

“You should have known better:” The Social Implications of
Victim-Focused Sexual Assault Prevention Tips

A Thesis Submitted to the College of
Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts in Applied Social Psychology
In the Department of Psychology
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

By

Sydney Cherniawsky

Permission to Use

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other uses of materials in this thesis in whole or part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of Psychology
9 Campus Drive, 154 Arts
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5A5, Canada

OR

Dean
College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
University of Saskatchewan
116 Thorvaldson Building, 110 Science Place
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5C9, Canada

Abstract

Common sexual assault prevention strategies emphasize potential victims' responsibility to protect themselves. Using a feminist theoretical approach, the present research assesses the unintended, negative consequences that result from taking a victim-focused approach to sexual assault prevention. A between-participants experimental design was employed, whereby participants ($N = 321$) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: 1) victim-focused prevention tips ($n = 114$); 2) perpetrator-focused prevention tips ($n = 103$); or 3) study tips (i.e., for control purposes; $n = 104$). Following prevention tip exposure, participants read a sexual assault vignette and completed measures of victim culpability, perpetrator culpability, and several related constructs. Results indicated that participants who received victim-focused prevention tips attributed significantly more blame to the victim based on the vignette than participants in the perpetrator-focused condition. Implications of the findings are discussed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Melanie Morrison, for accepting me into her lab, believing in me as a graduate student, and allowing me to grow as a researcher. She has taken every one of my ideas seriously, advocated on my behalf, and continues to be a role model throughout my journey as a feminist. I am also grateful for my committee members, Dr. Todd Morrison and Dr. Marie Lovrod, as well as my external examiner, Dr. Elizabeth Quinlan – all of whom provided me with invaluable input and encouragement throughout this project.

For their continual support, I would like to thank my fellow psychology graduate students – especially Iloradanon Efimoff, Karissa Wall, Kandice Parker, Selena Doyle, Evan Poncelet, and Brandon Sparks. I will always cherish the friendships we created and keep a place for you in my heart throughout my future endeavours.

To my family who provides me with unconditional love and support, I express my deepest gratitude. My parents, Michelle and Peter Cherniawsky, devoted their lives to helping others and taught me the importance of standing up for social justice. And last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my partner, Jason Johnson, for his unwavering and enthusiastic encouragement.

Table of Contents

Permission to Use	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Prevalence and Nature of Sexual Assault	2
1.2 Theoretical Explanations of Sexual Assault	3
1.3 Theoretical Explanations of Victim Blaming	6
1.4 Empirical Literature on Victim Blaming	9
1.4.1 The influence of gender and sexual orientation biases on victim blaming	9
1.4.2 The influence of racial biases on victim blaming	10
1.4.3 The influence of clothing-, characterological-, and substance use-related biases on victim blaming	10
1.4.4 The influence of biases toward victim-perpetrator relationships on victim blaming	11
1.5 The Effect of Victim Blaming on Rape Culture	12
1.5.1 The effects of victim blaming on current sexual assault prevention strategies	14
1.6 Incremental Advancements of the Current Study	18
1.7 Research Question and Hypotheses	18
Chapter 2: Method	20
2.1 Participants	20
2.2 Materials	20
2.2.1 Victim-focused prevention tips	20
2.2.2 Perpetrator-focused prevention tips	20
2.2.3 Study tips	20
2.2.4 Vignette	20
2.3 Measures	21
2.3.1 Victim blame	21
2.3.2 Perpetrator blame	22
2.3.3 Rape myth acceptance	23
2.3.4 Belief in a just world	23
2.3.5 Ambivalent sexism	23
2.3.6 Demographics	24
2.4 Procedure	24

Chapter 3: Results	26
3.1 Descriptive Analyses and Intercorrelations	26
3.2 Gender Differences	27
3.3 Hypothesis Testing	27
Chapter 4: Discussion	30
4.1 Explanation of Findings, Limitations, and Implications	30
4.2 Support for a Feminist Theoretical Approach and Theories of Victim Blame	32
4.3 Internal and External Validity	33
4.4 Directions for Future Research	34
Chapter 5: References	36
Table 1.1	45
Table 2.1	46
Table 3.1	48
Table 3.2	50
Table 3.3	51
Figure 3.1	52
Appendix A	53
Appendix B	54
Appendix C	55
Appendix D	56
Appendix E	57
Appendix F	58
Appendix G	59
Appendix H	61
Appendix I	62
Appendix J	64
Appendix K	66
Appendix L	68

List of Tables

Table 1.1: 2018 U15 Sexual Assault Prevention Strategies	45
Table 2.1: Participant Characteristics	46
Table 3.1: Scale Descriptive Statistics ($N = 311$)	48
Table 3.2: Correlation Matrix	50
Table 3.3: Gender Differences	51

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Main Effect of Condition on Victim Blame	52
--	----

Chapter 1: Introduction

The grotesque actions of prominent figures in western culture, such as Jian Ghomeshi, Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, and Donald Trump, have recently amplified the public dialogue around sexual assault. Each of these men is accused of using their positions of power and trust to abuse women whose professional careers relied on their so-called expertise, demonstrating the harmful effects of patriarchy and male privilege (i.e., the former referring to male dominated societies and the latter defined as social, political, and economic advantages experienced by men). In recent years, many Canadian politicians (e.g., Alberta MLA Sandra Jansen, Nova Scotia MLA Joanne Bernard, and former Deputy Prime Minister Sheila Copps) have disclosed incidents of sexual harassment or assault that they experienced during their political careers. The conversation spurred by these and other cases has led social thinkers and activists to reconsider how the issue of sexual assault is being addressed, and how interventions might be reconstructed.

The #MeToo movement, initiated by American activist Tarana Burke and turned viral by actress Alyssa Milano, is an example of the current dialogue regarding sexual assault prevention. The movement encourages women to publicly disclose their experiences with sexual harassment or sexual assault, with the intent to build female solidarity and alert the public to the prevalence of gender-based violence (Zarkov & Davis, 2018). Although many individuals partaking in the #MeToo dialogue have offered nonjudgmental support to those who have disclosed, many others have accused the victims of being at least partially accountable. This is otherwise known as *victim blaming*, which occurs when a victim of crime is thought to be culpable to at least some degree (Randall, 2010). Victim blaming occurs frequently in Western, individualist cultures and strongly hinders the victim's healing process (Breitenbecher, 2006). These frequent attributions of blame call into question the influence of sexual assault prevention initiatives on publicly perceived victim and perpetrator accountability. The present study aims to contribute to this dialogue by investigating current sexual assault prevention strategies utilized within and beyond post-secondary institutions in Western society, with a particular focus on Canadian institutions.

In Canada, sexual assault is defined as any unwanted physical contact that is sexual in nature, such as kissing, fondling, oral-genital contact, vaginal penetration, or anal penetration (*Criminal Code*, 1985). An incident constitutes sexual assault if all persons involved have not provided voluntary consent prior to and during the sexual act (*Criminal Code*, 1985). Consent has not been achieved if it is provided on behalf of another person, the person is mentally or

physically incapable of consenting (e.g., the person is unconscious or intoxicated), there is an abuse of power, trust, or authority (e.g., the dynamic is between a student and professor), the person says or implies “no” through words or behaviours (e.g., the person cries or disengages), or the person changes their mind (e.g., the person indicates that sexual activity is desired at a later time but no longer wants to engage when the time comes, or the person willingly engages in sexual activity and then wants to stop). Although the issues encompassed under the umbrella term “sexual violence” (e.g., intimate partner violence, childhood sexual abuse, stalking, and sexual harassment) are strongly related to one another through their origin and reinforcement of patriarchal power imbalances, the current thesis focuses primarily on sexual assault. The intent of this focus is not to overlook distinctions between the various violations. Further, those who have experienced sexual assault will be referred to as victims to maintain consistency with related literature. It is understood that beyond the parameters of this study, people who have experienced sexual assault may prefer or personally associate with different terminology (e.g., some may prefer the term “survivor” for its potentially empowering connotation, or “target” to emphasize the intentionality of the perpetrator).

The Introduction will be outlined as follows. The body of literature on sexual assault will be briefly summarized, as will the key theories that inform the ways in which sexual assault and victim blaming are conceptualized throughout the present study. The literature review on victim blaming serves to highlight its systemic and inequitable nature, as well as the particular victim and perpetrator characteristics that individuals and social welfare systems commonly hold accountable for sexual assault. The ways in which these characteristics (e.g., gender of victims) have informed current sexual assault interventions (e.g., prevention programs that are victim-focused, such as self-defence) will be reviewed critically. The Introduction will conclude with outstanding questions posed by contemporary victim-focused prevention strategies, and how these deficits in knowledge will be addressed by the present research.

1.1 Prevalence and Nature of Sexual Assault

Although sexual assault is most prevalent in social settings involving alcohol consumption (e.g., at parties), university and college campuses, and private residences (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006; Banyard, Ward, Cohn, & Plante, 2007), sexual assault can occur anywhere. Though anyone can be sexually assaulted (Weiss, 2010), the most common targets of sexual assault are women or marginalized persons (e.g., sexual and/or racialized

minority individuals, and individuals with disabilities; Bryant-Davis, Chung, & Tillman, 2009; Plummer & Findley, 2012; Rothman, Exner, & Baughman, 2011). Indeed, national statistics report that one in three women and one in six men experience sexual assault at some point in their lifetimes (Statistics Canada, 2006). Perpetrators of sexual assault, on the other hand, are predominantly heterosexual men (Hodge & Canter, 1998; McDermott et al., 2015; Scarce 1997). Contrary to popular belief, most perpetrators have a pre-established relationship (i.e., partnership or acquaintanceship) with their targets and engage in deliberate planning before committing their assaults (Guerette & Caron, 2007). The careful premeditation often preceding sexual assaults can make it extremely challenging for victims to recognize their situation as dangerous, or to escape their situation safely. The physical and psychological trauma that many victims of sexual assault experience can have long-lasting effects, often manifesting as PTSD, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and diminished self-esteem (Brewerton, 2007; Neville, Heppner, Spanierman, & Clark, 2004). Lastly, it has been demonstrated that victims are commonly held responsible or receive blame (i.e., from social networks, institutional and legal systems, or the self) for their sexual assault/s, and that this blame can greatly inhibit the recovery process (Randall, 2010; Ullman, Townsend, Filipas, & Starzynski, 2007).

To date, limited empirical attention has been paid to documenting the efficacy of common institutional sexual assault prevention measures, with a notable dearth of research investigating whether the tactics currently being used are beneficial or deleterious. Consequently, the mechanisms that cause interventions to prevent or to facilitate sexual assault serve as the focus of the present research, with the intention of forming better evidence-based intervention strategies aimed at reducing sexual assault in the long-term. An overview of the leading theoretical frameworks pertaining to sexual assault research follows.

1.2 Theoretical Explanations of Sexual Assault

In an effort to explain the prevalence of sexual assault in Western culture, two prominent theories (i.e., sexual conflict theory and feminist theory) have been formulated. Understanding these theoretical frameworks is essential, as they elucidate various societal perceptions surrounding sexual assault. Sexual conflict theory suggests that sexual assault is a result of innate reproductive differences between men and women (Buss, 1989). For instance, reproduction does not necessitate the same amount of physical resources for either sex, as men cannot carry a pregnancy to term. Sexual conflict theory asserts consequentially that men desire sex more

intensely and more often than their more “discriminating” female counterparts, which results in male frustration.

Though the notion that men constantly crave sexual relations remains prominent throughout Western culture, researchers have largely critiqued and distanced themselves from sexual conflict theory. Major criticisms of sexual conflict theory include its failure to distinguish “nature” from “culture.” Given its roots in evolutionary psychology, sexual conflict theory posits that the norms and roles assumed by men and women are universal, when in reality they differ across cultures and individuals (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Helliwell, 2000). This lack of universality vis-à-vis sexual assault suggests that cultural factors are crucial to consider in theoretical frameworks regarding sexual assaultive behaviour. The idea that men are incapable of showing sexual restraint deeply undermines male intelligence and compassion, given that many men choose never to commit sexual assault. Further, sexual conflict theory neglects to account for the one in six men who are sexually assaulted in geographic locations such as Canada. If the intentions behind committing sexual assault stem primarily from the desire to reproduce, then how does one account for the high prevalence of heterosexual men who assault other men (Hodge & Canter, 1998; Scarce 1997)? The criticisms of sexual conflict theory reflect a series of gaps in its proposed explanations for sexual assault — gaps that feminist theory attempts to address.

Feminist theory suggests that sexual assault is a socially constructed phenomenon, fostered by well-established cultural ideologies (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Ryan, 2011). Specifically, mainstream cultural ideologies that involve patriarchal gender norms serve to perpetuate rape culture (i.e., a culture in which sexual violence against women is tolerated; Lea & Auburn, 2001; Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). For example, Western culture commonly portrays dominance, power, and aggression as both admirable and masculine traits (Steinfeldt & Steinfeldt, 2012), a view that is compounded by media (e.g., advertisements and music) that normalize the treatment of women as sexual objects through objectification and hyper-sexualisation (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia, 2013). Thus, a person who has grown up with the understanding that men are “naturally” dominant and women are sexual objects might view sexual assault as permissible or even inevitable. Importantly, these cultural norms are learned and, therefore, can be replaced by norms that communicate an intolerance of sexual assault.

Feminist theory extends beyond its social constructionist roots and focuses on the role of

sexual assault as it pertains to the maintenance of social hierarchies (Donat & D’Emilio, 1992). Although learned social norms play a role in feminist theory, the main factor thought to facilitate sexual violence is the intentional assertion of dominance by men (Hunnicut, 2009). Sexual assault therefore serves the specific purpose of further marginalizing groups that are already oppressed (e.g., women, children, sexual minorities, racialized minorities, and persons with disabilities), or whose existence could challenge traditional gender norms (Riggs & Sion, 2017). By committing sexual assault, perpetrators assert that they do not see their victim/s as equal; therefore, they view themselves and those like them as dominant in areas such as politics and the workforce (Davies, Gilston, & Rogers, 2012; Riggs & Sion, 2017). Supporting this theoretical perspective, sexual violence has been found to be more prevalent in countries where the status of women is low (Yodanis, 2004).

