interacted or communicated with the survivor during the assault?
- What did the male perpetrators report on their experiences in regards to their communication after the assault?

Upon completion of my interviews, I thanked my participants for their time. In addition to audio recording the phone calls, I took notes regarding some of the main themes that were discussed. These notes helped me remember my own thoughts and initial reflections of the interview. When I transcribed and then analyzed my data, I used my field notes to help me come up with some of my codes.

Data Analysis

My analysis of the interviews focused on summarizing and describing the meanings of my participants' responses. I analyzed my data manually. Because my data was recorded as a flow of conversation, the data was minimally structured. I transcribed the interviews in full to allow for a deeper analysis. I listened to the interviews, and then read the transcribed interviews numerous times to start coming up with some key themes.

For my content analysis, I transformed some of my data into quantitative information by looking at the number of participants who described similar patterns and grouped my data together in that way. I analyzed the demographic information using quantitative methods to indicate the percentages of the various social demographics of my participants. I also used a qualitative thematic content analysis by looking at the patterns and relationships coming out of the interviews. I coded my interviews using open thematic coding through naming, categorizing, and comparing the details that emerged in a close analysis of the interviews. I looked at both the manifest content, what was clearly being said, and the latent content, the underlying tones and meanings. I used memoing to write notes to myself regarding the meaning of the code labels, theoretical thoughts, and notes on data collection issues. All of my data analysis came directly out of the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

This study was conducted to examine if there are gendered communication patterns surrounding instances of heterosexual sexual assault on NESCAC college campuses, and if so, what they are. As the current literature addresses both gendered communication and sexual assault, this study expands the existing literature to explicitly explore the communication around sexual assault on these specific college campuses.

This chapter presents data collected from phone interviews with nine mental health and sexual assault professionals who work at eight of the eleven NESCAC college campuses. Williams, Tufts, and Bowdoin refused to participate in the study citing that they would feel uncomfortable discussing this topic as they promise students confidentiality, despite being informed that my study was not looking at specific student cases and therefore would not breach any violations of confidentiality.

I collected demographic information from the participants pertaining to their personal social identities (age, race, and gender), years of experience in the mental health field, years at their current place of employment, their position at their place of employment, and their license or degree. My interview questions explored the following themes: basic information about the college counseling centers and resources for sexual assault; the communication patterns or interactions reported by female survivors and male perpetrators prior to the assault; the

communication patterns or interactions reported by female survivors and male perpetrators during the assault; the communication patterns or interactions reported by female survivors and male perpetrators after the assault with regard to both acknowledgements of, and reporting; and final reflections on the communication patterns.

My hypothesis for this study was that gendered communication patterns occur before, during, and after instances of sexual assault on NESCAC college campuses in that women's voices are muted, silenced, or ignored and that men's voices are controlling in the communication prior to, during, and after, instances of sexual assault. I anticipated that women's voices are muted in that they are not able to speak up and verbalize a "no" before and during the attack, as well as being unable to acknowledge or disclose the attack to themselves and others. I suspect that women's voices are being silenced by male perpetrators during the attack who tell them to be quiet, and also are silenced after the attack by peers and communities that either disbelieve or minimize the survivor's disclosure. I also hypothesized that the women's voices are ignored during the assault when they do say "no" but the male perpetrator does not listen to her. I anticipated that the men's communications before, during, and after the assault would be ones of dominance, control, and assertiveness. I suspected that gendered communication plays a role in sexual assault, for if women were saying, or were able to say "no", and men listened to them then there would not be so many instances of assault.

Demographic Information

I interviewed nine mental health and sexual assault professionals at eight different colleges. My participants ranged in age from 30 to 65, with an average age of 51. Seven of my participants identified their race/ ethnicity as White/ Caucasian, one identified as Black, and one identified as Latina. I interviewed eight female professionals and one male. Their years of

experience in the mental health field ranged from 8 to 25, with an average of 19 years. My participants had worked at their current place of employment from 1 year to 25 years, with an average of 15 years. I interviewed a variety of professionals at these colleges: three directors of the counseling center, one nurse, two sexual assault coordinators, and three counselors. The participants had a variety of licenses, ranging from three psychologists, two clinical professional counselors, two nurse practitioners, a licensed mental health counselor, and a domestic violence counselor.

Counseling Centers and Sexual Assault Resources

All of the professionals interviewed indicated that sexual assault is happening on their college campuses. One participant said that there are "acquaintance rapes happening every weekend but … we don't even see the tip of the iceberg", in reference to how few survivors come into counseling. Another one reported that sexual assault at college is nothing new as "college campuses are a reflection of the larger society. A lot of sexual violence". A third respondent summed it up with, "I think it is a challenge everywhere and it is something that we are still working on".

These participants reported that they have worked with numerous instances of sexual assault, ranging from about 5 to 30 cases a year at their colleges, with an average of 13. One of the professionals interviewed shared how sexual assault is often under-reported due to the stigma of assault "compounded with that a lot of students don't necessarily want to go to counseling services too because of the stigma that comes around with that." The respondents all noted how difficult it is to determine the actual rates of sexual assault due to a myriad of issues: some clinics do not keep track of the statistics because they work with students who want to discuss the issue anonymously; not all students come in immediately after an assault, some may report it

months or years later; some students come in seeking assistance for other struggles; and, some students do not report the assault to the counseling center. Only four of the respondents directly worked with any identified male perpetrators, and all of those said they only work with a couple of them each year.

All of these participants reported a variety of sexual assault resources available on these campuses. Most of the colleges expressed having similar resources: working with the local rape crisis centers; education to students/ residential life/ faculty about resources; using fliers/ brochures/ websites to disseminate information; working with the local hospitals and police departments; chaplain's offices; counseling centers; staff members on call during the night; support or psycho-education groups for survivors and allies of survivors; women's center; Title IX coordinator; take back the night rallies; trauma education and trainings; and, working with the survivors to make academic/ dorm accommodations. Two of the respondents mentioned that some of the male athletes at their colleges are actively involved in prevention work and advocacy. Some of the participants talked about resources that were not as effective on their campuses such as sexual assault hotlines, and some colleges found that support groups sometimes were not successful due to the small student body size. Several of the colleges I interviewed had a full-time specific staff member designated strictly to deal with sexual assault prevention, education, and support. Another college mentioned that their school is currently looking to add a sexual assault coordinator position for the upcoming academic year. One of the professionals described how despite the amount of resources available being utilized by the students, "there is still so much to be done".

When talking about additional campus resources, the professionals spoke about focusing on bystander education and intervention. Bystanders are not directly involved in the assault as a

survivor or perpetrator, but are students who may notice something or be aware that something may be happening. For example, a bystander may be someone at the party or in the hallway who may notice a female student under the influence of substances being led away by a male student. Bystander interventions focus on educating students how they may speak up or step in to prevent assaults before they happen, such as by taking the female student back to her friends. One participant said that bystander intervention is "the only thing that has any chance of working on a college" campus. Another respondent spoke of "the fact that you can intervene at that moment before it happens" through the use of bystanders stepping in when they notice someone heavily under the influence being led away by another student from a party. Many of the participants spoke of the importance of educating bystanders on how to handle those situations, in the hopes of stepping in to stop the assault before it happens.

All of the professionals interviewed mentioned that their sexual assault resources are utilized by many students, but also are under-utilized in that not all students take advantage of the sexual assault supports, education, and prevention opportunities available. One participant reported that some students do not pay attention to the resources as "there is the idea that this will never happen to me and I know enough about it". Another described it as, "I think people know that they [sexual assault resources] are here, it is like anything else that you don't really pay attention to until it relates to you… so I think people know the resources are here but it doesn't always mean they use them [or that they are] having that experience of needing to use them". These colleges all offer a wide variety of sexual assault resources and are actively working to try to reduce rates of assault.

Communications with the Perpetrator Prior to the Assault

The professionals interviewed reported that most sexual assaults occur following a social context of partying, as alcohol is almost always involved. One of them summarized it best with, "people are drinking and they are drinking a lot". Another participant made the explicit link between alcohol and sexual assault with the belief that college drinking is out of control, stating that if "drinking were more moderate, then rape would be less frequent". The substance use and abuse (primarily alcohol but sometimes other substances are involved as well) not only impedes a person's defenses and lowers their inhibitions, but also impacts the ability to communicate clearly, or as one respondent put it, "the alcohol discolors everything". Several participants referred to the lack of clear communication due to the excessive drinking, or as one person put it, "there isn't communication -- that is the problem. And I think that it is because of the social milieu because of the alcohol and hooking-up". All of the professionals interviewed discussed how substance use often precedes sexual assaults.

There was consensus among those interviewed that prior to the assault, the survivor knew her perpetrator at some level, whether they were acquaintances, friends, had some kind of actual or desired physical relationship, or were in an exclusive relationship. One participant summarized this with, "for the most part the stranger rape reports tend to not happen at school, they either happen over the summer or when they are abroad… but on campus it is primarily acquaintance rape". The respondents reported that in most cases, the survivor knew her perpetrator and they were using or abusing substances prior to the assault.

Communication with the Perpetrator during the Assault

The participants described a range of the survivor's initial responses to the perpetrator during the assault, from not saying anything to verbally refusing and everything in between. One of the respondents explained it best:

> So it is sort of one or two things: You know, 'I am pushing away, I've had too much to drink, you know I am probably not doing it very well… but I am saying no, no I don't want to do this, please stop', but then the guy gets up and locks the door and overpowers her... That or, the other side… 'I didn't want to do it, I didn't say anything, I should have said something, I didn't, you know I was trying to, I tried to lie there with my legs together…but he didn't, he just went ahead but I never said anything'…and anything in between that. It all seems like they are not wanting it, that they have had too much to drink and it is embarrassing and there are people next door and they don't want to make a scene and they don't want to make a fuss and 'oh it is nothing but sex and people hook up all the time and why am I making a big deal about this?'

In addition to trying to keep their legs together, other non-verbal responses the female survivors are reported to have used include trying to hold their pants up while the perpetrator tries to take them down or trying to push the perpetrator away. Only one of the professionals interviewed described an instance in which the female survivor was able to successfully fight off the perpetrator before penetration occurred. The participants explained how some female survivors initially resist physically, verbally, or use non-verbal cues and eventually give in to the assault, while others have difficulty verbalizing a "no".

Loss of voice.

All of the professionals interviewed except one indicated that a common response during the assault was the survivor feeling like she lost her voice and was not able to speak up and be assertive. One participant summarized it as "I think that most people, once they realize what inevitably is going to happen, they just shut up and do it". The respondents explained how they have found that many female survivors feel like they lose their sense of agency during the assault. Those interviewed rationalized the female survivors' loss of agency in a variety of different ways: the disbelief that they are in a sexual assault situation; feeling like they were in slow motion; being afraid for their lives if they resisted the perpetrator who is bigger and stronger than them; and, the alcohol and substance use. Three respondents explicitly described how female survivors often feel helpless, overpowered, and overwhelmed. Some survivors felt like, as one person put it, that "there was nothing that she could say or do that would impact the situation… and [they] were not able to access that part of their voice or brain to make that happen". Some of the survivors feel like they cannot do anything to change the outcome of the situation and do not fight back.

Two of the participants clearly linked this lack of agency, difficulty verbalizing a "no", and not fighting back during the assault to the trauma response of freezing. One of them explained how survivors become frozen when they realize they are being assaulted and "don't participate" in the assault by not moving and not speaking. Another one discussed the traditional trauma response of fight, flight, or freeze and said that:

> A lot of the survivors that I have worked with here talk about their freeze response, being in the moment and not feeling a sense of agency, not feeling that they knew what was happening [and] that they were unable to move or unable to speak.

Many female survivors demonstrate a typical trauma response of freezing during the assault.

Saying "no".

While some survivors do not or cannot physically or verbally resist, others do say "no" but their verbal refusal does not change the situation. All of the professionals interviewed reported that some survivors feel like when they said "no", it was ignored, unheard, or wasn't taken seriously and the offender continued anyway. Two described how many survivors are assertive and clearly say "no" at the start of the assault, but eventually stop resisting when the perpetrator continues to advance upon them. One of them explained it as:

> It is more of wearing them down so they [the female survivors] will say 'no' so the person [the male perpetrators] will back off and then they [the male perpetrators] will do something else and then they [the female survivors] will say 'no' and then the person [the male perpetrators] will back off and then they [the female survivors] get worn out.

Some of the female survivors do try to refuse and prevent the assault but eventually stop resisting when they feel like their refusals are to no avail. Another respondent described how some survivors may not be as assertive in their resistance, in that some survivors give "verbal 'no's' but tentative 'no', or 'no' or 'I am not interested in this' but no, 'no leave me the fuck alone'". This participant found that some survivors passively resist but have difficulties aggressively and forcefully resisting the perpetrator.

One participant shared her reaction to female survivors not being able to fight back:

> It always surprises me that, it seems like, okay, the logical thing is that you would poke his eyes out and be able to kick a guy in the groin and start screaming… But it is always amazing that people do not fight back a whole lot, I mean some people do… it seems the bottom line is just that, you want to shut up and don't give him a hard time … but that is

> also I think a piece of… [how] we as women, we blame the victim, we find something in the victim that they haven't done that we think we would do and that makes us protected…we would want to find a way, to you know, subconsciously so far deep inside of us, that says that won't happen to me because I would do this…

This participant talked about how it is easy for others to judge survivors for not being assertive and fighting back, because observers like to think they would do something differently so they do not have to ever picture themselves in an assault situation. However, many female survivors who are in the middle of an assault have trouble fighting back and accessing their voice to assertively refuse.

Communication after the Assault

There appear to be several stages of communication after the assault. The first level of communication happens immediately after the assault between the survivor and perpetrator. The next level is the survivor communicating with herself to acknowledge the assault. Disclosing of the assault to others follows the acknowledgement, and for some survivors the final step is reporting the assault to college administrators if they choose to do so. For some survivors this process of communication takes minutes to days, while for others it may take months to years.

Immediately after.

Similar to the lack of clear communication before and during the assault, there does not appear to be much communication happening directly after the female survivor is assaulted. One participant described the common experience of survivors reporting, "'I just don't really remember much of what happened, I woke up in his bed, my clothes were off and I don't remember how that happened'". Another said after the assault, "they [the female survivors]

basically get dressed and go home". There does not appear to be clear communication between the survivor and the perpetrator immediately following the assault.

Acknowledgement to self.

All of the professionals interviewed reported a range of survivor behaviors related to acknowledging the sexual assault. One participant reported that some students will acknowledge the assault immediately and reach out for help, but this process takes longer for many other survivors:

> Of course we always have the students who for whatever reason have not identified with what has happened to them as an assault, either they don't use that word or they don't think that is what has happened and they might not identify or talk about it until years later.

The survivors appear to vary in their ability to acknowledge the assault to themselves and the time it takes for them to identify or label their experience as an assault.

Many of the mental health and sexual assault professionals interviewed discussed how survivors often struggle in acknowledging that they were in an assault situation, or as one participant simply put it, "women don't necessarily identify their experience as assault" and another said, "it is rare that someone comes in and says 'I was acquaintance raped last night'". Five of the respondents explicitly spoke of this difficulty in acknowledging being a sexual assault survivor due to students not fully understanding or being willing/ able to comprehend the situation. Those interviewed all spoke of students coming to the counseling center and saying, "something bad happened to me" or "I don't know what happened. I feel terrible."

The participants explained this difficulty in acknowledging being a survivor of sexual assault in a variety of ways. One reported that, "a lot of them don't have the language to talk about it. Sexual assault is such a big heavy word to embrace". Another described it as:

> They don't use that language because it is almost like 'rape, well that wasn't rape, even though what happened to me was I said no, but rape is what happens in the alley, it happens with a stranger, with a guy that looks creepy or looks like a criminal' so I think that… they haven't kind of identified it because in their mind they have a certain idea of what a rape looks like and so this doesn't sit.

Another respondent described the additional challenge of identifying sexual assaults within relationships because of the conceptualization that, "your boyfriend doesn't rape you, strangers rape you". Due to the pervasive violent stranger rape narratives, many survivors have difficulty labeling their nonconsensual sexual experiences as assault because it does not fit the prevalent social definition of rape. Many survivors also blame themselves for what happened. One respondent described how "they [survivors] believe that somehow they were responsible". Many survivors feel like they did something to cause it happen, and that because they were responsible, it was not a "real" assault.

All the participants claimed that many students tend to minimize the assault. Several described how some survivors use denial narratives and defense mechanisms in response to dealing with the trauma of the assault. One participant reported that some survivors block it out, "so they are able to deal with it that way, and give themselves a little distance". Two respondents discussed how the survivors are hesitant to acknowledge the assault because of how disempowering that is, and how hard it is for someone to admit they could not protect or take care of themselves. One explained it as, "I think women perceive themselves as very assertive

and that they own their sexuality and stuff. And to come to grips with the idea that they might have not, is really challenging". Another participant discussed how it may be hard for some survivors to acknowledge it was an assault if they had a sexual response like an orgasm:

> It is almost confusing to them, like 'my mind didn't want it or I didn't want it but my body seemed to'. So that discrepancy makes it hard for them to make a conclusion or feel settled in the fact that what happened to them was an assault.

Due to the drinking, self-blame, trauma response, denial defense mechanisms, social definitions of rape, and confusion around their own reaction to the assault, many survivors struggle in coming to terms with labeling their experience as an assault.

Disclosure to others.

When survivors are able to acknowledge to themselves that what happened was an assault, they are then able to disclose to others, if they desire. This process can happen immediately, as one participant put it, "some women will go to a friend, a roommate and disclose right away. Other women… are going to the hospital and getting a rape kit done and trying to find an administrator or someone on campus to help them..." But not all survivors do disclose the assault immediately, for some it happens over an extended period of time, and some never disclose at all.

Several of the respondents discussed how many survivors will first disclose to their close friends, and oftentimes those friends are supportive in either taking the survivor to the hospital if the assault had just recently occurred, or encouraging the survivor to receive counseling after the incidence. One of the participants discussed how with the first people the survivor tells, "that person's response can have a huge impact or has an impact on how the survivors' healing process

is". If the friends are supportive and validating, the survivor is more likely to reach out for counseling and help.

Sometimes the survivor finds that her friends are not validating in that they may respond with, "'well I don't really think that was a big deal' or 'don't you think you are overreacting'" or as another respondent described the common reaction of others, "you know all around campus it is this, 'you hook up all the time… so you had sex with this guy and you maybe didn't want to, what is the big deal?'" These professionals I interviewed have found that the reaction of those the survivor tells can either validate or belittle her experience. Two others discussed how disclosure is difficult in that talking about sex is so personal, or as one put it, "I don't just like sit down with a stranger and talk about my sex life and I can't imagine someone having to come in [to counseling] and then do it". The participants all discussed some of the challenges survivors have in disclosing the assault to others.

Five of the respondents discussed the fact that many survivors are hesitant to disclose the assault to others for fear of social repercussions. This came through in talking about a "backlash", a "division" among friends picking sides with the survivor or offender, rumors being spread, feeling like people will treat the survivors differently, or, the survivors' experiencing shame and embarrassment. The respondents identified a myriad of additional fears associated with disclosure to others, such as the fear of: "people will know their business"; having something posted on facebook; reprisal from the perpetrator or from his friends; social isolation; being ostracized; and, not being invited to parties.