Feminist theory also highlights the role of dominance and power by addressing the sexual victimization of men by heterosexual male perpetrators. Essentially, not all men are viewed as equal within the patriarchy (Kilianski & Rudman, 1998), which is frequently exemplified by hazing processes among sports teams, college fraternities, and the military (Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Pershing, 2006; Scarce, 2001). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have contributed to this argument through their research on hegemonic masculinity and negative attitudes toward marginalized individuals, stating that heterosexual men are taught to devalue anyone who may serve as a threat to their masculinity. The idea that some men are superior to others explains why gay or bisexual men and transgender persons are more likely than heterosexual men to be sexually assaulted (Rothman et al., 2011; Stotzer, 2009). In these cases, perpetrators are enforcing the notion that their stereotypically masculine and heteronormative lifestyles allow them to dominate others, both during the act of sexual assault and within broader society. Thus, the pleasure obtained from assaulting someone is not derived from the sexual act alone but, rather, through exercising control over someone whom perpetrators believe to be less valuable than themselves.

Feminist theory identifies both the purpose of sexual assault (which is to uphold hegemony), and the means through which this purpose is achieved (i.e., the perpetuation of social norms). This modern theoretical perspective provides a comprehensive conceptualization of sexual assault and, by doing so, guides the formulation of the present research. Having established a theoretical approach, the following section will focus on a particular consequence

of the socio-political valences of sexual assault, namely, victim blaming.

1.3 Theoretical Explanations of Victim Blaming

Three key theoretical perspectives (i.e., rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism) provide a foundational understanding of victim blaming in prevention strategies – particularly those that are victim-focused (Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Lerner & Goldberg, 1999, Yamawaki, Darby, & Queiroz, 2007).

Heavily rooted in sex scripts (i.e., societal prescriptions for how men and women should behave sexually), rape myth acceptance theory posits that misconceptions regarding sexual assault circulate in common social networks, causing individuals to misconceive aspects of real sexual assaults (e.g., who is at fault; Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). For example, media commonly portray sexual assault as something that occurs as a result of a “tall, dark stranger” victimizing an unaccompanied, conservatively dressed woman (Anderson, 2007; Roden, 1991). Other common myths include the idea that sexual assault necessitates physical force, and that victims who are heavily intoxicated are at least partially responsible for losing control over their circumstances (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004). Cowley (2014) found that acceptance of these types of myths strongly correlates with victim blaming. Essentially, the greater the variation between the real sexual assault and the stereotypical version, the more the victim is cross-examined and held accountable (e.g., those high in rape myth acceptance may fail to understand how a man could be victimized by sexual assault). Sex scripts also suggest that personal choices like clothing or alcohol consumption reflect how protective women are expected to be over their “sexual integrity.” The scripts may, consequently, lead female victims to feel the need to justify their choice of clothing or level of intoxication whenever they disclose that they were sexually assaulted (Batemen, 1991). Rape myth acceptance has been found to correlate positively with sexism and racism, and is endorsed to the greatest extent by heterosexual men (George & Martínez, 2002; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). This endorsement, even among heterosexual men who do not assault women, serves to reinforce male privilege.

Just world belief theory suggests that some (often privileged) individuals are predisposed or come to know the world as a safe, just place, in which people get what they deserve (Lerner & Goldberg, 1999). In reality, it is impossible to foresee and control the vast multitude of circumstances under which sexual assault can occur. As most people would feel discomfort

regarding the idea that we are all potential targets of sexual assault, it can be easier to believe that victims allow the assault to happen by behaving in unsafe ways. Thus, if victims of sexual assault behave differently than certain individuals expect them to, these individuals may develop a false sense of security such that they are not personally at risk to be assaulted. People who hold this ideology are able to maintain it by systematically ignoring contradictory information, or evidence suggesting that the world is actually chaotic and unfair (Van Deurson, Pope, & Warner, 2012). Several studies have found that people who believe in a just world accept rape myths and blame victims of sexual assault to a greater extent (Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013; Strömwall, Alfredsson, & Landströmvan, 2013; van den Bos & Maas, 2009). This correlation may only exist for men, however, as women who believe in a just world have been found to victim blame less than those who do not (Kleinke & Meyer, 1990). It is likely that women who believe that the world is just attribute less blame to a female victim because they identify with her gender, and fear that the same thing (i.e., sexual assault) could happen to them (Kleinke & Meyer, 1990). In other words, they may feel conflicted by the idea that something as negative as sexual assault happened to someone they identify with in a just world, causing the world to seem less just.

Lastly, victim blaming may result from ambivalent sexist attitudes, stemming from a contemporary form of sexism first conceptualized by Glick and Fiske (1996). Ambivalent sexism is comprised of two dimensions: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism, whereby women are considered to be inferior to men, is the type of sexism that people most commonly refer to when they label a comment or behaviour as sexist or misogynistic (i.e., hateful toward women). The beliefs that women exaggerate their problems and are easily offended are examples of hostile sexism. These beliefs, along with many others relating to incompetence and irrationality, are associated with a generally adverse attitude toward women. It is logical to intuit that this negative bias toward women would cause female sexual assault victims to be blamed or held at least partially responsible. For example, the belief that women are incompetent may lead someone to assume that a woman's incompetent decision-making resulted in her being assaulted. Further, the phenomenon coined by Glick and Fiske (1996) as competitive gender differentiation, whereby men experience enhanced self-esteem as a result of associating with their male identity, could also result in increased victim blaming. Those who derive pride from being "male" are thought to hold a positive bias toward other men, which effectively reduces the amount of blame they attribute to male perpetrators of sexual assault.

In contrast to hostile sexism, benevolent sexism occurs when women are valued for predetermined traits (e.g., innocence, warmth, nurturance) that may be infantilizing or demeaning (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism often appears as positive on the surface, but actually serves to undermine women. For example, the idea that women are valuable for their physical attractiveness may correspond with colleagues overlooking their ability to contribute intellectually to their fields of work (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Ambivalent sexism results when benevolent sexism and hostile sexism occur simultaneously (e.g., beliefs that women are innocent yet incompetent, beautiful yet irrational, and sexually pleasing yet manipulative).

Those who are higher in benevolent sexism might be critical of sexual assault victims who are not perceived to possess the qualities deemed to be valuable in women (e.g., innocence). That is, if a woman is thought to be “flaunting” her sexual desirability by dressing in revealing clothing or isolating herself with men, she may be perceived as somehow asking for or deserving her assault. Particularly in cases of acquaintance sexual assault, benevolent sexism has been linked to decreased perpetrator blame and enhanced leniency in terms of recommended prison sentences (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004). Viki and colleagues (2004) explain that the moderating effect of benevolent sexism on victim blaming might vary between men and women. Specifically, men higher in benevolent sexism might consider when it is or is not appropriate to protect (or cease to protect) women (i.e., men higher in benevolent sexism might feel as though women are responsible to protect themselves from male acquaintances by exhibiting “appropriate” behaviour). On the other hand, women higher in benevolent sexism might believe that if they behave in “appropriate” ways (i.e., dress conservatively and behave “respectfully”), men will choose not to commit sexual assault. Masser, Lee, and McKimmie (2010) support Viki et al.’s (2004) theorizing, in that “stereotypical” victims (i.e., women who conformed to stereotypical gender norms by dressing conservatively and exhibiting passive behaviour) were blamed less than “counter-stereotypical” victims (i.e., women who wore revealing clothing or exhibited assertive behaviour) by those higher in benevolent sexism.

Both sub-components of ambivalent sexism (i.e., hostile and benevolent) positively correlate with rape myth acceptance (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2008), the objectification of women, and self-objectification (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2011; Swamsi, Coles, Wilson, Salem, Wyrozumska, & Furnham, 2010). In turn, Rudman and Mescher (2012) have found strong

associations between sexual objectification and permissive attitudes toward sexual aggression. These findings support the plausibility that ambivalent sexism, as a whole, contributes to victim blaming in cases of sexual assault. As all three theories (i.e., rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism) have been shown to correlate with victim blaming, they will all serve as a basis for comprehending the next section, which provides an overview of the literature on victim blaming and systemic inequities.

1.4 Empirical Literature on Victim Blaming

Perceptions of victim and perpetrator culpability largely inform sexual assault prevention strategies. Presenting an overview of the key systemic factors that contribute to victim blaming attitudes is therefore advisable, prior to any discussion of current prevention strategies. Accordingly, the extant body of literature on victim blaming that reflects the systemic inequities guiding common perceptions of sexual assault perpetrator and victim accountability is reviewed, with the next section describing these influential systems and presenting exemplars from the literature.

1.4.1 The influence of gender and sexual orientation biases on victim blaming. In 2009, Davies, Rogers, and Whitelegg employed a between-participants design to examine the effects of victim gender, victim sexual orientation, victim response, and participant gender on accountability attributions made toward an adolescent victim of sexual assault. The researchers made use of a hypothetical vignette, in which a man sexually assaults his 15-year old niece/nephew. The opportunistic, general population sample included 164 participants (81 male and 83 female) from Preston, England. The majority of participants were Caucasian, heterosexual, and between the ages of 19 and 69. After reading the vignette, participants completed a 15-item attribution questionnaire that assessed victim blame, perpetrator blame, non-offending parental blame, and assault seriousness. As predicted, victims were blamed less when they were female, heterosexual, or physically resistant, and were blamed more when they were male, gay, lesbian, or physically submissive. Male participants blamed the gay male victim who passively submitted to the assault (i.e., did not outwardly resist or try to fight off the perpetrator) the most, and the heterosexual male victim who resisted the assault the least. Female participants blamed victims less overall. The interaction effect of physical resistance and gender on victim blaming has been thought to stem from social stereotypes that portray men as strong, assertive, and capable of resisting unwanted sexual confrontation (Archer, 1992). In regards to

victim sexual orientation, the negative prejudice that participants may feel toward gay men and lesbian women likely contributed to perceptions of the sexual minority person's fault (van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). Similar results have been found in other studies investigating the influence of gender and sexual orientation on perceptions of victim blame (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2001; Wakelin & Long, 2003).

1.4.2 The influence of racial biases on victim blaming. Also using vignette methodology, George and Martínez (2002) manipulated victim race (Black, White), perpetrator race (Black, White), and the type of sexual assault (stranger, acquaintance). The sample consisted of 332 predominantly Caucasian and Asian undergraduate students (170 male and 162 female) from a Western university. After reading a vignette, participants completed the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986) to ascertain any racial bias amongst participants, a multi-item measure assessing perceived victim and perpetrator culpability, a 10-item measure assessing perceived credibility of the victim's refusal, and a scale designed to capture sentencing recommendations (i.e., 1 = no time in prison, 10 = more than 40 years in prison). In accordance with the researchers' hypotheses, perpetrator and victim race were found to determine victim blaming. Participants referred to vignettes illustrating *interracial* sexual assault as "definitely rape" *less* frequently than the vignettes describing *intraracial* sexual assault. Moreover, victims of the interracial sexual assault were perceived to be more accountable and less credible. The pattern of increased interracial victim blame was consistent across victim and perpetrator race combinations, such that both White and Black victims were blamed more if they were assaulted by a perpetrator of another race.

In the same study, George and Martínez (2002) observed that racism scores of female participants only moderated victim blaming in interracial sexual assaults committed by an acquaintance to the victim, indicating that racism did not influence the tendency of female participants to victim blame when the perpetrator and victim were the same race or the perpetrator was a stranger. The racism scores exhibited by male participants were positively associated with victim blaming in all conditions (i.e., the higher the modern racism scores, the greater the victim blaming perpetrated by male participants), confirming that victim blaming – like all bias – is a form of coercion (Randall, 2010).

1.4.3 The influence of clothing-, characterological-, and substance use-related biases on victim blaming. In a 1996 meta-analysis, Whatley compared the findings of studies that had

explored sexual assault victim characteristics to determine their influence on victim blaming. The majority of the studies included in the meta-analytic review were conducted in the United States between 1973 and 1996, and consisted primarily of undergraduate student samples. In six of the seven studies included in the review, victims who wore more revealing clothing were perceived as significantly more responsible. “Character” differences were also found to be significant in 14 of the 17 studies, in that the more “respectable” victim (e.g., a sober mother) was viewed as less responsible than the less “respectable” victim (e.g., an intoxicated blackjack dealer). These findings may be a result of the common belief held by those higher in benevolent sexism that there are socially appropriate and inappropriate ways for women to act (Glick & Fiske, 1996). By failing to adhere to these social expectations, female victims are thought to have put themselves at risk for being assaulted (Masser et al., 2010). In a more recent review, Grubb and Turner (2012) demonstrated support for the effect of “character respectability” uncovered previously by Whatley. Specifically, female victims are stereotyped as more sexually available when intoxicated (i.e., are viewed and evaluated as less respectable), rather than vulnerable and unable to consent. These victims are generally blamed more than victims who had not voluntarily consumed alcohol or drugs prior to their assault.

1.4.4 The influence of biases toward victim-perpetrator relationships on victim blaming. In addition to gender, sexual orientation, race, and behaviour (e.g., a victim’s selected attire and alcohol use), the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim prior to a sexual assault has proven to substantially influence attributions of blame. Viki, Abrams, and Masser (2004) conducted two consecutive studies evaluating this effect. In their first study, 85 student participants (32 male and 53 female) at a large English university comprised the sample. Participants were randomly assigned to receive a vignette illustrating a sexual assault, in which the perpetrator was either a stranger or an acquaintance. A tailored 5-item measure was administered to assess perceived perpetrator blame. A significant interaction was found between benevolent sexism and the type of sexual assault, such that those scoring higher in benevolent sexism attributed more blame to the perpetrator when he was a stranger, rather than an acquaintance. This supports the existence of a prevailing social notion that individuals should have the foresight to identify and address risks posed by those whom they let into their lives.