Three of the participants talked about the fact that a survivor may feel like she will be blamed for the assault and will be re-victimized if she discloses. This came through in talks about these various themes: the popular social narrative that many believe "she was drinking and

she got so intoxicated that she put herself in the situation"; the "stigma that society portrays…will therefore blame the victim"; the survivors' belief that "people won't believe their side of the story"; and fear of hearing responses such as "you shouldn't have been drinking", "you shouldn't have been with that person" or "oh, come on, that wasn't really sexual assault, that is just a normal hook-up". The participants identified a variety of reasons and fears why survivors may be hesitant to disclose the assault to others.

In talking with these mental health and sexual assault professionals, it became clear that cultural messages and rape mythologies inhibit many survivors from disclosing their assault. Three of them specifically addressed these cultural messages. One described the delayed acknowledgement or disclosure of sexual assault as connected to, "the social narrative around sexual assault and the assumption who perpetrators are" in that survivors often struggle with coming to terms with the fact that an acquaintance or even friend can assault them. Another talked about the, "whole rape mythology of what is rape" and how that makes it difficult for survivors to, "define what had happened to them as rape" and causes them to question their own judgment and experience. A third talked about the, "cultural messages about sexual violence and who is to blame for certain things happening kind of [are] being internalized". Cultural messages and social definitions of rape sometimes make it hard for survivors to acknowledge or disclose the assault.

Reporting the assault.

Some students report the assault right away in the middle of the night, some wait a couple of days/ weeks/ years, and some never report it. Two of the participants discussed how reports of sexual assaults have increased in frequency over the years, directly coinciding with an increase in the educational component. Another one explained it as, "people started coming forward and

saying 'wow, I had never really identified it as what you are talking about' but it certainly was". It appears that more students are reporting sexual assaults now than in the past; however this is still difficult for survivors to do.

Fears of disclosing the assault become even stronger when survivors start thinking about the social repercussions from reporting the assault. One participant explained that when survivors do report the assault, particularly when the offender is an athlete or in a popular social group:

> Students call it being blackballed on campus, but it is almost like you become like a social leper, you know people will not socialize with you, or you will be almost bullied, or not allowed to go to parties, you know people will react pretty strongly.

Another described it as:

> If they choose to report it, that is taking a lot of risks in terms of people finding out, friends of the person they are reporting, or that person may sort of, have some kind of retribution, some kind of retaliation…but I think that on the whole, you know it is not that people don't want to report it but I just think that they realize that things get out of control once they report it in terms of who knows and what is being said.

Other respondents talked about how some survivors may not want to report the case because "they may think that there is nothing they can do about it or they may think that they cannot prove it, which is often the case, cause there is no witness and no evidence". Several professionals discussed the reasons why some survivors decide not to report the assault to the college helping to explain why the reporting rates are so low.

Even though these respondents spoke of a hesitation on behalf of many survivors disclosing or reporting the assault, seven out of the nine professionals interviewed denied hearing

of any perpetrator threaten the survivor to not tell anyone about the assault. One described how those threats are not explicit, but more implicit in that, "women have perceived that if they reported it then things might happen". Another described how, often once the offender finds out the case is going to the student conduct board, "there is a lot of cajoling, 'that is not what I mean, I am sorry'". A third participant said that many students report not wanting to take the assault to a disciplinary committee, not for fear of the perpetrator but because, "they will say 'I don't want to ruin his life"'.

Despite having the majority of the survivors decide not to follow through and report a case to the disciplinary committee, the participants all spoke of some survivors who do report. Those interviewed did not have exact data on the number of sexual assault hearings each year but the reports ranged from one case every couple of years to about seven cases a year. All of the professionals described how the reporting rates are very low and many talked about why they believe that is the case. One described it as, "for people that have reported and have gone through with the hearing it is a very, very, I will use the word traumatic process for them", and another described the judicial process as "very hard… very emotional". Another respondent explained the low reporting rates by saying, "I think the most challenging part is for students to really understand that what happened was a violation of our misconduct policy", connecting back to the earlier discussion on the difficulties survivors have in acknowledging and labeling it as an assault.

One participant talked about the effort to make the reporting process easier on the survivors:

> Our process works to ensure that it is very survivor centered so that one of the things that the board does is it really takes into account how the survivor wants the hearing to

happen. So survivors have a couple of different options [and]… our judicial board is educated around issues of sexual assault and sexual violence… [so they are] aware of how trauma impacts the brain and memory and … the impact it has on a lot of students.

Another professional spoke of the need to further educate administrators and the judicial board around sexual assault by describing how sometimes the administrators have difficulties understanding dating violence and how, "sometimes you were having sex with this person and sometimes this person was doing it against your will". Several of the respondents mentioned how some students will wait and report after they leave campus or even graduate, so they will not have to deal with the challenges of reporting a case while they live, study, and socialize on campus.

The participants reported a range of results from the disciplinary hearings regarding cases of sexual assault. However, they all reported that when the perpetrator is found guilty, he is dismissed from school. Many of the schools did this through directly expelling the perpetrator or suspending him until the survivor graduates, or having the perpetrator voluntarily withdraw from the school. Several of the participants explained how their school takes a tough stance on issues of sexual assault through using the following phrases: "zero tolerance policy"; taking it "very seriously"; and, "that type of behavior has no place in our community". Several of the professionals interviewed described how in addition to holding formal hearings, the college also offers additional options for survivors such as having a dean speak to the offender, having a mediation meeting, and making dorm/ academic accommodations for the survivor.

One respondent spoke of the healing impact reporting a case can have not only on the survivor but also the entire community, citing an example of how a sexual assault became public and the college responded by heightened awareness programs, bystander trainings, forums with

top administrative officials and that the incident prompted "a lot of discussion and then some definite action on the part of administration". Another described how, "there is progress in the fact that people talk about it, whether it has lessened the frequency of that, it is so hard to know since you know it is such an underreported crime". The mental health and sexual assault professionals interviewed all described some challenges in having the survivor acknowledge, disclose and/ or report the assault.

Impact of the Assault on the Survivors

Some of the participants discussed how the sexual assault impacts the survivor, her mental health, self-view, and daily living, but as one participant put it, "it is hard to make a direct correlation" between mental health and the assault. Four of them all described similar experiences of the survivor feeling an increase in depression, anxiety, and fear following the assault, for as one put it "trauma lives in the body". The respondents described additional symptoms of: sleep difficulties; not trusting anyone; having difficulties concentrating on their schoolwork; engaging in self-harming behaviors; over-eating or under-eating; nightmares; tearfulness; shock and disbelief; isolation; and, PTSD symptoms including hyperviligence. Several of the participants discussed how sexual assault changes the way that survivors see themselves, others, and their environment as the assault, "disrupts their sense of trust and safety" as one of them put it.

One respondent described it as:

> Once you have been raped, it seems to me that everybody's world just turns upside down… and everything just gets totally screwed up….you think that you will never be able to say 'no' to anybody or choose a partner because if this can happen to you once then you are doomed. And it is horrible.

Other survivors' experience, "anger that their world has been disrupted in such a big way and anger at the person who hurt them and anger at themselves and also sometimes anger at their friends who are not understanding what they are experiencing". Those interviewed described the range of negative impacts that sexual assault has on the survivors.

Reflections on Communication

All of the participants reported that the survivors experienced regrets about their communication with the perpetrator, as some survivors feel like they put themselves in that situation. These regrets may be connected to their feelings of guilt, self-blame, responsibility, and shame. Four respondents described some of the common responses they hear from the survivor: "I wish I hadn't drank that much"; "I wish I had been able to tell him 'no'"; "I wish I had verbalized my 'no' more clearly"; "I wish I hadn't have left the party with him; and, "I wish I had been more assertive or physically assertive or aggressive". Other common responses the professionals have heard include: "I just figured maybe he would be a nice guy and he would stop and I didn't think this would happen to me"; "I should have said stop or I am going to do something and given him an ultimatum"; and, "I did something to lead him on".

One of the participants talked about the many women who have regrets that they did not act more assertively:

> I think that they end up realizing that these individuals would probably not have listened to their voice, so I think that even though they wish that they had punched him in the face and walked out the door…I think they were afraid, that they would be overcome.

All of the professionals discussed how the survivors wish in retrospect that they had communicated differently during the assault by being more assertive and forceful in their refusal.

The respondents expressed consensus in the belief that the female survivors have a hard time communicating and talking about the assault. They discussed a myriad of reasons for this including: the feelings of guilt, remorse and shame; talking about it makes the survivors feel more exposed and vulnerable; the use of defense mechanisms to try to block out those memories; and, their recollection and understanding of the event may be clouded by substance use. Four of the professionals interviewed discussed how sexual experiences are not often talked about in our culture. As one participant said, "it is not something that we talk about in general in our society and I think there is so much secrecy and shame". As mentioned earlier, many respondents reported that survivors do not even have the language or understanding of rape and sexual assault, as they often refer to their own assault as "the incident" and struggle with even identifying as a survivor. Some of the professionals said that by the time survivors make it into counseling then they are ready to talk about it and have an easier time communicating about the assault.

Two of the participants raised the issue of parental communication around sexual assault and how parents can act as better resources for their children. According to one of the respondents, "it is very hard for parents to talk about sex with their children". This contributes to students not having, as this participant described:

> Any language of rape… if you don't exercise a muscle you don't know how to have access to the power of that… I think surprisingly that kids really want to know their parents ideas about this, even if they diverge 100% …But if we don't have any knowledge and if it is a secret that we don't talk about, then we don't know [what our parents think and how to talk about assault].

Another spoke of how, "parents are a group of people that we really need to embrace and do some more education with". These participants talked about the importance of educating parents to be a resource and support surrounding sexual assault to help their children prevent, talk about, and deal with such instances.

The Perpetrators' Communication with the Survivor Prior to the Assault

In addition to discussing the female communication patterns before, during, and after instances of sexual assault, I also asked the mental health and sexual assault professionals interviewed about the male communication patterns. The participants indicated that the male perpetrators reported that they were partying and drinking prior to the assault. One of the participants explained it as, "a lot of it is the hook-up culture, the alcohol culture so you know they sort of think that this is what everybody is doing… thinking that everybody else is getting drunk and having sex". One respondent described how "alcohol is used as a weapon when it comes to sexual assault" for the offenders "specifically target people who have been drinking because they know their defenses are lower". Another said that some male perpetrators will specifically seek out and target some of their victims who may appear more submissive:

> Even if you are walking down the street and if you are going to pick someone out, you pick out the quiet little person who is walking meekly along, you don't pick out a woman who shoots you direct eye contact and who you think might be really aggressive with you.

One respondent differentiated between the male perpetrators who, for whatever reason truly felt like the experience was consensual, and those who are the:

> I hate to say the word serial rapist but they are, they know what they are doing, they get the first year, the quiet kid, the kid who is not going to yell out, they, they are handsome,

they are pushy, they are just hooking up, they get them drunk, have sex with them and move on to the next person.

Several participants described how some male perpetrators will specifically choose their victims, seeking out women who may have been drinking and who appear submissive.

The Perpetrators' Communication with the Survivor during the Assault

The professionals interviewed discussed a variety of ways the perpetrator communicated or interacted with the survivor during the assault. When asked about this communication, one of the participants summed it up with, "the problem is they [the male perpetrators] are pretty effective". The other respondents described how some perpetrators see the assault as miscommunication, with the perpetrator assuming it was consensual; best explained by, "I don't think they see themselves as having done a sexual assault… I don't think that they think that they have done anything wrong". Another participant further explained it by saying how some male perpetrators go more by "the nonverbal cues, rather than the verbal ones… so they start saying 'well she came to the room with me, she, we were undressed' and you know, all those cues". Other respondents also report hearing the male perpetrators say things like, "I thought she wanted it" or "I was taking it as a yes", with the perpetrators believing "the infamous 'no, no, no', means 'yes, yes, yes'".

The participants discussed the fact that some male perpetrators often report that they did not hear the female say "no" or verbally refuse. One of the respondents described it as, "some of them claim that there was a conversation and that there was never a definite 'no'". Another said some men reported that "she said 'no' but I think she wanted it anyways" as some male perpetrators believe that no needs to be said in "a certain tone, or something like that, like having some caveat to it" in order for them to believe it. Another participant said that some of the male

perpetrators just claim to "have amnesia around the whole event" so they claim to be unable to remember the communication, or lack of communication occurring around the assault.

One of the respondents reported that about half of the male perpetrators:

> Would convince me that genuinely they did not know that they were raping this person, they both had a lot to drink, they thought she wanted it, you know, and the other [half] are covering their asses like nothing is going on, you know 'that is not what happened', and blah, blah, blah, and the lies, you just don't believe them, but they are just covering their tail.

The participants reported a mix of communication patterns for the male perpetrators with some perpetrators who, after heavy drinking, acted on poor communication and others who appeared to know and understand what they were doing was wrong but they did not care.

When asked about whether the male perpetrators reported that they ignored the female survivor saying "no", the participants explained that while the men denied doing that, it certainly seems like they did. One respondent put it as, "if people were really listening then sexual assault wouldn't happen, especially on college campuses." Many of them discussed how the male perpetrators reported that they did not understand that the survivor was saying "no", as one respondent explained, "their response a lot of time is 'I never, I didn't know that was what she was saying, I, that is not what I heard her saying, that is not what her body language was saying'". One participant described the challenge in discerning what really transpired during the course of the assault by saying, "a lot of what we see is through the lens of substance abuse and so it is hard to discern for you, anyone, what really happened and when and how and so on and so forth". Many of the participants discussed how the male perpetrators often report that they did

not know the female survivor was not consenting, either because they did not believe her "no" or say she never did voice a refusal.

The professionals interviewed denied ever having had a male perpetrator admit that he told the female to be quiet, to stop talking, or that he had physically stopped her from talking, for instance, by covering her mouth. One of them said that this "ordering" happens more in stranger rape and not in acquaintance rapes that are more likely to occur on the college campuses. Eight of the nine participants reported that the perpetrator never physically stopped the female survivor from speaking. One of them said this only rarely happens, saying, "I can think of a couple of instances where somebody was physically being restrained… it might have even been an arm over the face or something like that, but I think that is also less common". The majority of the respondents reported that it is uncommon for perpetrators to threaten the survivors not to report or disclose the attack.

The Perpetrators' Communication after the Assault

Similar to the female survivor's lack of communication immediately after the assault, the perpetrators do not seem to be communicating much with the survivor directly following the assault. The participants indicated that the male perpetrators often have one of two experiences with regard to their public communication after the assault in that they either viewed the experience as miscommunication after heavy drinking or that they knowingly engaged in sexual acts with a non-consenting woman and did not care about her refusal. One respondent described these two types of responses of the male perpetrators, "there is this chunk that is just miscommunication and lousy, lousy back and forth talking about sex… and then there is the serial rapist" who knows what he is doing.

The participants described a group of perpetrators who knowingly commit assaults. These perpetrators say things like, "'I know she kind of wasn't totally into it but I really wanted it anyways'". One of the respondents explained how these perpetrators who knowingly commit assaults are aware of, "exactly what they want and pick out exactly the right person and are pretty successful about it".

In addition to having a group of male perpetrators being defined as serial rapists who knowingly commit assaults, the participants all described how another type of perpetrators who, "really just didn't realize that what they were doing was being experienced as sexual assault by the other person" and were surprised by being labeled as a perpetrator. One of the respondents reported that many of these offenders who assumed the encounter was consensual feel terrible about it. The communication patterns of the male perpetrators vary based on the two main types, those who have poor or no communication surrounding sexual boundaries and intent with the survivor, and those who knowingly commit assaults but do not value the survivor's wishes or respect her voice.

Social Identities

During the interview several of the respondents commented on the role that the survivors' and perpetrators' social context, such as personality, class, and socioeconomic status may play in sexual assault.

Common personalities of male perpetrators.

Some of the respondents identified groups of men that they feel are more likely to be reported as being perpetrators. Four of the participants suspected that the men who behave as one put it, "over-masculinized, that you know masculinity in some way becomes a big part of their identity" (such as men in sports teams, particularly football and hockey, and fraternities or

certain social groups) are more likely to be reported as, or have the reputation to be offenders of sexual assault. One respondent described having the perception that the typical personality of perpetrators consist of more "antisocial traits… like 'I don't really care about someone else's feelings', 'I can do whatever I want'… like 'I am entitled to do it because I want to'". Many of the participants were able to identify some personality traits of the men more likely to be reported as perpetrators as being highly masculine and egotistic.

Race and Socioeconomic Class.

One of the professionals interviewed spoke about the role that race plays in sexual assault. This participant reflected on the way that power dynamics play out with women of color and their voice:

> The idea that women of color may be more sexualized and men might see them in much more ways as objectified and they might have more sense of entitlement towards women of color than they might towards dominant culture [may influence sexual assaults] and… historically women of color have been used in so many ways over so many years.

In addition to the role that race may play in instances of sexual assault, socioeconomic class also may have an impact. One participant speculated, "when there is a popular guy who is rich and wealthy, you know that popular culture plays out in many different ways" with a male perpetrator's sense of entitlement. The other respondents indicated that they did not have enough data to ascertain the role that race and socioeconomic class plays in sexual assault on their campuses.

Conclusions Regarding the Findings

The major findings of this study were that gendered communication patterns do occur during instances of sexual assault on these NESCAC college campuses. For the most part, the

respondents reported many similar trends and experiences working with female survivors and male perpetrators of sexual assault. They reported that most sexual assaults occur after a social situation of partying with use and or abuse of substances, and that the survivor and perpetrator are acquaintances. Several common themes occurred when talking about the communication during the assault: some of the survivors experience a loss of voice; survivors feel helpless, overwhelmed, and experience a freeze response; and, other survivors are able to articulate a "no" that was ignored, not heard, or not believed. After the assault, survivors have difficulty acknowledging to themselves that they were assaulted due to the disbelief, not wanting to admit to themselves that they were victimized, and the propensity to buy into rape mythologies/ stranger rape narratives. Many survivors report apprehension in disclosing and reporting the assault to others, fearing that they will not be believed, and that they may experience some social isolation or other retaliations from their peers. These sexual assault and mental health professionals described how the survivors experience shame, guilt, and self-blame for the assault. The communication patterns for the male perpetrators surrounding the assault appear to follow one of two trends -- some report miscommunication/ misunderstanding often due to the heavy substance use, and some appear to knowingly commit assaults but do not care.

The respondents all spoke of offering a plethora of sexual assault resources to the students and also the challenges of having the students utilize those resources. Despite the sexual assault education and prevention occurring on these campuses, sexual assaults are still happening. The participants all described gendered communication patterns happening before, during, and after instances of sexual assault on their college campuses.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

My hypothesis for this study was that gendered communication patterns occur before, during, and after instances of sexual assault on NESCAC college campuses. I anticipated that women's voices are muted, in that they are unable to speak up, silenced, in that male perpetrators tell them to be quiet, or ignored, in that others do not listen their voices, prior to, during, and after, instances of sexual assault. I suspected that the men's communication before, during, and after the assault is that of dominance, control, and assertiveness. The results of this study supported most of my hypothesis and disproved some parts of it.