Viki and colleagues’ (2004) second study consisted of 67 student participants (45 male and 22 female) from the same English university. Using identical vignettes, Study 2 expanded

upon Study 1 by measuring the sentence recommended as a dependent variable. Similar to Study 1, the interaction between benevolent sexism and type of sexual assault was significant (i.e., those scoring higher in benevolent sexism recommended longer sentences for the perpetrator who was a stranger to his target, as opposed to an acquaintance). In turn, participants scoring higher in benevolent sexism recommended a shorter sentence when the perpetrator had known the victim prior to the assault. In addition to illustrating the effects of benevolent sexism, Viki and colleagues' (2004) research demonstrates the likelihood that added responsibility is placed on victims of acquaintance sexual assault. The revealed pattern of blame attribution also indicates that acquaintance perpetrators are let "off the hook" in terms of attributed culpability and enforced punishment. Recently, researchers have gone beyond the scope of circumstantial and systemic aspects of victim blaming to examining its social implications.

1.5 The Effects of Victim Blaming on Rape Culture

Hildebrand and Najdowski (2014) explained the psychological mechanisms (e.g., sex scripts) that are fostered by rape culture (i.e., a culture wherein sexual violence is tolerated), and their subsequent implications on juror decision-making. Based on rape myth acceptance, sexual objectification, and sex norms literature, the authors argued that rape culture would increase the likelihood of jury members acquitting perpetrators. Their review was concluded with the hypothesis that jury members are more likely to acquit offenders when their sexual assaults do not adequately correspond to the stereotypical sexual assault portrayed by media (i.e., a stranger assault where the female victim attempts to fight back). Hildebrand and Najdowski's assessment of victim and perpetrator culpability in the criminal justice system requires further empirical support; however, it raises a critical question — what happens when perpetrators of sexual assault are acquitted?

The acquittal of sexual offenders can affect the support that the victim receives not only from their personal networks, but from broader society as well. When a jury declares that they do not believe a perpetrator is guilty, bystanders may assume that the assault did not actually happen, the victim lied about aspects of the assault, or the victim was somewhat responsible for the assault occurring (Belknap, 2010). When victims of sexual assault are not believed and supported, their risk of developing serious mental health disorders (e.g., PTSD, depression, anxiety, eating disorders) increases substantially, impeding their recovery process (Breitenbecher, 2006; Brewerton, 2007). Victims who are not believed by authorities or their

personal networks often report feeling re-traumatized (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Moreover, if other victims of sexual assault become aware of the hardships (e.g., judgment) that accompany court procedures, they may be deterred from pressing charges against their own perpetrators, or even completing a police report (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2008).

Currently, sexual assault cases are drastically underreported, and conviction rates are alarmingly low (Grubb & Turner, 2012; Kelly, 2002). For example, 33 of every 1000 sexual assaults in Canada are reported to the police, and only three of these reported perpetrators are convicted (Johnson, 2012). It is critical that the quantity of police reports accurately reflects the rate of incidents that occurs for any given crime, as these numbers influence action taken by the criminal justice system. In turn, the criminal justice system influences social beliefs about the frequency and causes of sexual assault, and the extent to which victims should be believed (Grubb & Turner, 2012). For instance, if victims are not aware of the high prevalence of sexual assault, they might feel ashamed to disclose their experiences to supporters. Furthermore, the majority of sexual assaults are committed by repeat offenders (Lisak & Miller, 2002). If victims do not foresee themselves being supported by the criminal justice system and, in turn, decline to report the assault, the perpetrator is free to target others.

In sum, victim blaming serves to maintain inaccurate perceptions of sexual assault within peer groups, the criminal justice system, and among victims themselves – all of which contribute to the rape culture that exists today. It is therefore imperative to assess critically the nature of prevention efforts in order to determine whether they are infused with a victim blaming philosophy that places responsibility for preventing sexual assault primarily on the victims (who are predominantly women and other marginalized social groups).

Below is a brief overview of the sexual assault prevention strategies currently being enacted across the country; namely, bystander intervention, consent education, and self-defence training. What follows after this brief delineation is an effort to contextualize the sexual assault prevention training currently taking place on post-secondary campuses. To better understand the current post-secondary sexual assault prevention context as it may pertain to victim blaming, I provide an assessment of the features of sexual assault prevention strategies within influential Canadian academic institutions, with an explicit focus on the 15 universities deemed the most “research-intensive” in Canada (i.e., the U15). Though not an exhaustive environmental scan of all Canadian universities, reviewing the U15 provides insight as to whether Canada’s top

academic institutions, known for their research intensity, leadership, and innovation, provide their campuses with sexual assault prevention efforts that are indeed victim-focused. Of critical import, too, will be the identification of the effects of victim-focused prevention strategies, in an effort to determine whether the consequences are deleterious in that they “promote” victim blaming (i.e., when an individual is warned that something harmful may occur, and the person was incapable of preventing it from happening, then the blame rests with the individual in question).

1.5.1 The effects of victim blaming on current sexual assault prevention strategies.

Among western institutions (e.g., academic, public security, and healthcare), bystander intervention training, consent education, and self-defence training are prominent sexual assault prevention strategies (Brecklin, 2008). Bystander intervention training is an effective strategy for providing participants of all genders with the knowledge to detect behaviours that facilitate sexual assault, as well as the skills and confidence to safely interfere (Ahrens, Rich, & Ullman, 2011; Gidycz, Orchowski, & Berkowitz, 2011). Consent education can take the form of lectures, standalone or interactive booths, posters, brochures, or awareness campaigns that serve to debunk myths, clarify what does and does not constitute consent, and elaborate on institution-specific policies (Borges, Banyard, & Moynihan, 2008). Although bystander intervention training and consent education call upon people of all genders to prevent sexual assault, they do not specifically target those most likely to be perpetrators (i.e., men). Further, when bystander intervention training and consent education are voluntary, they may be attended more frequently by those who already have a vested interest in ending sexual violence due to their greater likelihood of victimization (i.e., women).

Unlike bystander intervention training and consent education, self-defence training (i.e., education and practice on physical competence, assertiveness, and avoidance techniques) is usually restricted to female participants. Specific examples of self-defence training courses include the *Rape Aggression Defense System* (R.A.D.) and the *Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act Sexual Assault Resistance Program* (Senn et al., 2015). These initiatives primarily target post-secondary students, although community organizations (e.g., police services) occasionally offer equivalent courses for female civilians. Service recipients have reported leaving the *Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act Sexual Assault Resistance Program* with the ability to recognize signs that an assault is about to occur, understand the reality of the danger they are in,

and if need be, fight off their perpetrator (Senn et al., 2015). The effectiveness of these assessment and defence strategies likely depends on a participant's sobriety, which is problematic given the high prevalence of alcohol-facilitated sexual assaults (i.e., particularly among college/university campuses; Armstrong et al., 2006; Cowley, 2014). In other words, women may feel obligated to abstain from alcohol use (i.e., a common social activity) in order to reduce their risk of being sexually assaulted. Although the *Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act Sexual Assault Resistance Program* has offered promising outcomes (i.e., the deconstruction of rape myths and reduced risk of attempted and completed assaults; Senn et al., 2015), it is not known whether public knowledge of the existence of such programs increases victim blame exhibited throughout society more generally. That is, those who do not comprise the small group of program recipients may become aware of the availability of self-defence programs and increasingly blame victims who did not attend training or apply self-defence techniques.

Based on a review of the strategies offered at each of the U15 institutions (please see Table 1.1 for a concise breakdown of sexual assault prevention strategies provided by each U15 institution), nine (i.e., the University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, Laval University, University of Manitoba, McGill University, University of Ottawa, Queen's University, University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Western Ontario) offer bystander intervention workshops; nine (i.e., the University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, Laval University, McGill University, Université de Montreal, Queen's University, University of Toronto, and the University of Waterloo) offer some form of consent education; and eight (i.e., McGill University, Laval University, University of British Columbia, University of Manitoba, University of Toronto, University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Western Ontario) offer self-defence courses. The bystander intervention and consent awareness initiatives appear to target all genders; however, self-defence training is offered exclusively to women. At the present time, only three universities (i.e., the University of Waterloo, University of British Columbia, and the University of Toronto in the form of multifaceted programming) appear to have implemented prevention strategies designed exclusively to engage men. Further, only three institutions in the U15 (i.e., the University of British Columbia, Laval University, and McGill University) provide all three prevention strategies (i.e., bystander intervention, consent education, and self-defence training), seven of the 15 institutions offer two of the three prevention strategies, and two of the 15 institutions offer

just one of the prevention strategies typically implemented. Alarming, of the institutions that comprise the U15, Dalhousie University and McMaster University do not appear to have any sexual assault prevention strategies in place.

In addition to the most common types of sexual assault prevention (i.e., bystander intervention training, consent education, and self-defence training), risk management or avoidance strategies that are aimed at potential victims of sexual assault circulate through society in the form of social norms (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2015). Common risk management strategies (i.e., otherwise known as prevention tips) typically involve: 1) only walking in public or well-lit places; 2) wearing non-revealing clothing to avoid sending the wrong message; and 3) keeping an eye on your beverage at all times to avoid the unwanted consumption of drugs (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2015). Prevention tips like these are often communicated via word-of-mouth (e.g., parents warning their children), social media (e.g., tips found on Twitter), health centres (e.g., womenshealth.gov), post-secondary websites (e.g., Durham College, Mohawk College), and other violence prevention platforms (e.g., Personal Protection Systems Inc). Moreover, prevention tips are reflective of common rape myths, and are therefore geared toward a female audience (e.g., [women] “don’t wear skimpy clothes to the bar;” Payne et al., 1999, p. 55). As a result of their widespread circulation, it is likely that victim-focused prevention tips influence the design and implementation of other prominent sexual assault prevention strategies (e.g., self-defence training and consent education) and encourage institutions to employ a victim-focused approach.

Prevention initiatives intended to engage only women are highly problematic, in that they send a message that sexual assault is an inevitable phenomenon (i.e., some men will inevitably commit sexual assault, so women should take precautionary efforts to protect themselves). According to Murnen (2015), this approach ignores the patriarchal gender norms that actually perpetuate rape culture and thus, fails to target the root causes of the issue. Moreover, focusing prevention tips solely on women excludes the one in six men who are victimized by sexual assault, which could result in rape myth perpetuation (i.e., the assumption that men are never victimized by sexual assault) and increased post-traumatic feelings of victim shame (Taylor-Butts, 2015).

Some platforms for disseminating prevention tips include a disclaimer that the victim is never at fault, and that the socially perceived or personally felt accountability of victims should

not be influenced by prevention tip adherence (e.g., University of Saskatchewan). These disclaimers are likely intended to serve as a safeguard from the resistance and criticism provided tirelessly by feminist groups (Hall, 2004; Hollander, 2009). The vast majority of feminist groups feel that victim-focused prevention tips place the onus on the victim (i.e., female victims) to protect themselves. The precautionary measures encompassed by prevention tips can be strict, inconvenient, and oppressive, and if they are not adhered to when an assault occurs, it is reasonable to predict that at least some blame will fall on the victim (Campbell, 2005; Rentschler, 2015). Furthermore, the notion that increasing the responsibility of one party (i.e., victims) automatically alleviates responsibility from the other (i.e., perpetrators) is often inferred, yet this needs to be empirically examined.

In contrast to victim-focused prevention tips, prevention strategies directed at potential perpetrators (e.g., consent education, social norms training, and programs designed to enhance male empathy toward potential targets) or bystanders (e.g., bystander intervention training) do not appear to run the same risk of enhancing victim blaming attitudes and are becoming increasingly popular (Barone, Wolgemuth, & Linder, 2007; Foubert, 2005; Katz, Heisterkamp, & Fleming, 2011). Perpetrator-focused prevention strategies call upon men to take responsibility for their behaviour and perpetuation of rape culture. This responsibility could take the form of asking for and recognizing consent, understanding the influence of culturally portrayed masculinities, or better understanding the impact of sexual assault on potential targets. Bystander intervention training, on the other hand, sends the message that it is all of society's responsibility to prevent sexual violence by holding perpetrators accountable and supporting victims.

Despite the promising effects of sexual assault reduction that perpetrator and bystander-focused initiatives have demonstrated, institutions and members of the general population often feel strongly that victim-focused prevention strategies should remain accessible. Ideally, prevention strategies should target the root causes of sexual assault without creating additional harm or perpetuating gender-based violence further. To date, the potential consequences of victim-focused prevention tips (i.e., increased victim blaming) have yet to be empirically examined, but doing so could substantially contribute to the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention strategies implemented by Western institutions (i.e., educational institutions, government agencies, health centres, and non-profit organizations endeavouring to reduce sexual violence). Indeed, whether victim-focused prevention strategies serve to increase the deleterious

consequences for victims of sexual assault constitutes the primary focus of the present research.

1.6 Incremental Advancements of the Current Study

The current study aims to advance knowledge of victim blaming and sexual assault prevention in several ways. Firstly, the study assesses a potential shortfall within current, commonly utilized prevention strategies (i.e., the effects of victim-focused prevention tips on victim blaming). To the researcher's knowledge, these effects have not received empirical attention at the present time. All prevention strategies, particularly when implemented by influential institutions like universities, should have at least some degree of empirical support. In the absence of empirical support, it cannot be known whether current efforts are actually resulting in unintended, negative social consequences. Even if prevention tips are not found to influence victim blaming, their utility in regards to helping potential victims avoid being sexually assaulted should be thoroughly examined.

Secondly, the present study examines the function that rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism serve in interpreting prevention tips. Guided by previous research on each of these theories in relation to sexual assault, the possibility that they play a role in the effect of prevention tips on victim blaming is explored for the first time.