Going back to the term "gendered", which when applied to a phenomenon, means that social processes have determined appropriate masculine and feminine behaviors (Schwartz & Rutter, 2000, p. 3), this study demonstrated that gendered communication patterns occur during instances of sexual assault as social definitions of masculinity and femininity play a role in this phenomenon. I did not anticipate the extent to which substance use distorts or diminishes the communication that happens prior to and during the assault. In support of my hypothesis, I found that women's voices are being muted during and after the assault when they cannot verbalize a "no" and have difficulty acknowledging and telling others about the assault. The results of this study, contrary to my initial thoughts, indicated that very few male perpetrators silence the survivor during the attack. However as I had suspected, this silencing does occur after the assault

when some survivors are afraid to report or disclose the attack for fear of retribution, reprisal, or social isolation from the perpetrator and peers. This study supported my hypothesis that women's voices are ignored during the attack when the male perpetrator does not listen to her refusals and also after the attack when her peers and community may not validate or may dismiss her claims of the attack. For the most part, the results of this study supported the major findings and theories in current literature surrounding communication patterns, gender, and sexual assault.

Gendered Communication Patterns Prior to the Assault

The results of this study indicated that most instances of sexual assault occur following a social situation of partying and substance use. As alcohol use is so prevalent on college campuses and students commonly party heavily on the weekends, it makes sense that assaults occur following drinking which lowers peoples' inhibitions and distorts their thinking. Several of the respondents discussed the negative implications of substance use and heavy drinking. One participant described alcohol as a weapon used in instances of sexual assault and another explicitly said that to decrease instances of sexual assault, drinking needs to decrease first. Similar to the results of this study, Bohmer and Parrot (1993) found that most instances of sexual assault occur after partying.

As these colleges I studied had a relatively small student population, it is understandable that most of the survivors knew their perpetrator on some level, whether it was as classmates, from living in the same dorm, from sharing some of the same classes or labs, as friends, friends-of-friends or as having previously encountered the person around campus. Several of the professionals interviewed spoke of assaults occurring within relationships, either previous physical relationships or intimate exclusive relationships; however this study did not explicitly

focus on relationship violence, indicating the need for future research on dating violence. Most sexual assaults at these colleges are happening between acquaintances following substance use.

Gendered Communication Patterns during the Assault

This study demonstrated, as many of the participants pointed out, the dearth of explicit, clear communication during instances of sexual assault. The results of this study demonstrate that consent is not clearly given or obtained during instances of sexual assault. Going back to the literature, Muted Group theory helps describe this phenomenon on how the dominant group, in this case men, determines the appropriate communicative system and the subordinate group, in this case women, become inarticulate. As the research and this study indicate, during instances of sexual assault female survivors have difficulty verbalizing a "no" and having that "no" listened to and respected.

Loss of voice.

Trauma theory helps explain why so many female survivors report being unable to access their voice and verbalize a refusal, as previously discussed in the literature reviewed. Allen (2001) describes how in traumatic situations, when individuals feel like fighting or fleeing is too dangerous, they become passive and freeze. Herman (1997) talked about how surrendering is a common defense when a person feels powerless and Nijenhuis, Vanderlinden, and Spinhoven (1998) also reported that women are more likely to use passive defenses of freezing during a sexual assault. Several of the participants clearly described this freeze response when talking about survivors who do not participate in the assault, as many women feel like they cannot speak up or move, or feel like they cannot do or say anything that would impact the situation. Many of the respondents described how female survivors feel helpless, overwhelmed, and overpowered during instances of sexual assault. This loss of agency and voice that the survivors experience is

supported by the current literature. Osman's (2003) study found that some men viewed a woman's silence as consent. Similar to the previous literature, the participants reported that male perpetrators view silence and a lack of a verbal refusal as consent.

Saying "no".

The professionals interviewed discussed how many female survivors feel ignored when they do speak up and say "no" or verbally refuse during the assault. Several theories in the current literature help explain this phenomenon. Traditional sexual scripts consist of the notion that men are the initiators of sexual acts and women are the refuters. Token resistance refers to the belief that women who say "no" really mean "yes" because they have to say "no" in order to comply with traditional notions of passive virginal femininity. Both of these theories came through in this study when the participants reported that some male perpetrators thought the female survivor wanted it anyway despite verbalizing a "no".

The results of this study that described how some female survivors report saying "no" but the male perpetrators did not listen to or respect their refusal, coincides with the results of many previous studies. Kimmel (2008) found that most of the men he interviewed believed that women use token resistance, saying "no" to protect their reputation and that even if a woman says "no", or is drunk, she actually consents to sex. Adams-Curtis and Forbes (2004) reported that men may not respond to a woman's "no", in that women's more passive communication styles may be less explicit, or be conveyed in nonverbal indirect ways. These studies demonstrated that some men do not respond to a woman's refusal, either because they did not think it was made explicitly enough or because they thought she wanted it anyway despite verbalizing or indicating a refusal. Similar to studies done by Muehlenhard and Rogers (1998), O'Sullivan and Allgeier (1994), and Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova, and Levitskaya (1994), the

results of this study indicated that women are not using token resistance. Despite the stereotype and beliefs that some men have that some women use token resistance, this study demonstrated that women are not saying "no" while meaning "yes", but rather when they say "no", they mean "no".

Despite the current literature reporting that some men use threats or instances of force in sexual assault, I did not find that in my study. Lisak and Miller (2002) found that 10% of the male college students who had committed rapes used threats or force in instances of sexual assault. Only one of the participants reported that on rare occasions male perpetrators will use force to prevent a female survivor from speaking up or struggling during an assault and none of the respondents reported male perpetrators making explicit threats. These discrepancies in my results compared to previous studies, may have to do with the fact that my study was done with relatively small college campuses where the survivor commonly knew her perpetrator.

In addition to not finding that male perpetrators silence the survivors through threats or force, I also did not find female survivors explicitly reporting verbally agreeing to sexual acts when they wanted to say "no" because of the pressures to be viewed as a pleasing woman, as Phillips (2000) found in her study. However, I did not interview actual survivors or explicitly ask about this phenomenon, therefore I cannot make any clear conclusions on the pressures female survivors felt to be a pleasing woman.

Importance of having clear communication.

This study, as well as the current literature, highlighted the importance of having clear, explicit communication and consent made during instances of hooking-up. As one participant described, "no means no, and you need two people to give consent and if they are not giving consent then you are not, and if you are drunk or stoned you cannot give consent". Sexual assault

occurs when consent is not confirmed and when refusals go ignored. Many of the mental health and sexual assault professionals interviewed explained how clear communication does not happen during instances of sexual assault. The research in current literature also explains the importance of talking about sexual boundaries and intentions. Winslett and Gross (2008) studied the impact of talking about sex and how making explicit verbalized discussions on sexual boundaries helps both men and women understand where to draw the line between consensual contact and assault. This study emphasized the importance of obtaining consent and clearly talking about sexual boundaries and intentions prior to and while engaging in any sexual acts.

Gendered Communication Patterns after the Assault

The results of this study match the current literature which reports that many female survivors have difficulties in acknowledging the assault to themselves, disclosing it to others, and reporting it to campus administrators. One of the participants reported, "I can't wrap my hands around the fact that it happens as frequently as it does and we don't get to officially deal with it very frequently at all". All of those interviewed talked about how sexual assault is such, as one phrased it, an "under-reported crime". All of the respondents spoke passionately about their school's efforts to try to reduce rates of sexual assault. However so many things beyond their control impede a survivor's ability to acknowledge the assault and desire to report it. The common literature cites how rape myths, including the belief that a woman can resist rape if she really wants to, that the woman is often promiscuous, the idea that the woman makes up the rape to punish a man, and that rape is only completed by strangers and done in a violent fashion, interferes with a survivor's ability to recognize that she was assaulted and may increase her hesitation to disclose of the assault to others. Many of the participants discussed how difficult it is for survivors to acknowledge and disclose the assault.

Acknowledgement to self.

Most of the respondents spoke of how many survivors struggle in acknowledging to themselves that they were involved in an assault. This matches the research in current literature. Phillips (2000) found that few college women labeled their assault experiences as sexual assault because they did not want to think of themselves as a victim and also had internalized messages of privileging male pleasure, preserving relationships, and of stranger rape narratives. Llyod and Emery (2000) found that many survivors have difficulty labeling their experience as assault since they view sexual aggression as typical of dating, thus normalizing the experience. Peterson and Muehlenhard (2004) and also Bondurant (2001) reported that violent stranger rape narratives are prevalent and prevent many women from identifying acquaintance rape as actual rape. Kahn, Mathie and Torgler (1994) found that women who identified themselves as rape survivors were more likely to have experienced a forceful assault, and that most women's rape scripts and definitions of rape include violence and strangers. Littleton and Axsom (2003) found that both rape and seduction scripts include the man using manipulation and the women participating in acts she may not have wanted, with the only difference between the two was that the rape scripts focused more on overt violence. All of these studies match the results of my own research that indicates that many sexual assault survivors have confusion about how to label their non-consensual sexual activities.

Due to the prevalence of stranger rape narratives as well as the belief that "it could never happen to me" many female survivors of sexual assault do not label themselves as survivors. There are many denial narratives around this, as well as a fear of admitting that they lost control of the situation. Many survivors often use the defense mechanism of blaming themselves for the assault, because in doing so they attempt to regain a sense of control and agency in a situation

that robbed them of so much power. By blaming themselves, survivors can feel like they influenced the situation, rather than admit that they were overpowered, could not protect themselves, and were completely victimized. However, this self-blame can impede healing and interfere with a person's ability to recognize themselves as a survivor and understand their own strength in dealing with such a difficult debilitating situation. One professional talked about this "tremendous self- incrimination for a crime that just is not, it is just not their fault". These difficulties in acknowledging the assault refer back to the notion of disidentification, (Zenmore, Fiske & Kim, 2000) that explains how acknowledging or disclosing of the assault would indicate a woman's victim status of being weak and powerless, thus confirming negative feminine stereotypes. Many survivors often blame themselves for the assault, making it difficult for them to acknowledge that they are in fact, a survivor, and not a victim.

Feelings of self-blame came up in most of the interviews. In addition to survivors experiencing self-blame, the professionals interviewed described themes of guilt and shame. One participant discussed the connection between these three feelings and how the cycle of guilt, shame, and self-blame "tend to feed into each other so the person blames themselves for things they did or didn't do …and then they feel shame around that and then they feel guilty and that goes around in the cycle". Female survivors experience feelings of guilt, shame, and self-blame that interferes with their ability to acknowledge themselves as survivors, to disclose the assault to others, and to report it to campus administrators.

Disclosure to others and reporting the assault.

The mental health and sexual assault professionals interviewed spoke of how many survivors do not disclose the assault to others, and only a very minute percent actually report the assault to campus administrators. As one participant said, "I think most people don't just [talk

about the assault], they live it, they suffer alone". This matches the current literature that indicates that many survivors do not disclose the assault. Pratt (2011), the Center of Public Integrity (2010), Lam and Roman, (2009), Burnett et al. (2009) Fisher et al. (2000), Lloyd and Emery (2000), Sheffield (1997), and Bohmer and Parrot (1993) found that there is a culture of silence surrounding sexual assault in that many survivors do not report the assault because they blame themselves, feel ashamed of it, or because the perpetrator did not use strong physical force so they fear others will be skeptical about the assault, or worry that others will blame them. Many survivors feel silenced in that they were denied a voice during the assault, but also felt silenced afterwards with regard to their disclosure.

Often, survivors do not talk about the assault for a variety of reasons already discussed. Many of the respondents in my study talked about the ways that survivors are fearful of disclosing or reporting the assault because of the threat of social isolation and retribution. These fears did not come across in the current literature. However, as all of the colleges studied had a relatively small population, this fear may not be present at larger colleges where students face a greater chance of being anonymous and not having to worry about everyone knowing or gossiping about their business.

Several previous studies discussed how colleges are not handling sexual assault cases proficiently enough. The Center of Public Integrity (2010) revealed that 33% of the survivors reporting their cases indicated that the administration discouraged them from filing sexual assault complaints, and only 18% of male perpetrators found guilty of sexual assault were expelled. That study also found that many college administrators see sexual assault cases as tarnishing their schools' reputation. Institutional barriers on campuses deter survivors from pursuing sexual assault complaints, and colleges do not spend enough time educating students on how to respond

to friends and peers who have been sexually assaulted. Pratt (2011) also found that the community and administration sometimes cover up the prevalence of sexual assaults, question the accuracy of the survivor's stories, and do not punish the perpetrators despite clear convincing evidence.

I did not encounter this information in my study. However, I also did not focus my research around this issue of college's responses to sexual assault, and I only interviewed a select population of mental health and sexual assault professionals, those who are passionate about their work and are dedicated to decreasing instances of sexual assaults. I found that all of the college campuses offer a plethora of resources for sexual assault survivors, prevention, and education. The professionals I interviewed impressed me with their passion for trying to eradicate such crimes on their campuses as they acknowledged it was a problem and discussed how they were addressing it. I wonder if the three colleges, Bowdoin, Williams, and Tufts, that refused to participate in this study may not be as willing to address the topic of sexual assault and may be more in denial about it, or are afraid of tarnishing their own reputation by talking about assaults on their campus and would prefer to keep such a topic silent and hidden.

While it is a challenge, and understandably so, for many survivors to disclose and report instances of sexual assault, bringing the matter to public awareness can lead to many positive conclusions. Several of the participants talked about the healing impact that reporting the assault can have on not only the survivor, but also the entire community. One school has been able to make several positive changes in how sexual assault is addressed and dealt with on its campus after a report was disclosed and a case made public. Just because many survivors have their voices silenced or ignored during the assault, does not mean that this needs to happen after the assault. Talking about sexual assault allows for positive change to happen, improvements to be

made, and growth to occur. Keeping silent around the issue simply perpetuates it and re-instates the message to survivors that their voices are not deemed worthy enough to be listened to or respected.

Impact of the Assault on Survivors

Several of the participants discussed the negative impact that sexual assault has on survivors. In addition to survivors feeling self-blame, shame, and guilt as previously discussed, many experience mental health struggles including depression, anxiety, and a decrease in self-esteem. This matches the research in the current literature. Both Lloyd and Emery (2000) and Moscarello (1991) discussed how sexual assault survivors experience common symptoms of anxiety, depression, social isolation, anger, and feelings of worthlessness. Several of the participants discussed the long-lasting impact sexual assault has on survivors, describing similar symptoms as present in the literature. One of the respondents reported that if survivors, "get assistance right away, if they get counseling right away, I see those people as much more resilient and able to get through it with minimal long term consequences". If survivors can receive help right away or soon after the assault, they are able to receive support in navigating through this ordeal, that is challenging personally, mentally, and socially.

Gender and Sexual Assault

As this study and the current literature indicates, gendered communication patterns occur in instances of sexual assault. Gender plays a role through the verbal, non-verbal, and lack of communication before, during, and after instances of sexual assault. The current literature presents many theories on gender socialization. Self-Categorization theory best describes the role that gender plays in sexual assault by stating that individuals are expected to conform to gender stereotypes and social categories. Masculine and feminine norms and notions are played out in

instances of sexual assault, when people act and communicate based on the internalized social definition of their gender.

Patriarchy.

Patriarchy has a role in instances of sexual assault when men violate women and do not verify, listen to, or respect their sexual boundaries. My study, in addition to the contemporary literature, confirms this notion. Schur (1997) and Sheffield (1997) argue that sexual assault happens because of patriarchy and traditional gender roles, for as Sheffield (1997) concluded the, "right of men to control the female body is a cornerstone of patriarchy" (p. 110). Patriarchy allows for sexual assault to occur by promoting the superiority and power of males and the inferiority and submissiveness of females. Sanday (1997) also linked rape to male dominance and an ideology of male toughness, indicating that patriarchal societies are rape-prone cultures. If women were viewed and treated as equals, then sexual assault would not be as prevalent as a woman's voice would then be heard and respected.

Femininity.

Notions of traditional femininity play out in instances of sexual assault when women internalize limiting and demeaning gender norms. Numerous studies have been conducted on how traditional feminine norms of passivity and submissiveness negatively impacts women. Lamb and Brown (2006) concluded that girls are being sold by the media stereotypical messages that teach girls that their sex appeal is important, as is beauty, romance, homemaking, nurturing, and shopping. Girls internalize the notion that in a patriarchal society their voice does not hold as much power as that of men, and internalize the emphasis placed on their relationships with others.

Additional studies have examined how notions of femininity impact a woman's voice and communication. Marshall and Aarvay (1999) reported that girls self-silence in situations where they risked losing a relationship or for fear of being thought of as mean. Gilligan (1993) discussed the notion that girls lose their voice in adolescence, Rogers (1993) found that girls self-silence themselves in order to maintain an image of being nice, and Brown (1991) studied how girls develop a care-orientation that focuses on preserving relationships. These studies all discuss the ways that notions of traditional femininity and the importance placed on pleasing others impact a women's sense of self and voice, similar to what I found in my study. Going back to the scene from "The Little Mermaid" (1998) where Ursela tells Ariel, "It's she who holds her tongue who gets her man", girls learn through socialization and through media messages to be more passive and quiet in order to be viewed as pleasing and likable. Internalized traditional feminine norms may impact a woman's inability to verbalize a refusal and adamantly fight back during instances of sexual assault.

Masculinity.

While norms of femininity may influence the ways that female survivors act and communicate during instances of sexual assault, notions of masculinity may impact male perpetrators. There have been numerous studies done examining the role that norms of masculinity play in the lives of men. Brown, Lamb, and Tappan (2009) studied the media's use of negative stereotypes to depict boys as enjoying violence, being independent, and being players, meaning they play the dating field to get as many girls as possible. Kimmel (2008) reported that men feel pressure to prove their masculinity through as many sexual encounters with women as possible, as sex is seen as a form of masculine success and achievement. The traditional norms of masculinity place a high emphasis on men proving their superiority through

the sex with, or dominance of, women. Men feel pressure to comply with this high standard of masculine success and feel the need to project an image of themselves as being popular through sleeping with a multitude of women. As noted in the lyrics in Jon Lajoie's "Show me Your Genitals" (2009), boys grow up with the message that:

> Girls' brains are much stupider than men's are,
>
> So they should always listen to us 'cause we're smart.
>
> Women are only good for three things,
>
> Cooking, cleaning, - and vaginas.

Teenagers and college men hear messages like this all the time in the popular culture that tells them how "real" men should act. This study indicated that many college men have been socialized to follow traditional notions of masculinity as demonstrated by not believing a woman means "no" when she says it, and feeling like their own wishes are more important than that of a woman's.

Several of the participants in this study identified groups of men, athletes and certain social groups/ fraternities that are reported to be more likely accused of sexual assaults. This matches up with previous research of Bohmer and Parrot (1993) and O'Sullivan (1993) who both reported that male athletes and fraternity brothers are part of highly-masculinized sub-cultures that often foster sexual aggression and sexist views of women. Voller and Long (2010) studied personality traits of male perpetrators and found that they had higher levels of egotism and lower levels of warmth, positive emotions, and altruism than did non-perpetrators. These studies linked men with more traditional masculine traits of strength, power, and independence as more likely to be involved in instances of sexual assault. The traditional stereotypes of masculinity play out

in instances of sexual assault when men feel pressured to prove their manhood through sex with women, and have internalized the notion of male dominance.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The study had numerous strengths. An advantage of talking with the mental health and sexual assault professionals, instead of actual survivors or perpetrators was that I heard about multiple students' experiences over the past several years. By talking with these professionals, I was able to hear many different stories through one voice. I was able to learn about the trends the participants have encountered in dealing with many instances of sexual assault. These professionals were able to share their insight and reflections about their own work with sexual assault survivors and perpetrators.