Thirdly, the current study adheres to Strömwall et al.'s (2013) recommendation to assess both victim blame and perpetrator blame simultaneously. The majority of research that has examined victim blaming in relation to sexual assault has neglected to include perceived perpetrator culpability as a dependent variable (e.g., Grubb & Turner, 2012; Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia, 2013; Whatley, 1996). As perpetrator blame and victim blame tend to be negatively correlated, the hypotheses will address the concept of culpability through the lens that decreased blame for one party inevitably leads to increased blame for the opposing party.

1.7 Research Question and Hypotheses

Based on a review of the literature, the following research question was formulated: do victim-focused sexual assault prevention tips, when compared to perpetrator-focused prevention tips or unrelated tips, influence perceived victim and perpetrator culpability? In response to this research question, four hypotheses were generated. They are:

H₁: It is predicted that participants who read victim-focused prevention tips prior to reading the sexual assault vignette will perceive victims as more responsible for the assault than participants who are exposed to the study tips (control condition).

H₂: It is expected that participants who receive victim-focused prevention tips will score significantly higher on victim blaming than those who receive perpetrator-focused prevention tips (i.e., participants who view the perpetrator-focused prevention tips will attribute the least amount of blame to victims).

H₃: Conversely, it is predicted that participants who read victim-focused prevention tips prior to reading the sexual assault vignette will perceive perpetrators as less responsible for the assault than participants who are exposed to the study tips.

H₄: It is anticipated that participants who view the perpetrator-focused prevention tips, as opposed to victim-focused tips or study tips, will attribute the greatest amount of blame to perpetrators.

Chapter 2: Method

2.1 Participants

A sample of 321 participants was recruited through the University of Saskatchewan PAWS webpage and the Psychology Department's undergraduate participant pool – the latter providing assignment credit in exchange for student participation. Participants consisted of 110 men, 210 women, and 1 gender non-binary person. The majority of participants were Caucasian (65%), heterosexual (86%), and somewhat liberal (29.5%; 7.8% = very liberal; 22.7% = liberal; 26.6% = somewhat conservative; 12.0% = conservative; 1.3% = very conservative). Most participants attended the College of Arts and Science (72%) and reported never attending religious services (40%).

2.2 Materials

2.2.1 Victim-focused prevention tips. Participants in the victim-focused condition assessed a list of eight victim-focused prevention tips (see Appendix A). Illustrative tips include “Be alert and aware of your surroundings,” “Don’t leave your drink unattended at bars or parties,” and “Don’t wear clothes that might draw unwanted attention.”

2.2.2 Perpetrator-focused prevention tips. Participants in the perpetrator-focused condition assessed a list of eight perpetrator-focused prevention tips (see Appendix B). These tips are reflective of the perpetrator’s role, but are otherwise the same as the victim-focused tips in content. Representative items are “Don’t slip any unwanted substances into drinks at bars or parties,” “Don’t assume that someone’s choice of clothing means they want to have sex with you,” and “If you see someone walking alone in quiet, poorly lit areas, don’t bother them.”

2.2.3 Study tips. Participants in the control condition assessed a list of eight study tips that can be found in Appendix C. Some exemplary items are “Take a ten-minute break every hour,” “Avoid cramming the night before a test,” and “Don’t listen to music or have the television on.”

2.2.4 Vignette. Participants in all three conditions were asked to read a vignette, which can be viewed in full in Appendix D. The vignette describes the circumstances and actions of both the perpetrator and victim, as well as their relation to one another. Although people of all genders and ages can be victimized by sexual assault, the victim in this vignette is a young woman. The reasoning for this choice of victim is that young women have the highest risk of being sexually assaulted, and are the most common recipients of prevention tips (Rentschler,

2015). For similar reasons, the vignette depicts the perpetrator as a young male. As this is an initial examination of the relationship between prevention tips and victim blaming attitudes, this study will pave the way for future research to examine the specific effects of beliefs about victim and perpetrator characteristics. Departing from more stereotypical sexual assault scripts too drastically would be an assessment of the role that beliefs about victim or perpetrator characteristics (e.g., age, sex, race) play in victim blaming, which is not the purpose of the present study.

The vignette illustrates a scenario addressed by a common prevention tip – that being “Watch your drink at bars and nightclubs.” To the researcher’s knowledge, studies that have utilized sexual assault vignettes have not included the words “sexual assault” or “rape,” as they have all been intended to measure participant recognition of sexual assault (i.e., whether participants can determine when a scenario is illustrating sexual assault; Cowan 2000; Slead, Durrheim, Kriel, Solomon, & Baxter, 2002; Strömwall et al., 2013). Alternatively, the purpose of the current study is to measure whether victims are blamed and perpetrators are pardoned when it is clear that a sexual assault has actually occurred, so the phrase “sexual assault” is explicitly stated in the vignette. Additionally, simply stating that a sexual assault occurred is intentionally less graphic than describing the details of a sexual assault, which would likely serve as a trigger to participants who have been personally victimized.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Victim blame. The Victim Blame Scale (VBS) consists of four items that have been tailored to the vignette to measure aspects of perceived victim culpability (e.g., “By leaving her drink on the ledge, Ashley tempted Jonathon to slip something into it”). The full list of items can be referred to in Appendix E. Participants responded to each item on a 7-point Likert scale, whereby 0 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree. Total possible scale scores range from 0 to 24, with higher scale scores denoting greater victim blame.

The number and tailoring of items were modeled after a scale created by Strömwall and colleagues (2013), who reported adequate reliability ($\alpha = .67$) and strong convergent validity with sample scores on a measure of belief in a just world. The VBS demonstrated strong convergent validity by significantly correlating with theoretically related constructs, including perpetrator blame, rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism. In addition to the VBS, victim blame was measured using a single item sliding scale (VB Sliding

Scale) asking participants to rate the extent to which they believe Ashley (i.e., the victim) was responsible for the assault on a scale of 1 to 100 (1 = not at all responsible; 100 = completely responsible). Sliding scales are frequently used in social science research to offer participants a broad range of response options (Downing & Dymont, 2013; Tannenbaum, Uhlmann, & Diermeier, 2011). Measures of this nature have demonstrated strong reliability and validity when applied to related constructs (e.g., prejudice; Herek & McLemore, 2013; Tianmei et al., 2011).

2.3.2 Perpetrator blame. The Perpetrator Blame Scale (PBS) is comprised of four items that have been tailored to the vignette to measure aspects of perceived perpetrator culpability (e.g., “The assault occurred solely because Jonathon wanted it to”). The full list of items can be referred to in Appendix F. Total possible scale scores range from 0 to 24, with higher scale scores denoting greater perpetrator blame. Participants responded to each item on a 7-point Likert scale, whereby 0 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree. One of the four items (i.e., “Jonathon resorted to assaulting Ashley because he is unable to emotionally connect with women.”) was reverse coded. This particular item was included to assess whether participants would excuse the perpetrator for committing sexual assault by believing that his motivation was a product of social awkwardness. Although inclusion of the item only slightly decreased the scale score reliability of the PBS (i.e., $\alpha = .39$ with the item and $\alpha = .48$ without), it has been deemed as an inadequate assessment of perpetrator culpability and results associated with this item should be interpreted with caution. Specifically, a participant could believe that the perpetrator is unable to emotionally connect with women *and* hold him fully accountable, or vice versa.

Due to the inadequate scale score reliability of the PBS in the present study, PBS items were analyzed based on individual item scores, as opposed to total scale scores. Each of the four items correlated strongly with theoretically related constructs (i.e., rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism), demonstrating strong convergent validity. The number and tailoring of items were informed by a scale developed and implemented by Strömwall et al. (2013). Like the VBS, the researchers reported acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .63$) and strong convergent validity with participant scores on a measure of belief in a just world. In addition to the PBS, perpetrator blame was measured using a single item sliding scale (PB Sliding Scale) asking participants to rate the extent to which they believe Jonathon (i.e., the perpetrator) was responsible for the assault on a scale of 1 to 100 (1 = not at all responsible; 100 = completely

responsible).

2.3.3 Rape myth acceptance. The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, Short-Form (IRMA-SF) is comprised of 20 of the original 45 items, and can be located in Appendix G (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). The items address the following subscales of rape myth acceptance: “She asked for it;” “It was not really sexual assault;” “He did not mean for it to happen;” “She wanted it to happen;” “She lied;” “Sexual assault is a trivial event;” and “Sexual assault is a deviant event.” Sample items in the IRMA-SF are: “If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control” (i.e., myth that she asked for it) and “It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped” (i.e., myth that sexual assault is a result of deviance). Approximately half of the items pertaining to each subscale in the original 45-item scale were included in the IRMA-SF based on their psychometric properties. Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree), where higher scores denote greater acceptance of rape myths. Total possible scale scores range from 0 to 120. The IRMA-SF is used frequently in sexual assault research and is considered to be psychometrically sound (Aronowitz, Lambert, & Davidoff, 2012; Jozkowski, Sanders, Peterson, Dennis, & Reece, 2014).

2.3.4 Belief in a just world. The Global Belief in a Just World Scale (GBJWS) developed by Lipkus (1991) is a 7-item measure of one’s tendency to believe that the world is fair and just. As listed in Appendix H, sample items include “I feel that people get what they deserve” and “I basically feel that the world is a fair place.” Responses were coded on a 7-point Likert scale, where 0 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree. Higher scale scores within the total possible range of 0 to 42 denote a greater tendency to believe in a just world. The psychometric properties of the GBJWS have been validated by several researchers following the scale’s development (Hellman, Muilenburg-Trevino, & Worley, 2008; O’Connor, Morrison, & Morrison, 1996).

2.3.5 Ambivalent sexism. Glick and Fiske’s (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) consists of 22 items designed to measure ambivalent sexism, and can be referred to in Appendix I. Within the scale, 11 items reflect hostile sexism (HS; e.g., “Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist,” “Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them”), and the remaining 11 items reflect benevolent sexism (BS; “Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores,” “Women, compared to men, tend to have superior moral sensibility”).

Responses were coded on a 7-point Likert scale, whereby 0 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree (six of the 22 items were reverse scored). Total possible scale scores range from 0 to 132, with higher scores denoting greater degrees of ambivalent sexism. Researchers have encouraged further use of the ASI, as it is deemed sufficiently reliable and valid (Rollero, Glick, & Tartaglia, 2014; Smiler & Epstein, 2010).

2.3.6 Demographics. As illustrated in Appendix J, participants were asked to identify their age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, political orientation, college, and academic major. Age and academic major were reported in an open-ended format. Participants were provided with five categories to record gender (i.e., “female,” “male,” “transgender female-to-male,” “transgender male-to-female,” and “please specify your preferred gender identity if it did not appear on this list”). Participants were provided with an additional eight categories to record sexual orientation (i.e., “lesbian,” “gay,” “bisexual,” “pansexual,” “asexual,” “heterosexual,” “queer,” and “please specify your sexual orientation if it did not appear on this list”). Religious attendance was recorded using four frequency options (i.e., “regularly,” “now and then,” “on special occasions,” and “never”). Political orientation was assessed using a psychometrically robust, single-item measure with response options ranging from 1 (very liberal) to 6 (very conservative; Morrison & Morrison, 2003). For a complete breakdown of participant demographic information, please refer to Table 2.1.

2.4 Procedure

The Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan approved this research on March 13, 2018. Using an online survey platform, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (i.e., victim-focused, perpetrator-focused, or control). Participants in the victim-focused experimental condition began by assessing a list of victim-focused prevention tips selected from various online sources (e.g., post-secondary websites, social media). The complete list of victim-focused prevention tips can be found in Appendix A. Participants in the perpetrator-focused experimental condition were provided with a list of perpetrator-focused prevention tips (i.e., rather than victim-focused prevention tips; please see Appendix B). Participants in the control condition began by assessing a list of study tips, which can be referred to in Appendix C. All participants were asked to summarize the content of the lists, comment on the writing quality, and state any other observations in two sentences or less. The participants’ answers were merely intended to offset demand characteristics that might have

occurred if participants consciously connected the prevention tips to ratings on the VBS and PBS. For similar reasons, each list was presented to participants as the first part of a 2-part study (i.e., the vignette and subsequent measures were said to comprise the second part). After reading the list of tips corresponding with their condition, participants in all three conditions were asked to read the same sexual assault vignette, followed by completion of the VBS, PBS, and both sliding scales (i.e., assessing perceived victim and perpetrator responsibility). Lastly, they were asked to complete the IRMA-SF, GBJWS, ASI, and several demographic items.

Upon completion of the study, participants were provided with a thorough debriefing, wherein the study's true design and hypotheses were revealed. Given that a significant portion of participants likely have personal experiences with sexual assault or violence, the sensitive nature of the study was considered at all times. Preceding the sexual assault vignette, a brief warning notified participants about the potentially triggering nature (i.e., causing someone who has undergone a traumatic experience to have a flashback, including negative emotions) of the study's subject matter. The trigger warning was intended to reduce their likelihood of being taken off-guard and alerted them to opportunities to withdraw from the study. Additionally, participants were provided with appropriate resources if they required extra support following the experiment (e.g., participants were encouraged to contact the University of Saskatchewan Counselling Services or the Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre).

Chapter 3: Results

3.1 Descriptive Analyses and Intercorrelations

All scale score means, standard deviations, ranges (i.e., possible and actual), and reliabilities for all key variables (i.e., VBS, PBS, VB Sliding Scale, PB Sliding Scale, IRMA-SF, GBJWS, ASI, HS, and BS) can be found in Table 3.1. Participants generally scored below the midpoint on the VBS (midpoint = 12, $M = 9.34$, $SD = 5.08$) and higher than the midpoint on the PBS (midpoint = 12, $M = 18.52$, $SD = 3.11$). Thus, participants found the perpetrator of the assault more responsible than the victim overall, although victim blaming was still present. Similar results were found on the VB Sliding Scale ($M = 23.00$, $SD = 34.56$) and PB Sliding Scale ($M = 81.08$, $SD = 33.44$) – each of which had a midpoint of 50.5. Participants typically scored lower than the midpoint on rape myth acceptance, as measured by the IRMA-SF (midpoint = 60, $M = 29.79$, $SD = 13.34$), as well as belief in a just world, as measured by the GBJWS (midpoint = 21, $M = 17.34$, $SD = 7.33$), and ambivalent sexism, as measured by the ASI (midpoint = 66, $M = 56.98$, $SD = 13.27$). The mean total scale scores suggest that the sample was moderately low in rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism.