The study also had several limitations. All of my data was second-hand in that I was not able to interview actual survivors or perpetrators of sexual assault due to the difficulties of talking about such an emotionally sensitive topic. Instead I interviewed professionals who deal with this issue. As I interviewed mental health and sexual assault professionals and not actual survivors or perpetrators, I may have received a biased response and not a complete understanding of the phenomenon. Another limitation of this study is the fact that not all female survivors identify themselves as a survivor, and not all male perpetrators acknowledge themselves as perpetrators and do not seek help, therefore my data may be missing some information from this group of students that do not talk about their assault experiences. The participants all had met with more female survivors than male perpetrators, and not all of my participants had worked with male perpetrators, therefore my data was more heavily influenced by their work with survivors rather than perpetrators. There also is an inherent gender imbalance in seeking mental health help, in that women are more likely to seek counseling than men,

therefore I may have limited my results by focusing on interviewing mental health professionals. By interviewing these mental health and sexual assault professionals, I have received more information from the female survivor's perspective rather than the male perpetrators, but as it is the women's voices that traditionally have been silenced in regards to sexual assault, both during the attack and afterwards, it was important to hear their voice regarding this issue.

Phone interviews also have numerous limitations in that I was not able to use any non-verbal communication such as body language, head nods, or smiles to encourage the participants to continue speaking. I was not be able to see my participants, so some of them may have attempted to use the time to multi-task by checking email or organizing their notes and therefore may not have been as fully engaged in the conversation as they may have been in a face-to-face situation.

My small sample size may have hindered generalizability of the results. My data is not generalizable to all colleges since I did a nonprobability sampling by only looking at a small select population, the specific NESCAC colleges. My results can only be generalized at these select schools, as NESCAC colleges are not representative of all colleges; instead they are highly selective, often referred to as the "Little Ivies". As the majority of the students at these colleges are middle to upper class and predominantly white, the students are not representative of all college students, and neither were the participants I interview, instead they represent a limited range of social identities with minimal racial and socioeconomical diversity.

I was aware of several types of potential biases during the interviews and interpreting the results. As counseling is a more female-dominated field, many of the people I interviewed may have held feminist beliefs and some of their personal biases may have influenced how they

viewed sexual assault. My own biases pertaining to my experiences with sexual assault, my own thoughts, and opinions may have influenced the research and interpretation of the findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

In order for the results to be generalizable, there need to be more studies done regarding this issue and the studies should be larger and more representative in regards to diversity. Studies should be conducted at a broader range of colleges across the United States. In order to fully understand the communication patterns occurring during instances of sexual assault we need to study both the survivors' and the perpetrators' experience and hear the stories from their own voices and perspectives. The role that race and socioeconomic class play in instances of sexual assault should be further investigated. This study only looked at heterosexual sexual assault with female survivors and male perpetrators, and there needs to be additional research looking at sexual assault with male or transgender survivors and female or transgender perpetrators, as well as assaults within gay and lesbian relationships. As several of the participants spoke of assaults occurring within relationships, the topic of dating violence should be further explored. Future studies should focus on first-hand accounts of interviewing both survivors and perpetrators of sexual assault.

Recommendations for Communities and Colleges

Unfortunately sexual assault occurs on college campuses and in communities. All of the professionals I interviewed spoke of how their schools are working to handle instances of sexual assault and trying to decrease its prevalence. As one participant said, "I don't know what more we can do. I think it has to be a culture change embodied". As gendered communication plays a role in instances of sexual assault, there does need to be a cultural change both in terms of how

we view gender but also how we view sexual relations. In addition to a cultural change, communities and colleges can continue their efforts addressing and eradicating this issue.

Transforming gender norms.

As the mental health and sexual assault professionals interviewed indicated that many female sexual assault survivors have trouble accessing their voice and assertively fighting back verbally and/ or physically, we need to help transform the traditional feminine identity of passivity and focus on preserving relationships to one of strong independence. Buchwald (1992) described how in order to change the rape culture and reduce instances of sexual assault against women:

> We must help young girls grow up strong enough to resist sexual violence and teach them to be independent and to feel valued; to have sexual knowledge; that they can be involved in change; to be critical of the media; to have strong male and female mentors and role models; and, to be supportive of each other. (p. 189-199)

As the media play a significant role in shaping and perpetuating gender roles, we must not only provide strong healthy female role models but also teach women to be critical of media messages. We need to teach women to access their voices and be proud to assert themselves, and also to support each other by not only standing up for each other but also believing each other. As a culture we must help raise strong and proud women.

In addition to transforming traditional notions of femininity, we must also address traditional definitions of masculinity. The participants spoke of some men who knowingly commit sexual assaults because they did not value the woman's refusal. To decrease the number of males committing sexual assaults, our society must change the definition of masculinity from one that centers on "toughness, power, dominance, eagerness to fight, lack of empathy, and a

callous attitude towards women" to a definition that includes "caring, nurturance, and empathy,… courage, strength, initiative, and adventurousness" (Miedzian, 1993, p. 154). This change must involve transforming the male role models depicted in the media as being violent and sexist and also to change the socialization of men to "not see women as commodities and sexual objects to fulfill male pleasure" (Madhubuti, 1993, p. 168). Kimmel (2008) also speaks of the need to encourage emotional resilience in guys, stating that in the end, "we need to develop a new model of masculinity… Being a real man means doing the right thing, standing up to immorality and injustice…" (Kimmel, 2008, p. 287). We need to help men see that masculinity and their sense of manhood is not defined by the amount of women they hook-up with, but rather by the amount that they care and treat others with compassion. As a culture, we need to work on changing limiting stereotypical notions of gender for both men and women.

Creating compassionate communities.

In addition to working to transform traditional gender roles, communities can also help decrease rates of sexual assault by creating a culture and ethos of positive, healthy, and consensual sex. One of the participants pondered how "it is a really interesting topic on how we kinda talk about sex or don't talk about sex and how that plays into assault and then the follow up with it". Many of the professionals interviewed addressed how sex is not often talked about in our society or in families with parents and their children. We need to start having more open and honest conversations about sex and sexual relationships.

Several of the respondents discussed how some men reported seeing the sexual assault as miscommunication, stating that they did not know the female was not interested. Therefore, we need to encourage more healthy dialogues around sex and relationships. Individuals need to be up-front with partners about both their interest levels and boundaries. Many of the participants

indicated that sexual assaults occur because there is not communication. We need to change that and have open conversations about sex not only with our partners, but parents with their children, and students with their peers.

In addition to shaping a supportive open environment around the topic of sex, communities can also work on how they support survivors when sexual assaults occur. Herman (1997) argues that the response of the community influences the ultimate resolution of the trauma, "these two responses, recognition and restitution- are necessary to rebuild the survivor's sense of order and justice" (p. 70). When assaults happen, communities should work on supporting the survivor, validating her experience, and creating repercussions for the perpetrator. By creating a strong stand against sexual assault, communities can allow for all members to feel safe and supported. Communities can help reduce instances of sexual assault by promoting open-dialogues around sex and in supporting survivors when assault does happen.

Making college campuses safer.

The following recommendations for colleges to improve the way sexual assault is addressed and handled on their campuses are taken from Bohmer, and Parrot's (1993) book *Sexual assault on campus: The problem and the solution*. This book presented numerous suggestions for changes that colleges might work on in hopes of eliminating sexual assault and also addressed ways the college could support sexual assault survivors.

Administrators must take a tough stance on sexual assault by striving to: create and follow explicit sexual assault policies that have penalties clearly outlined; eliminate organizations that foster or support rape and rape beliefs; examine and revise if necessary the fraternity system; deal with assault violations harshly and swiftly; create a rapid response team to respond to a report of rape; provide proactive and preventative training and programs; maintain a

safe campus through the use of security escorts, adequate lighting, and phones around campus; and, allocate funds for the prevention of sexual assault. Schools should provide adequate campus judicial procedures that provide equal rights for the defendant and the survivor, and trainings for the judicial board members surrounding sexual assault. Schools should offer services for the survivors that include medical care and counseling supports. The educational efforts schools should make surrounding sexual assault include training for faculty, staff, and hall residents, assault programming, self-defense classes, assertiveness training, and self-esteem programs. As alcohol often plays a role in instances of sexual assault, schools should enforce their alcohol policy and in some cases make the policies more stringent and also provide substance abuse education (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993, p. 182-213).

Bohmer and Parrot (1993) also compiled the following check-list for colleges in assisting sexual assault survivors; I changed the terminology from "victim" to "survivor":

1. Make sure that potential survivors know as much as possible about what to do if they are raped
2. Make sure the frontline people (RAs, counselors, nurses, faculty advisors, and those in the dean's office) know what to do immediately upon receiving information about a charge, or at least where to go to get such information
3. Train people to respond fast and sympathetically
4. Be consistent in what the survivor is told. If you do not know information for sure, then find out; don't tell her something that later turns out to be untrue
5. Make sure the survivor receives all the medical and psychological treatment she needs as soon as possible. Have policies in place to deal with cases that arise on weekends and holidays as well as when everyone is in their office

6. Keep the survivor informed at all stages of preparation for the hearing, as well as afterward
7. Be sure to deal openly and sympathetically with the survivor's parents
8. Make every effort to ensure that the survivor and the defendant do not come in contact
9. Hold the hearing as soon as possible after the event
10. Make sure that the survivor understands what will happen as the case proceeds, especially if she chooses to press charges in the criminal justice system
11. Be sure the survivor understands her role as witness, not plaintiff, in both the campus judicial system and the criminal justice system (p. 53)

Colleges can work on reducing instances of sexual assault by making it a priority on their campuses. Colleges should provide prevention resources and education for not just the students, but also their parents and faculty members. Colleges should provide sufficient funds for prevention and education methods and have full-time staff working as sexual assault coordinators/ resources. Colleges can work on creating a culture of safety and compassion for all students by reducing rates of sexual assault.