The alpha coefficients for scale scores on the VBS, IRMA-SF, GBJWS, and ASI ranged from adequate to superior ($.73 < \alpha < .87$). The scale score reliability of the PBS was insufficient ($\alpha = .39$), so the four scale items were treated independently in all subsequent analyses.

Bivariate correlations were computed for all combinations of variables (i.e., VBS, each PBS item, VB Sliding Scale, PB Sliding Scale, IRMA-SF, GBJWS, and ASI), stratified by participant gender. The complete correlation matrix can be viewed in Table 3.2. Scale scores on the VBS were positively correlated with scores on PBS Item 4 (i.e., for female participants only) IRMA-SF, GBJW, and ASI, and negatively correlated with items 1, 2 (i.e., for female participants only), and 3 of the PBS. Thus, participants who attributed more blame to the victim scored higher in rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism, and attributed less blame to the perpetrator. Due to significant correlations ($ps < .01$) with the dependent variables (i.e., VBS and PBS items), the IRMA-SF, GBJWS, and ASI were treated as covariates in the succeeding Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVAs). The IRMA-SF did not correlate to a statistically significant extent with PBS Item 4 scores, and was therefore excluded as a covariate for that particular ANCOVA. The VB Sliding Scale and Perpetrator Sliding Scale exhibited a strong, negative association with each other, but failed to correlate significantly with

any other key variable (i.e., with the exception of the VB Sliding Scale and PBS Item 1). Possible explanations for this unanticipated lack of significant correlations will be considered in the Discussion section that follows.

3.2 Gender Differences

To explore gender differences within the key dependent variables (i.e., VBS, PBS items, VB Sliding Scale, and PB Sliding Scale) and identified covariates (i.e., IRMA-SF, GBJWS, and ASI), one-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. Results of these ANOVAs (i.e., male and female means, F and p -values, and effect sizes) can be viewed in Table 3.3. Significant gender differences were found on the VBS, IRMA-SF, GBJWS, and ASI ($ps \leq .003$), such that female participants scored lower than male participants on each variable. These results indicate that women in the sample blamed the victim less and demonstrated fewer traits associated with victim blaming (i.e., rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism) than their male counterparts. The same dependent variables did not, however, vary across conditions (i.e., as demonstrated by an additional ANOVA stratifying data based on condition). Further, a significant gender difference was found on PBS Item 2 (i.e., “Had there been no drinks left unattended that night, Jonathon probably still would have found a way to assault someone”; $F(1, 309) = 21.57, p < .0001$), whereby men had lower mean scores than women. Female participants were therefore more likely than male participants to attribute the assault to the perpetrator’s intentions, rather than circumstantial factors (i.e., the unattended drink). No significant gender differences were found in the remaining three items on the PBS, the VB Sliding Scale, or the PB Sliding Scale.

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

To test Hypothesis 1, which predicted that participants who read victim-focused prevention tips prior to reading the sexual assault vignette would perceive victims as more responsible for the assault than participants who were exposed to the study tips (control condition), a 2 (participant gender: male, female) X 3 (prevention tips: victim-focused, perpetrator-focused, control) ANCOVA was conducted. Variance attributed to rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism was controlled. There was no interaction effect of participant gender and condition on VBS scores, and no main effect of participant gender on VBS scores. There was, however, a significant effect of participant condition on VBS scores, $F(2, 302) = 4.23, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .03$ (see Figure 3.1 for an illustration of

the main effect of condition on victim blame). The mean scores of participants in the control condition were lower than those in the victim-focused condition, as expected (victim-focused $M = 10.30$, $SD = 5.57$; control $M = 8.87$, $SD = 4.92$). Based on a Bonferroni post-hoc analysis, the mean difference did not reach statistical significance.

To further test Hypothesis 1, an additional ANOVA was conducted using scores on the VB Sliding Scale as the dependent variable. Because the VB Sliding Scale scores were not significantly correlated with participant scores on the IRMA-SF, GBJWS, or ASI, the 2 (participant gender: male, female) X 3 (prevention tips: victim-focused, perpetrator-focused, control) ANOVA was conducted without the inclusion of covariates. There were no significant interaction effects or main effects of gender and condition on the VB Sliding Scale. Thus, the hypothesis that participants exposed to study tips would blame victims significantly less than participants exposed to victim-focused tips was not supported. It is noteworthy, however, that 44 of the 321 participants with suitable data selected values between 90 and 100 (i.e., placing substantial blame on the victim).

Hypothesis 2, which predicted that participants who viewed the perpetrator-focused prevention tips would attribute the least amount of blame to victims, was tested using the same 2 (participant gender: male, female) X 3 (prevention tips: victim-focused, perpetrator-focused, control) ANCOVA utilized to test Hypothesis 1. A Bonferroni post-hoc analysis was used to further examine the significant main effect of condition on VBS scores (referred to in Hypothesis 1). As anticipated, mean scores of the perpetrator-focused group were lower than those of the victim-focused group and control group (victim-focused $M = 10.30$, $SD = 5.57$; control $M = 8.87$, $SD = 4.92$; perpetrator-focused $M = 8.43$, $SD = 4.63$). Hypothesis 2 was therefore supported, as participants in the perpetrator-focused condition blamed victims significantly less than those in the victim-focused condition ($p = .03$).

Hypotheses 3 and 4 respectively predicted that participants who read victim-focused prevention tips prior to reading the sexual assault vignette would perceive perpetrators as less responsible for the assault than participants who were exposed to the study tips, and that participants who viewed the perpetrator-focused prevention tips would attribute the greatest amount of blame to perpetrators. Both hypotheses were tested using four 2 (participant gender: male, female) X 3 (prevention tips: victim-focused, perpetrator-focused, control) ANCOVAs, wherein scores on each item of the PBS was treated as a dependent variable. Variance attributed

to rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism was controlled. No significant interaction effects or main effects of gender and condition were found for items 1, 3, and 4 of the PBS. There was, however, a significant main effect of participant gender on PBS Item 2 (i.e., “Had there been no drinks left unattended that night, Jonathon probably still would have found a way to assault someone”) scores, $F(1, 302) = 12.84, p < .0001, \eta_p^2 = .04$. Specifically, in comparison to their male counterparts, female participants believed that the perpetrator would likely have assaulted someone regardless of the unattended drink (female $M = 4.61, SD = 1.24$; male $M = 3.89, SD = 1.41$).

To further test Hypotheses 3 and 4, an additional ANOVA was conducted. Due to the non-significant correlations between the PB Sliding Scale scores and participant scores on the IRMA-SF, GBJWS, and ASI, the 2 (participant gender: male, female) X 3 (prevention tips: victim-focused, perpetrator-focused, control) factorial ANOVA did not utilize covariates. There were no significant interaction effects or main effects of gender and condition on the PB Sliding Scale scores. Thus, the predictions that participants exposed to perpetrator-focused tips would blame victims significantly less than participants exposed to both study tips and victim-focused prevention tips were not supported. It is worth noting, however, that 42 of the 321 participants with suitable data selected values between 1 and 10 (i.e., placing minimal blame on the perpetrator).

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Explanation of Findings, Limitations, and Implications

The main objective of the present research was to measure, for the first time, the effects of victim-focused prevention tips on blame allocated to both victims and perpetrators of sexual assault. In order to achieve this, a between-participants experimental design was employed, whereby participants ($N = 321$) were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: 1) victim-focused prevention tips ($n = 114$); 2) perpetrator-focused prevention tips ($n = 103$); or 3) study tips (i.e., for control purposes; $n = 104$). After reading the prevention tips corresponding to their conditions, participants were asked to read a sexual assault vignette and complete measures of victim culpability (i.e., VBS and VB Sliding Scale), perpetrator culpability (i.e., PBS and Perpetrator Blame Scale), and several related constructs (i.e., IRMAS, GBJWS, and ASI). The results, limitations, and implications of this study will now be discussed in greater depth.

Of the four hypotheses tested, one of the four (i.e., Hypothesis 2) was supported through the results of the ANCOVAs. Participants in the victim-focused condition exhibited significantly more victim blame (i.e., according to scale scores on the VBS) than participants in the perpetrator-focused condition. Alternatively, participants in the perpetrator-focused condition demonstrated less victim blame, as compared to participants in the victim-focused condition. These findings, albeit modest, support the idea that mere exposure to victim-focused prevention tips can cause individuals to hold victims more responsible following their assaults (Campbell, 2005; Rentschler, 2015). Given that increased victim blame has a multitude of negative effects on those who have experienced sexual assault (e.g., increased anxiety, depression, PTSD; Ullman et al., 2007) and likely influences the decision-making of court authorities (Hildebrand & Najdowski, 2014), individuals and institutions should consider refraining from offering victim-focused prevention tips. At the very least, the utility of these tips should be thoroughly examined, with the extent of rape myth acceptance and sexist attitudes reflected by the tips taken into account. Victim-focused prevention tips that are founded in rape myths are likely to have minimal to no positive impact on the safety of potential targets, so the plausible risks of enhancing victim blame and perpetuating rape myths make tips of this nature unwarranted.

Given the potential implications of these findings, researchers should empirically assess whether additional victim-focused prevention strategies, such as self-defence training, might

have similar negative consequences (i.e., increased victim blaming). It is plausible that the extent to which the effect of increased victim blaming is replicated in other victim-focused prevention strategies depends on the specific program's projection of rape myths. Nevertheless, it is pertinent that institutions understand both the positive and negative outcomes of a program before it is made available to the public. Having reflected upon the serious implications stemming from the effect of victim-focused prevention tips on victim blaming, the effects of prevention tips on perpetrator blame will now be discussed.

A similar effect of prevention tip condition on perpetrator blame (i.e., significant difference between victim-focused and perpetrator-focused conditions) was not achieved, contrary to the hypotheses that participants in the victim-focused condition would blame perpetrators the least, and participants in the perpetrator-focused condition would blame perpetrators the most. This finding is particularly interesting, given that a strong relation between victim and perpetrator blame is often assumed (i.e., by placing more blame on one party, the other party should logically receive less blame). The lack of significant effects of condition on perpetrator blame may be due to limitations of the present study. Firstly, the PBS did not demonstrate adequate reliability, so items were analysed independently. Albeit necessary, the item-level analyses likely jeopardized the content validity of the PBS. It is likely that each item only addressed one aspect of perpetrator blame, rather than all components. Secondly, the vignette's unambiguous language (e.g., "he sexually assaulted her") and thorough description of the perpetrator's actions leading up to the assault may have minimized the effect of condition on perpetrator blame. The intention behind the detailed description was to examine whether participants exhibited victim blaming tendencies when it was clear that an assault occurred, rather than to examine whether participants believed an assault actually occurred. Increasing the ambiguity of language included in the vignette could have resulted in reduced perpetrator blame — particularly for those in the victim-focused condition. Alternatively, it is possible that the lack of significant effects of condition on perpetrator blame is as result of the persistent operation of prevailing attitudes toward sexual assault victims and perpetrators. In other words, participants' attributions of perpetrator culpability may be so deep-seated and consistent across scenarios that they are minimally influenced by cues preceding the vignette.

Hypotheses 1 and 3, which compared the mean scores of those in the victim-focused and perpetrator-focused conditions to those in the control condition, were also not statistically

supported. This is likely because participants are exposed to rape myths and social attitudes about sexual assault on a regular basis. The study tips were intended to reflect a state of neutrality (or irrelevance) in regards to victim and perpetrator blame, so participants in this condition would have likely perceived victim and perpetrator culpability based on their previous knowledge and attitudes. Thus, the victim-focused and perpetrator-focused prevention tips did not evoke any substantially different attitudes in participants than attitudes they already held.

Finally, participant gender was not associated with victim blame or perpetrator blame when covariates (i.e., rape myth acceptance, belief in a just world, and ambivalent sexism) were accounted for, with the exception of item 2 of the PBS (i.e., “Had there been no drinks left unattended that night, Jonathon probably still would have found a way to assault someone”). The lack of disparity between male and female participants on victim blame and perpetrator blame (i.e., for most items) is somewhat unsurprising, in that both men and women are involved in the distribution of victim-focused sexual assault prevention tips (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2015). The non-significant gender effects are also aligned with Masser et al.’s (2010) findings, wherein female participants higher in benevolent sexism blamed women who wore revealing clothing more than women who dressed conservatively (i.e., a behaviour often considered to be “responsible” and “protective”).

4.2 Support for a Feminist Theoretical Approach and Theories of Victim Blame

The significant difference in victim blame between individuals exposed to victim-focused and perpetrator-focused sexual assault prevention tips provides support for the use of a feminist theoretical model in sexual assault research. Specifically, the implications highlighted by these findings likely extend beyond negative victim outcomes and affect the patriarchal structure of society. The victim blaming brought about by consistent and long-term use of victim-focused prevention tips could contribute to the ongoing oppression of women, sexual and/or racialized minority individuals, and other marginalized social groups who are targeted by perpetrators of sexual assault at disproportionately high rates (Bryant-Davis et al., 2009; Plummer & Findley, 2012; Rothman et al., 2011). By continuing to provide victim-focused prevention tips despite their association with increased victim blaming, powerful, influential institutions (e.g., universities) and individuals (e.g., politicians) may be making a statement that they support the patriarchal social structure as it stands.

The main finding of this study also verifies theoretical approaches for victim blaming,

including rape myth acceptance, ambivalent sexism, and belief in a just world. Participant attributions of victim blame and perpetrator blame were significantly correlated with these variables, indicating that these constructs are both theoretically and statistically related.

4.3 Internal and External Validity

In interpreting the present study's findings, internal and external validity should be taken into consideration. The study demonstrated strong internal validity through its utilization of random assignment to allocate participants to the three conditions. This ensured that there was symmetry between participants within the different groups. The temporal precedence of the list of tips also ensured the internal validity of subsequent measures. In other words, the order by which the study materials were administered (i.e., tips, vignette, and measures of blame) helped to ensure that confounding variables did not account for the emergent effects. Additionally, participants were not aware of the condition to which they were assigned.

The study did not include a random sample, therefore, generalizability cannot be assumed. The sample consisted of participants who were educated and generally liberal in political orientation. The online means of participant recruitment also entailed a self-selection bias. This limits the generalizability of the findings, as they may not pertain to individuals with lower levels of education or differing political orientations. Research on the association between socio-political ideologies and traits related to victim blaming, such as belief in a just world, (Hafer & Sutton, 2016; Jost & Amodio, 2012; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003), ambivalent sexism (Mosso, Briante, Aiello, & Russo, 2013), and rape myth acceptance (Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997), suggests that participants with a conservative political orientation may be more likely to victim blame than their politically liberal counterparts. Likewise, research on victim blaming that accounts for participant education level supports the hypothesis that participants with more education will attribute less blame to sexual assault victims (Idisis, Ben-David, & Ben-Nachum, 2007).

In addition to various sample characteristics, the relevance of the present study's results will likely depend on the political climate and cultural dialogue around sexual violence. For example, the #MeToo movement that has recently consumed popular media could influence the public's awareness and knowledge of sexual assault, allowing receivers of victim-focused prevention tips to be more critical. The effect of prevention tips on victim blaming attitudes would therefore be minimized.

4.4 Directions for Future Research

Based on the discussed findings and limitations, several directions for future research are proposed. Firstly, researchers should further examine the effects of victim-focused prevention strategies on blame attributed to perpetrators. This could involve the administration of various forms of vignettes (i.e., differing factors preceding the assault, degrees of ambiguity, or perpetrator and victim characteristics). It could also entail the modification or development of measures for assessing perceived perpetrator accountability. To the researcher's knowledge, measures of perpetrator blame have generally been developed for the specific vignette included in each study (e.g., George and Martínez, 2002; Strömwall et al., 2013). A thoroughly created and validated measure of perpetrator blame that could be easily tailored to a broad range of sexual assault vignettes may support the accuracy, implications, and ease of production of sexual assault culpability research.

Secondly, the addition of qualitative analyses would be valuable, in that quantitative findings would be accompanied by descriptions of participants' subjective thought processes. Participants' explanations of their vignette interpretations and motivating factors in blame allocation could provide deeper insight into the mechanisms associated with the effects of prevention tips on both victim and perpetrator culpability assessments. The use of a mixed methods approach would also serve as useful when determining the validity of quantitative measures, such as the PBS.

Thirdly, it is suggested that similar studies be conducted outside of the academy with non-student participants. Extending the present research design to samples with varying characteristics will enhance the generalizability of findings (Peterson, 2001). It is inferred that the effects of victim-focused prevention tips on victim blaming would be amplified in a less educated or more politically conservative sample (Christopher & Mull, 2006; Costa-Lopes, Dovidio, Pereira, & Jost, 2013; Kassing, Beesley, & Frey, 2005). If these findings were in fact magnified, it would further support the argument that the use of victim-focused prevention tips as a sexual assault prevention strategy should be reconsidered.

Additionally, the effects of perpetrator or bystander-focused prevention strategies (e.g., consent education, social norms education, bystander intervention training) should be further examined. Rather than placing the burden on women to protect themselves, these approaches highlight the involvement of all persons (i.e., with a particular emphasis on men) in sexual

assault prevention. Studies have found that those who partake in bystander intervention training that is accompanied by social norms training and a consent education component experience a significant increase in self-reported confidence to interfere when inappropriate behaviour is encountered, as well as decreased participation in rape culture (e.g., watching sexually explicit media or associating with aggressive peers; Gidycz et al., 2011). If these programs are able to effectively reduce sexual assault without the added negative effect of increased victim blame, it is critical to assess ways in which their outreach and delivery can be optimized. The potential impact of these prevention strategies should thus be empirically examined, in order to support the development and maintenance of related programming.

Lastly, future research should examine the effects of victim blaming on both victims of sexual assault and society as a whole. Researchers could examine the effects of victim blaming on rape culture by providing participants with a vignette in which someone is blamed for being sexually assaulted, and observing participants' responses in the form of quantitative and qualitative data. Participants could assign more blame to the victim after observing someone else's enhanced blame attributions – an effect that could spread between individuals interpreting real cases of sexual assault and propagate rape culture. Additional research in the areas of victim outcomes and rape culture perpetuation may serve to further support the elimination of victim-focused prevention tips, and to advocate for the need to develop, evaluate, and fund alternative methods of sexual assault prevention.

Chapter 5: References

- Abrams, D., Viki, G. T., Masser, B., & Bohner, G. (2003). Perceptions of stranger and acquaintance rape: The role of benevolent and hostile sexism in victim blame and rape proclivity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(1), 111-125.
- Ahrens, C. E., Rich, M. D., & Ullman, J. B. (2011). Rehearsing for real life: The impact of the InterACT Sexual Assault Prevention Program on self-reported likelihood of engaging in bystander interventions. *Violence Against Women, 17*(6), 760-776.
- Anderson, I. (2007). What is a typical rape? Effects of victim and participant gender in female and male rape perception. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 46*(1), 225-245.
- Anderson, K. , Cooper, H. , & Okamura, L. (1997). Individual differences and attitudes toward rape: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23*(3), 295-315.
- Archer, J. (1992). Childhood gender roles: Social context and organization. In H. McGirl (Ed.), *Childhood social development: Contemporary perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Armstrong, E. A., Hamilton, L., & Sweeney, B. (2006). Sexual assault on campus: A multilevel, integrative approach to party rape. *Social Problems, 53*(4), 483-499.
- Aronowitz, T., Lambert, C. A., & Davidoff, S. (2012). The role of rape myth acceptance in the social norms regarding sexual behavior among college students. *Journal of Community Health Nursing, 29*(3), 173-182.
- Banyard, V. L., Ward, S., Cohn, E. S., & Plante, E. G. (2007). Unwanted sexual contact on campus: A comparison of women's and men's experiences. *Violence and Victims, 22*(1), 52-70.
- Barone, R. P., Wolgemuth, J. R., & Linder, C. (2007). Preventing sexual assault through engaging college men. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(5), 585-594.
- Bedera, N., & Nordmeyer, K. (2015). "Never go out alone": An analysis of college rape prevention tips. *Sexuality & Culture, 19*(3), 533-542.
- Belknap, J. (2010). Rape: Too hard to report and too easy to discredit victims. *Violence Against Women, 16*(12), 1335-1344.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (2007). *The social construction of reality [1966]*.
- Brecklin, L. R. (2008). Evaluation outcomes of self-defense training for women: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 13*, 60-76.

- Breitenbecher, K.H. (2006). The relationships among self-blame, psychological distress, and sexual victimization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 21*(5), 597-611.
- Brewerton, T. D. (2007). Eating disorders, trauma, and comorbidity: Focus on PTSD. *Eating Disorders, 15*(4), 285-304.
- Bryant-Davis, T., Chung, H., & Tillman, S. (2009). From the margins to the center: Ethnic minority women and the mental health effects of sexual assault. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 10*(4), 330-357.
- Buss, D. M. (1989). Conflict between the sexes: Strategic interference and the evocation of anger and upset. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*(5), 735-747.
- Campbell, A. (2005). Keeping the 'lady' safe: The regulation of femininity through crime prevention literature. *Critical Criminology, 13*(2), 119-140.
- Chapleau, K. M., Oswald, D. L., & Russell, B. L. (2008). Male rape myths: The role of gender, violence, and sexism. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 23*(5), 600-615.
- Christopher, A. N., & Mull, M. S. (2006). Conservative ideology and ambivalent sexism. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 30*(2), 223-230.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender and Society, 19*(6), 829-859.
- Costa-Lopes, R., Dovidio, J. F., Pereira, C. R., & Jost, J. T. (2013). Social psychological perspectives on the legitimization of social inequality: Past, present and future. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 43*(4), 229-237.
- Cowan, G. (2000). Beliefs about the causes of four types of rape. *Sex Roles, 42*(9-10), 807-823.
- Cowley, A. D. (2014). "Let's get drunk and have sex": The complex relationship of alcohol, gender, and sexual victimization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 29*(7), 1258-1278.
- Criminal Code, R.S.C. 1985, c.46, s.231*(6).
- Davies, M., Gilston, J., & Rogers, P. (2012). Examining the relationship between male rape myth acceptance, female rape myth acceptance, victim blame, homophobia, gender roles, and ambivalent sexism. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*(14), 2807-2823.
- Davies, M., Pollard, P., & Archer, J. (2001). The influence of victim gender and sexual orientation on judgments of the victim in a depicted stranger rape. *Violence and Victims, 16*(6), 607-619.
- Davies, M., Rogers, P., & Whitelegg, L. (2009). Effects of victim gender, victim sexual

- orientation, victim response and respondent gender on judgements of blame in a hypothetical adolescent rape. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 14(2), 331-338.
- Donat, P. L., & D'Emilio, J. (1992). A feminist redefinition of rape and sexual assault: Historical foundations and change. *Journal of Social Issues*, 48(1), 9-22.
- Downing, J. J., & Dymont, J. E. (2013). Teacher educators' readiness, preparation, and perceptions of preparing preservice teachers in a fully online environment: An exploratory study. *The Teacher Educator*, 48(2), 96-109.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A. G. & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39(2), 175-191.
- Foubert, J. D. (2005). *The Men's Program: A peer education guide to rape prevention* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Frese, B., Moya, M., & Megías, J. L. (2004). Social perception of rape: How rape myth acceptance modulates the influence of situational factors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19(2), 143-161.
- George, W. H., & Martínez, L. J. (2002). Victim blaming in rape: Effects of victim and perpetrator race, type of rape, and participant racism. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26(2), 110-119.
- Gidycz, C. A., Orchowski, L. M., & Berkowitz, A. D. (2011). Preventing sexual aggression among college men: An evaluation of a social norms and bystander intervention program. *Violence Against Women*, 17, 720-742.
- Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1996). The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating hostile and benevolent sexism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(3), 491-512.
- Grubb, A., & Turner, E. (2012). Attribution of blame in rape cases: A review of the impact of rape myth acceptance, gender role conformity and substance use on victim blaming. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 17(5), 443-452.
- Guerette, S. M., & Caron, S. L. (2007). Assessing the impact of acquaintance rape: Interviews with women who are victims/survivors of sexual assault while in college. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 22(2), 31-50.
- Hafer, C. L., & Sutton, R. (2016). Belief in a just world. In C. Sabbagh & M. Schmitt (Eds.), *Handbook of social justice theory and research* (pp. 145-160). Springer, New York, NY.

- Hall, R. (2004). "It can happen to you": Rape prevention in the age of risk management. *Hypatia*, 19(3), 1-18.
- Hanson, R. K., & Morton-Bourgon, K. E. (2005). The characteristics of persistent sexual offenders: A meta-analysis of recidivism studies. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(6), 1154.
- Hayes, R. M., Lorenz, K., & Bell, K. A. (2013). Victim blaming others: Rape myth acceptance and the just world belief. *Feminist Criminology*, 8(3), 202-220.
- Helliwell, C. (2000). "It's only a penis": Rape, feminism, and difference. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 25(3), 789-816.
- Hellman, C. M., Muilenburg-Trevino, E. M., & Worley, J. A. (2008). The belief in a just world: An examination of reliability estimates across three measures. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 90(4), 399-401.
- Herek, G. M., & McLemore, K. A. (2013). Sexual prejudice. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 64, 309-333.
- Hildebrand, M. M., & Najdowski, C. J. (2014). The potential impact of rape culture on juror decision making: Implications for wrongful acquittals in sexual assault trials. *Albany Law Review*, 78, 1059-1086.
- Hodge, S., & Canter, D. (1998). Victims and perpetrators of male sexual assault. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13(2), 222-239.
- Hollander, J. A. (2009). The roots of resistance to women's self-defense. *Violence Against Women*, 15(5), 574-594.
- Hunnicut, G. (2009). Varieties of patriarchy and violence against women: Resurrecting "patriarchy" as a theoretical tool. *Violence Against Women*, 15(5), 553-573.
- Idisis, Y., Ben-David, S., & Ben-Nachum, E. (2007). Attribution of blame to rape victims among therapists and non-therapists. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 25(1), 103-120.
- Johnson, H. (2012). Limits of a criminal justice response: Trends in police and court processing of sexual assault. *Sexual Assault in Canada: Law, Legal Practice and Women's Activism*, 640, 305-341.
- Jost, J. T., & Amodio, D. M. (2012). Political ideology as motivated social cognition: Behavioral and neuroscientific evidence. *Motivation and Emotion*, 36(1), 55-64.
- Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sulloway, F. J. (2003). Political conservatism as