Implications for Social Work Practice

This study is important for social work practice in that it brings light to the phenomenon of communication patterns regarding instances of sexual assault on NESCAC college campuses. By better understanding the issue, mental health professionals will be able to better support survivors of assault and create educational programming to help reduce sexual assault. This research has highlighted the amount of guilt, shame, and self-blame that survivors feel, therefore in working with survivors, professionals can better understand and address some of these issues.

In terms of prevention and education, this research indicates that such work should focus around improving the communication around talking about sex and hooking-up and reinforce the necessity of ensuring there is clear, verbal, not-under-the-influence consent from both sides. In working with young women, there needs to be a focus on increasing their self-esteem, assertiveness, sense of self-worth, and ability to say "no". In working with young men, there needs to be emphasis on not only highlighting the importance of communication and increasing emotional resilience, but also on shifting traditional notions of masculinity as defined by hooking-up with as many girls as possible to that of treating others with respect. This study highlighted some of the communication patterns, or lack-thereof, surrounding instances of sexual assault and will aid social work practice in better understanding not only how to work with survivors and perpetrators but also to improve prevention and educational methods around sexual assault.

Conclusion

This study found that gendered communication patters occur before, during, and after instances of heterosexual sexual assault on NESCAC college campuses. The results demonstrated that most assaults occur following the social context of partying and substance use with most survivors knowing their perpetrators. The female survivors' voices are muted during the assault in that she has difficulty verbalizing a refusal, and after the assault when she has trouble acknowledging that she was even assaulted. The voices of female survivors are silenced by her perpetrator and peers when she is afraid to disclose the assault for fear of social isolation, not being believed, or being blamed for the assault. Female survivors find their voices ignored during the assault when the perpetrators do not listen to their refusals, and after the assault when peers, friends, and college administrators dismiss, invalidate, or belittle her disclosure. There

appear to be two main types of male perpetrators: those who feel like there was a misunderstanding in that they did not know it was not consensual, and those who did not care that the woman was not interested but continued with the sexual acts anyway. Internalized notions of femininity and masculinity play out in the communication patterns surrounding instances of sexual assault.

Many of the mental health and sexual assault professionals interviewed discussed how there needs to be cultural changes for sexual assault rates to diminish. There needs to be less of an emphasis on drinking and hooking-up on college campuses and more of an emphasis on clear communication and obtaining consent. I found that there also needs to be changes in traditional gender norms, with more of an emphasis on equality and compassion towards others. Madhubiti (1993) advised that in order for rape to end in our contemporary society, we must: "teach our sons to be anti-rapist; teach our daughters to defend themselves against men; not rely on gender stereotypes that limit both men and women; and learn to love" (p. 174-5). Learning how to feel compassion towards ourselves and others is a great first step in reducing instances of sexual assault, not just on college campuses, but in all communities.

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Appendix A

Human Subjects Review Committee Approval Letter

School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

January 5, 2012

Carolyn Curtis

Dear Carrie,

Your responses all made sense and you have now met all the requirements of the Human Subjects Review Committee. I very much appreciate your alacrity, clarity, excitement and the professionalism with which you approached your project and revisions. If you decide to change your questions a bit or anything like that please let me and Laurie Wyman know before you use them - such changes, given your current study design does not change, could be evaluated very quickly and, unless they create more risk for the participants, should be approved quickly.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Best of luck with your project!

Sincerely,

David L. Burton, M.S.W., Ph.D.
Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Claudia Bepko, Research Advisor

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I am currently receiving my Masters in Social Work from Smith School of Social Work and I am conducting a study on the gendered communication patterns between men and women prior to, during, and after incidents of heterosexual sexual assault on NESCAC (New England Small Colleges Athletic Conference) college campuses. Sexual assault continues to be a pervasive issue on many college campuses, one that has received little attention. In particular, the communication patterns surrounding the assaults occurring on college campuses have not been fully studied. A clearer understanding of this topic will be important to help develop interventions that empower women and reduce rates of sexual assault, in addition to allowing college staff to better understand, prevent, and support survivors of assault. Information obtained from these interviews will be used for my Masters in Social Work thesis, professional presentations, and publication.

You are being asked to participate in a 30 minute phone interview for the purpose of sharing and discussing your experiences regarding working with cases of sexual assault. I am looking to interview mental health professionals or other professionals who deal with sexual assault working at a NESCAC college counseling center who have worked on multiple cases of clients dealing with sexual assault on their college campus. I will not be interviewing individuals who lack the experience of working with sexual assault. The interview will be conducted over the phone at a time convenient to you and I will audiotape the interview and complete the transcription myself. My research advisor will assist me in analyzing and interpreting the data once I remove all identifying information. During the interview, I will ask some basic demographic information (race, age, gender, years of experience, and licensure) and then open-ended questions covering topics pertaining to the gendered communication patterns between men and women employed before, during, and after instances of sexual assault.

There is minimal risk anticipated for you partaking in these interviews; however it is important to realize the potential emotional distress you may experience talking about this. As sexual assault is an emotionally sensitive topic, it may be distressing for you to share your experiences working with this issue and there is a chance you may feel some emotions in regards to your place of employment as we discuss sexual assault on your college campus. You may also experience some difficulties in trying to remember the words and experiences of the clients that I am asking you to represent. These risks are offset by the potential benefits of participating in this study. You may gain a better insight and understanding of the communication occurring during instances of sexual assault as you reflect on and recount your experiences. I will share my findings with you by sending you a one page summary of my results upon completion of my thesis, without using any identifying information of you or any other participants, to allow you and your agency to use this information to help your college community better understand, prevent, and support survivors of sexual assault. You will not be compensated for their participation in the interviews.

The interviews will be audiotaped and I will be the only person to transcribe them. I will remove all identifying information, prior to my research advisor seeing the data. In publications or presentations, I will present the data in the aggregate without referring to any identifying information and will disguise any quotes or vignettes I use. I will keep the data, audiotapes, notes and consent forms in a secure locked cabinet in my room for three years as mandated by federal guidelines after which I will destroy them or continue to keep them securely locked and then destroy them when no longer needed. I will type my data and report on my personal laptop which is password protected, all to ensure confidentiality. I will ask that you not identify any of your own clients to protect their confidentiality.

Participation in these interviews is voluntary and at any time you can choose not to answer a question, skip a question or withdraw from the study. You may withdraw before the study begins or at any time during the course of the interview simply by telling me, upon which I will destroy any of the information you provided. After the interview, you can decide not to have your interviews used up until April 1, 2012 but you must inform me in writing or in an email of that decision. There is no penalty for withdrawal from the study. You can contact me by the email address listed below for any questions or concerns prior to or after the interview, or contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Thank you for your participation in this study. I appreciate you taking the time to share your insight with me. Please keep a copy of this form for your personal records.

YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Signature of Participant _____ Date:_____

Signature of Researcher_____ Date:_____

Researcher email: cacurtis@smith.edu

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Demographic information:

- What is your specific license/ degree?
- How many years of experience do you have working in the mental health field?
- How many years have you been at your current place of employment?
- What is your gender?
- How old are you?
- How would you describe your race/ ethnicity?

Sexual Assault:

- Approximately how many female survivors of sexual assault do you personally encounter in your clinic in an academic year?
- Approximately how many female survivors does your entire clinic usually encounter in an academic year?
- What did the women report on their interactions or communications with the perpetrator prior to the assault?
- What did the women report on their interactions or communications with the perpetrator during the assault?

Note: Depending on the response my participants give, I will ask the following questions to illicit more information if needed:

  - During the assault, did the female survivor report that she felt like she lost her voice in that she felt like she wasn't able to speak up or be assertive?

    - During the assault, did the female survivor report that she felt like her voice wasn't being heard in that the attacker did not listen to her?
    - During the assault, did the female survivor report that the attacker gave her orders to stop talking, or to be quiet?
    - During the assault, did the female survivor report that the attacker physically stopped her from speaking, such as by covering her mouth?
- What did the women report on their experiences after the assault regarding their disclosure or acknowledgment of the attack?
- After the assault, did the female survivor report that the attacker told her or threatened her not to tell anyone about it?
- Approximately what percentage of these women follow through and report the case to a disciplinary committee at your school?
- What are the typical results of disciplinary hearings regarding cases of sexual assault?
- How do these women wish they had communicated differently regarding the assault?
- In your work with these female survivors, do you feel like they have a hard time communicating and talking about the assault?
    - If so, why do you suspect that is the case?
- Have you ever worked with any male perpetrators of sexual assault?
    - If so: Approximately how many male perpetrators do you personally work with each academic year?
    - Approximately how many male perpetrators does your clinic see each academic year?

- What did the men report on how they interacted or communicated with the survivor prior to the assault?
- What did the men report on how they interacted or communicated with the survivor during the assault?

    Note: Depending on the response my participants give, I will ask the following questions to illicit more information if needed:

    - During the assault, did the men report that they ignored the female saying no?
    - During the assault, did the men report that the female did not say no or that she never verbally refused?
    - During the assault, did the men report that they told the female to be quiet or to stop talking?
    - During the assault, did the men report that they physically stopped the female from talking, such as by covering her mouth?
- What did the men report on their experiences in regards to their communication after the assault?
- After the attack, did the men report that they threatened or told the female not to tell anyone?

- Do you have any additional thoughts regarding sexual assault on your college campus?