- motivated social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(3), 339.
- Jozkowski, K. N., Sanders, S., Peterson, Z. D., Dennis, B., & Reece, M. (2014). Consenting to sexual activity: The development and psychometric assessment of dual measures of consent. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 43(3), 437-450.
- Kassing, L. R., Beesley, D., & Frey, L. L. (2005). Gender role conflict, homophobia, age, and education as predictors of male rape myth acceptance. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 27(4), 311-328.
- Katz, J., Heisterkamp, H. A., & Fleming, W. M. (2011). The social justice roots of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Model and its application in a high school setting. *Violence Against Women*, 17(6), 684-702.
- Kelly, L. (2002). *A research review on the reporting, investigation and prosecution of rape cases*. London: Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.
- Kilianski, S. E., & Rudman, L. A. (1998). Wanting it both ways: Do women approve of benevolent sexism? *Sex Roles*, 39(5), 333-352.
- Kirby, S. L., & Wintrup, G. (2002). Running the gauntlet: An examination of initiation/hazing and sexual abuse in sport. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 8(2), 49-68.
- Kleinke, C. L., & Meyer, C. (1990). Evaluation of rape victim by men and women with high and low belief in a just world. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 14(3), 343-353.
- Lea, S., & Auburn, T. (2001). The social construction of rape in the talk of a convicted rapist. *Feminism & Psychology*, 11(1), 11-33.
- Lerner, M. J., & Goldberg, J. H. (1999). When do decent people blame victims? The differing effects of the explicit/rational and implicit/experiential cognitive systems. In S. Chaiken & Y. Trope (Eds.), *Dual-process theories in social psychology* (pp. 627-640). New York: Guilford.
- Lipkus, I. (1991). The construction and preliminary validation of a Global Belief in a Just World Scale and the exploratory analysis of the multidimensional Belief in a Just World Scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 12(11), 1171-1178.
- Lisak, D., & Miller, P. M. (2002). Repeat rape and multiple offending among undetected rapists. *Violence and Victims*, 17(1), 73-84.
- Liss, M., Erchull, M. J., & Ramsey, L. R. (2011). Empowering or oppressing? Development and exploration of the Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale. *Personality and Social Psychology*

- Bulletin*, 37(1), 55-68.
- Loughnan, S., Pina, A., Vasquez, E. A., & Puvia, E. (2013). Sexual objectification increases rape victim blame and decreases perceived suffering. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 37(4), 455-461.
- McConahay, J. B. (1986). Modern racism, ambivalence & the modern racism scale. In J. Dovidio, & S. Gaertner (Eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination and racism* (pp. 91–127). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- McDermott, R. C., Kilmartin, C., McKelvey, D. K., & Kridel, M. M. (2015). College male sexual assault of women and the psychology of men: Past, present, and future directions for research. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 16(4), 355.
- Morrison, M. A., & Morrison, T. G. (2003). Development and validation of a scale measuring modern prejudice toward gay men and lesbian women. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 43(2), 15-37.
- Mosso, C., Briante, G., Aiello, A., & Russo, S. (2013). The role of legitimizing ideologies as predictors of ambivalent sexism in young people: Evidence from Italy and the USA. *Social Justice Research*, 26(1), 1-17.
- Muehlenhard, C. L., & Kimes, L. A. (1999). The social construction of violence: The case of sexual and domestic violence. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(3), 234-245.
- Murnen, S. K. (2015). A social constructivist approach to understanding the relationship between masculinity and sexual aggression. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 16(4), 370-373.
- Neville, H. A., Heppner, M. J., Oh, E., Spanierman, L. B., & Clark, M. (2004). General and culturally specific factors influencing black and white rape survivors' self-esteem. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 28(1), 83-94.
- O'Connor, W. E., Morrison, T. G., & Morrison, M. A. (1996). The reliability and factor structure of the Global Belief in a Just World Scale. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 136(5), 667-668.
- Payne, D. L., Lonsway, K. A., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (1999). Rape myth acceptance: Exploration of its structure and its measurement using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 33(1), 27-68.
- Pershing, J. L. (2006). Men and women's experiences with hazing in a male-dominated elite military institution. *Men and Masculinities*, 8(4), 470-492.

- Peterson, R. A. (2001). On the use of college students in social science research: Insights from a second-order meta-analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(3), 450-461.
- Peterson, Z. D., & Muehlenhard, C. L. (2004). Was it rape? The function of women's rape myth acceptance and definitions of sex in labeling their own experiences. *Sex Roles*, 51(3-4), 129-144.
- Plummer, S. B., & Findley, P. A. (2012). Women with disabilities' experience with physical and sexual abuse: Review of the literature and implications for the field. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 13(1), 15-29.
- Randall, M. (2010). Sexual assault law, credibility, and "ideal victims": Consent, resistance, and victim blaming. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 22(2), 397-433.
- Rentschler, C. (2015). #Safetytipsforladies: Feminist Twitter takedowns of victim blaming. *Feminist Media Studies*, 15(2), 353-356.
- Riggs, D. W., & Sion, R. (2017). Gender differences in cisgender psychologists' and trainees' attitudes toward transgender people. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 18(2), 187.
- Roden, M. (1991). A model secondary school date rape prevention program. In B. Levy (Ed.), *Dating violence: young women in danger* (pp. 267-278). Seattle, WA: Seal Press.
- Rollero, C., Glick, P., & Tartaglia, S. (2014). Psychometric properties of short versions of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and Ambivalence Toward Men Inventory. *TPM: Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 21(2), 149-159.
- Rothman, E. F., Exner, D., & Baughman, A. L. (2011). The prevalence of sexual assault against people who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual in the United States: A systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 12(2), 55-66.
- Rudman, L. A., & Mescher, K. (2012). Of animals and objects: Men's implicit dehumanization of women and male sexual aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(6), 734-746.
- Ryan, K. M. (2011). The relationship between rape myths and sexual scripts: The social construction of rape. *Sex Roles*, 65(11-12), 774-782.
- Scarce, M. (1997). Same-sex rape of male college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 45(4), 171-173.
- Scarce, M. (2001). *Male on male rape: The hidden toll of stigma and shame*. Basic Books.
- Senn, C. Y., Eliasziw, M., Barata, P. C., Thurston, W. E., Newby-Clark, I. R., Radtke, H. L., &

- Hobden, K. L. (2015). Efficacy of a sexual assault resistance program for university women. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 372(24), 2326-2335.
- Sleed, M., Durrheim, K., Kriel, A., Solomon, V., & Baxter, V. (2002). The effectiveness of the vignette methodology: A comparison of written and video vignettes in eliciting responses about date rape. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 32(3), 21-28.
- Smiler, A. P., & Epstein, M. (2010). Measuring gender: Options and issues. In J. Chrisler & D. McCreary (Eds.), *Handbook of gender research in psychology* (133-157). New York: Springer.
- Statistics Canada (2006). Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006. (Statistics Canada, Catalogue No.85-570-XWE). Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.
- Steinfeldt, M., & Steinfeldt, J. A. (2012). Athletic identity and conformity to masculine norms among college football players. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 24(2), 115-128.
- Stotzer, R. L. (2009). Violence against transgender people: A review of United States data. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 14(3), 170-179.
- Strömwall, L. A., Alfredsson, H., & Landström, S. (2013). Rape victim and perpetrator blame and the Just World hypothesis: The influence of victim gender and age. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 19(2), 207-217.
- Suarez, E., & Gadalla, T. M. (2010). Stop blaming the victim: A meta-analysis on rape myths. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25(11), 2010-2035.
- Tannenbaum, D., Uhlmann, E. L., & Diermeier, D. (2011). Moral signals, public outrage, and immaterial harms. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47(6), 1249-1254.
- Taylor-Butts, A. (2015). Section 1: Overview of family violence. *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2013*, 6.
- Tianmei, S., Liang, S., Yun'ai, S., Chenghua, T., Jun, Y., Jia, C., ... & Hongyan, Z. (2011). The Chinese version of the Personal and Social Performance Scale (PSP): Validity and reliability. *Psychiatry Research*, 185, 275-279.
- Ullman, S. E., Townsend, S. M., Filipas, H. H., & Starzynski, L. L. (2007). Structural models of the relations of assault severity, social support, avoidance coping, self-blame, and PTSD among sexual assault survivors. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31(1), 23-37.
- van den Bos, K., & Maas, M. (2009). On the psychology of the belief in a just world: Exploring experiential and rationalistic paths to victim blaming. *Personality and Social Psychology*

- Bulletin*, 35(12), 1567-1578.
- van der Bruggen, M., & Grubb, A. (2014). A review of the literature relating to rape victim blaming: An analysis of the impact of observer and victim characteristics on attribution of blame in rape cases. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 19(5), 523-531.
- Viki, G., Abrams, D., & Masser, B. (2004). Evaluating stranger and acquaintance rape: The role of benevolent sexism in perpetrator blame and recommended sentence length. *Law and Human Behavior*, 28(3), 295-303.
- Wakelin, A., & Long, K. M. (2003). Effects of victim gender and sexuality on attributions of blame to rape victims. *Sex Roles*, 49(9-10), 477-487.
- Weiss, K. G. (2010). Male sexual victimization: Examining men's experiences of rape and sexual assault. *Men and Masculinities*, 12(3), 275-298.
- Whatley, M. A. (1996). Victim characteristics influencing attributions of responsibility to rape victims: A meta-analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 1(2), 81-95.
- Yamawaki, N., Darby, R., & Queiroz, A. (2007). The moderating role of ambivalent sexism: The influence of power status on perception of rape victim and rapist. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 147(1), 41-56.
- Yodanis, C. L. (2004). Gender inequality, violence against women, and fear a cross-national test of the feminist theory of violence against women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19(6), 655-675.
- Zarkov, D., & Davis, K. (2018). Ambiguities and dilemmas around #MeToo: #ForHowLong and #WhereTo? *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 25(1), 3-9.

Table 1.1: 2018 U15 Sexual Assault Prevention Strategies

U15 Institution	Bystander Intervention Training	Consent Education	Self-Defence Training	Explicit Engagement of Men
University of Alberta	*	*		
University of British Columbia	*	*	*	*
University of Calgary		*	*	
Dalhousie University				
Laval University	*	*	*	
University of Manitoba	*		*	
McGill University	*	*	*	
McMaster University				
Université de Montréal		*		
University of Ottawa	*			
Queen's University	*	*		
University of Saskatchewan	*		*	
University of Toronto		*	*	*
University of Waterloo		*		*
University of Western Ontario	*		*	

Note: * indicates that the prevention strategy has been implemented by the institution; *Bystander intervention training* provides participants of all genders with knowledge to detect behaviours that facilitate sexual assault and skills to safely intervene; *Consent education* informs participants of all genders on institution-specific policies and debunks myths pertaining to consent; *Self-defence training* instructs female participants on how to avoid risks associated with sexual assault victimization, as well as basic physical defence skills; *Explicit engagement of men* in sexual assault prevention can take a variety of forms (e.g., workshops for athletic teams or fraternities, interactive booths, or class lectures), and requires that men are the primary targets of the prevention initiative.

Table 2.1: Participant Characteristics

	Victim-Focused Tips (<i>n</i> = 114)	Perpetrator-Focused Tips (<i>n</i> = 103)	Study Tips (<i>n</i> = 104)
Gender	Male = 37 (32.5%) Female = 76 (66.7%) Other = 1 (.9%)	Male = 36 (35.0%) Female = 65 (63.1%) Transgender FTM = 1 (1.0%) Transgender MTF = 1 (1.0%)	Male = 36 (34.6%) Female = 68 (65.4%)
Age	<i>M</i> = 21.58 (18 – 47), <i>SD</i> = 4.01	<i>M</i> = 21.46 (17 – 38), <i>SD</i> = 4.21	<i>M</i> = 21.09 (18 – 34), <i>SD</i> = 3.11
Ethnicity	Aboriginal = 7 (6.1%) Black = 6 (5.3%) East Asian = 6 (5.3%) South Asian = 10 (8.8%) Southeast Asian = 1 (.9%) West Asian = 1 (.9%) Latin American = 2 (1.8%) Caucasian = 80 (70.2%) Other = 1 (.9%)	Aboriginal = 17 (16.5%) Black = 2 (1.9%) East Asian = 4 (3.9%) South Asian = 7 (6.8%) Southeast Asian = 7 (6.8%) West Asian = 0 Latin American = 1 (1.0%) Caucasian = 64 (62.1%) Other = 0	Aboriginal = 7 (6.7%) Black = 8 (7.7%) East Asian = 4 (3.8%) South Asian = 13 (12.5%) Southeast Asian = 3 (2.9%) West Asian = 0 Latin American = 3 (2.9%) Caucasian = 66 (63.5%) Other = 0
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian = 1 (.9%) Bisexual = 11 (9.6%) Pansexual = 1 (.9%) Asexual = 3 (2.6%) Heterosexual = 96 (84.2%) Queer = 1 (.9%)	Lesbian = 1 (1.0%) Gay = 2 (1.9%) Bisexual = 8 (7.8%) Pansexual = 1 (1.0%) Asexual = 2 (1.9%) Heterosexual = 88 (85.4%) Queer = 1 (1.0%)	Lesbian = 2 (1.0%) Gay = 2 (1.9%) Bisexual = 8 (7.7%) Pansexual = 1 (1.0%) Heterosexual = 91 (87.5%)
Religious Attendance	Regularly = 13 (11.4%) Now and Then = 24 (21.1%) Special Occasions = 30 (26.3%) Never = 47 (41.2%)	Regularly = 15 (14.6%) Now and Then = 20 (19.4%) Special Occasions = 27 (26.2%) Never = 41 (39.8%)	Regularly = 11 (10.6%) Now and Then = 23 (22.1%) Special Occasions = 28 (26.9%) Never = 42 (40.4%)
Political Orientation	Very Liberal = 9 (7.9%) Liberal = 31 (27.2%) Somewhat Liberal = 25 (21.9%) Somewhat Conservative = 29 (25.4%) Conservative = 18 (15.8%) Very Conservative = 2 (1.8%)	Very Liberal = 7 (6.8%) Liberal = 18 (17.5%) Somewhat Liberal = 35 (34.0%) Somewhat Conservative = 29 (28.2%) Conservative = 11 (10.7%) Very Conservative = 2 (1.9%)	Very Liberal = 9 (8.7%) Liberal = 25 (24.0%) Somewhat Liberal = 33 (31.7%) Somewhat Conservative = 25 (24.0%) Conservative = 10 (9.6%)

Table 2.1: Participant Characteristics Continued

College	Agriculture and Bioresources = 3 (2.6%) Arts and Science = 83 (72.8%) Education = 4 (3.5%) Business = 13 (11.4%) Engineering = 2 (1.8%) Graduate Studies and Research = 1 (.9%) Kinesiology = 3 (2.6%) Law = 2 (1.8%) Nursing = 1 (.9%) Social Work = 1 (.9%)	Agriculture and Bioresources = 1 (1.0%) Arts and Science = 76 (73.8%) Education = 3 (2.9%) Business = 9 (8.7%) Engineering = 6 (5.8%) Graduate Studies and Research = 1 (1.0%) Kinesiology = 3 (2.9%) Law = 1 (1.0%) Nursing = 1 (1.0%) Pharmacy and Nutrition = 1 (1.0) Other = 1 (1.0%)	Agriculture and Bioresources = 6 (5.8%) Arts and Science = 73 (70.2%) Education = 2 (1.9%) Business = 11 (10.6%) Engineering = 2 (1.9%) Kinesiology = 3 (2.9%) Law = 1 (1.0%) Medicine = 1 (1.0%) Nursing = 1 (1.0%) Veterinary Medicine = 2 (1.9%) Social Work = 2 (1.9%)
---------	--	---	--

Table 3.1: Scale Descriptive Statistics ($N = 311$)

	<i>M(SD)</i>	Midpoint	Possible Range	Actual Range	Cronbach's Alpha(95% CIs)
VBS	9.35(5.11)	12	0 - 24	0 - 24	.76(.72 - .80)
Victim Tips	10.35(5.57)			0 - 24	
Study Tips	9.21(4.92)			0 - 22	
Perpetrator Tips	8.43(4.63)			0 - 19	
PBS	18.38(3.27)	12	0 - 24	5 - 24	.39(.27 - .49)
Victim Tips	18.26(2.99)			11 - 24	
Study Tips	18.25(3.58)			11 - 6	
Perpetrator Tips	18.65(3.25)			11 - 5	
PBS Item 1	5.48(1.00)	3	0 - 6	0 - 6	--
Victim Tips	5.51(.79)			2 - 6	
Study Tips	5.43(1.21)			0 - 6	
Perpetrator Tips	5.50(.97)			1 - 6	
PBS Item 2	4.36(1.34)	3	0 - 6	0 - 6	--
Victim Tips	4.23(1.42)			0 - 6	
Study Tips	4.36(1.39)			1 - 6	
Perpetrator Tips	4.50(1.19)			1 - 6	
PBS Item 3	5.18(1.29)	3	0 - 6	0 - 6	--
Victim Tips	5.13(1.28)			0 - 6	
Study Tips	5.19(1.31)			0 - 6	
Perpetrator Tips	5.22(1.30)			0 - 6	
PBS Item 4	3.37(1.76)	3	0 - 6	0 - 6	--
Victim Tips	3.39(1.71)			0 - 6	
Study Tips	3.28(1.77)			0 - 6	
Perpetrator Tips	3.43(1.83)			0 - 6	
VB Sliding Scale	22.95(34.40)	50.5	1 - 100	1 - 100	--
Victim Tips	26.02(36.27)			1 - 100	
Study Tips	22.48(33.05)			1 - 100	
Perpetrator Tips	20.16(33.74)			1 - 100	
PB Sliding Scale	81.14(33.32)	50.5	1 - 100	1 - 100	--
Victim Tips	78.51(35.56)			1 - 100	
Study Tips	83.12(30.40)			1 - 100	
Perpetrator Tips	81.95(33.77)			1 - 100	
IRMA-SF	29.53(13.00)	60	0 - 120	8 - 70	.86(.84 - .88)
Victim Tips	29.98(12.42)			11 - 68	
Study Tips	30.31(14.43)			12 - 68	
Perpetrator Tips	28.29(12.11)			8 - 70	

Table 3.1: Scale Descriptive Statistics Continued ($N = 311$)

GBJWS	17.27(7.22)	21	0 - 42	0 - 34	.83(.80 - .86)
Victim Tips	16.57(6.92)			1 - 31	
Study Tips	18.18(7.24)			0 - 34	
Perpetrator Tips	17.09(7.48)			0 - 33	
ASI	57.01(12.80)	66	0 - 132	29 - 97	.71(.66 - .76)
Victim Tips	58.21(11.53)			31 - 86	
Study Tips	56.77(14.40)			29 - 97	
Perpetrator Tips	55.99(12.40)			32 - 88	
HS	26.02(8.09)	33	0 - 66	9 - 52	.66(.60 - .72)
Victim Tips	27.34(7.33)			12 - 46	
Study Tips	25.80(8.52)			10 - 49	
Perpetrator Tips	24.83(8.29)			9 - 52	
BS	30.99(7.42)	33	0 - 66	11 - 54	.57(.50 - .64)
Victim Tips	30.86(6.69)			13 - 44	
Study Tips	30.97(8.35)			11 - 54	
Perpetrator Tips	31.15(7.24)			17 - 50	

Note: Victim Tips = participants in the victim-focused condition ($N = 108$); Study Tips = participants in the control condition ($N = 101$); Perpetrator Tips = participants in the perpetrator-focused condition ($N = 102$); VBS = Victim Blame Scale; PBS = Perpetrator Blame Scale; VB Sliding Scale = Victim Blame Sliding Scale; PB Sliding Scale = Perpetrator Blame Sliding Scale; IRMA-SF = Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, Short-Form; GBJWS = Global Belief in a Just World Scale; ASI = Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; HS = hostile sexism items on the ASI; BS = benevolent sexism items on the ASI; double hyphens (--) indicate that no alpha coefficient was calculated due to the nature of the measures (i.e., single items)

Table 3.2: Correlation Matrix

Measures	VBS	PBS Item 1	PBS Item 2	PBS Item 3	PBS Item 4	VB Slide	PB Slide	IRMA- SF	GBJW	ASI
VBS	--	-.50**	-.14*	-.32**	.16*	.06	.05	.57**	.28**	.49**
PBS Item 1	-.38**	--	.02	.44**	.05	-.12	.05	-.42**	-.13	-.23**
PBS Item 2	-.17	.08	--	.31**	.06	.11	-.13	-.17*	-.15*	-.11
PBS Item 3	-.29**	.49**	.57	--	.11	.03	-.09	-.29**	-.16*	-.17*
PBS Item 4	.12	.25**	.11	.13	--	.03	-.06	.11	.19**	.25**
VB Slide	.03	-.03	.10	.01	.07	--	-.92**	.11	.02	-.06
PB Slide	.06	.04	-.05	.00	-.01	-.88**	--	.01	.00	.14*
IRMA-SF	.57**	-.28**	-.14	-.20*	.01	.11	-.03	--	.41**	.61**
GBJW	.36**	-.08	.00	-.16	.15	.03	.04	.37**	--	.46**
ASI	.43**	-.11	-.11	-.10	.16	.01	.08	.74**	.43**	--

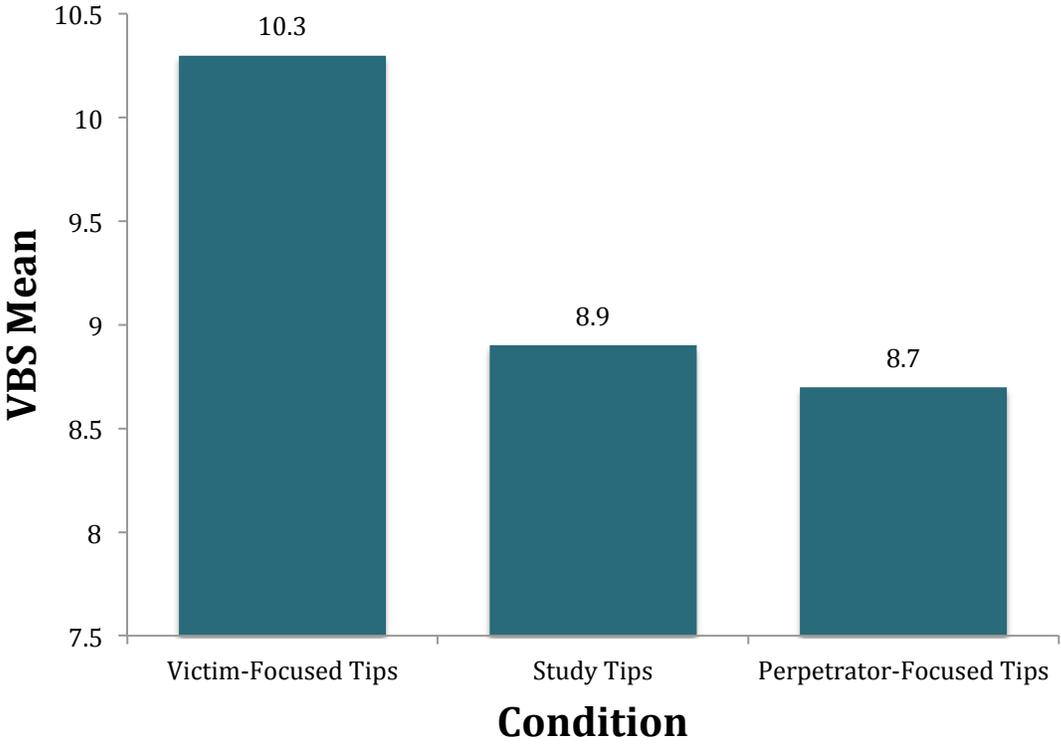
Note: Values above the diagonal line correspond to female participants; values below the diagonal line correspond to male participants; * = correlation is significant at the $p = .05$ level (2-tailed); ** = correlation is significant at the $p = .01$ level (2-tailed); VBS = Victim Blame Scale; PBS Item 1 = Perpetrator Blame Scale Item 1; PBS Item 2 = Perpetrator Blame Scale Item 2; PBS Item 3 = Perpetrator Blame Scale Item 3; PBS Item 4 = Perpetrator Blame Scale Item 4; VB Slide = Victim Blame Sliding Scale; PB Slide = Perpetrator Blame Sliding Scale; IRMA-SF = Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, Short-Form; GBJW = Global Belief in a Just World Scale; ASI = Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

Table 3.3: Gender Differences

	Female (<i>n</i> = 204) <i>M(SD)</i>	Male (<i>n</i> = 107) <i>M(SD)</i>	<i>F</i> (1, 309)	<i>P</i>	η^2
VBS	8.74(5.20)	10.41(4.74)	8.66	.003	.03
PBS Item 1	5.52(.94)	5.40(1.11)	.97	.324	< .01
PBS Item 2	4.61(1.24)	3.89(1.41)	21.57	< .001	.07
PBS Item 3	5.24(1.30)	5.06(1.27)	1.43	.233	< .01
PBS Item 4	3.29(1.82)	3.50(1.66)	1.00	.318	< .01
VB Sliding Scale	25.59(36.81)	17.91(28.74)	3.53	.061	.01
PB Sliding Scale	78.56(35.77)	86.05(27.55)	3.58	.060	.01
IRMA-SF	26.64(11.59)	35.05(13.79)	32.33	< .001	.09
GBJWS	16.02(7.22)	19.64(6.62)	18.73	< .001	.06
ASI	55.13(12.27)	60.59(13.07)	13.26	< .001	.04

Note: VBS = Victim Blame Scale; PBS Item 1 = Perpetrator Blame Scale Item 1; PBS Item 2 = Perpetrator Blame Scale Item 2; PBS Item 3 = Perpetrator Blame Scale Item 3; PBS Item 4 = Perpetrator Blame Scale Item 4; VB Sliding Scale = Victim Blame Sliding Scale; PB Sliding Scale = Perpetrator Blame Sliding Scale; IRMA-SF = Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, Short-Form; GBJW = Global Belief in a Just World Scale; ASI = Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

Figure 3.1: Main Effect of Condition on Victim Blame



Appendix A: Victim-Focused Prevention Tips

The tips provided below are meant to enhance your personal safety and reduce your risk of being sexually assaulted. Please read over this list carefully. After reading through all of the tips, please summarize the list in two sentences.

- 1) Don't leave your drink unattended at bars or parties.
- 2) Be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- 3) Don't wear clothes that might draw unwanted attention.
- 4) Don't be afraid to make a scene if someone feels threatening.
- 5) Don't walk alone in quiet, poorly lit areas.
- 6) Make sure someone knows where you are at all times.
- 7) Drink in moderation so you're able to look out for yourself.
- 8) Surround yourself with trustworthy friends at bars or parties.

Appendix B: Perpetrator-Focused Prevention Tips

The tips provided below are meant to enhance the personal safety of others and reduce your risk of committing sexual assault. Please read over this list carefully. After reading through all of the tips, please summarize the list in two sentences.

- 1) If you see someone walking alone in quiet, poorly lit areas, don't bother them.
- 2) Don't slip any unwanted substances into unattended drinks at bars or parties.
- 3) Don't assume that someone's choice of clothing means they want to have sex with you.
- 4) Remember that it's okay for someone to change their mind once sex has already been initiated, even if they agreed to have sex with you earlier.
- 5) Don't try to have sex with someone who's unconscious or intoxicated.
- 6) If you're tempted to sexually assault someone, think about how you would feel if someone forced you to have sex against your will.
- 7) If too much alcohol makes it difficult to stop yourself from sexually assaulting someone, drink in moderation or not at all.
- 8) Assume that if someone is not saying "yes," they are saying "no."

Appendix C: Study Tips

Below is a list of strategies that can help undergraduate students prepare for exams. Please read over this list carefully. After reading through all of the tips, please summarize the list in two sentences.

- 1) Take a ten-minute break every hour.
- 2) Don't listen to music or have the television on.
- 3) Get plenty of sleep before a long day of studying.
- 4) Study in groups to keep things interesting.
- 5) Think of possible questions that might be asked and come up with the answers.
- 6) Use various colours of ink or paper to help trigger certain concepts.
- 7) Review material you're struggling with before bed, so that your brain can mull it over while you sleep.
- 8) Avoid cramming the night before a test.

Appendix D: Sexual Assault Vignette

Ashley was out at a nightclub with friends, celebrating the end of the semester. With a drink in hand, she joined her friends on the dance floor. Over the loud club music, she heard the faint ringing of her cellphone coming from her purse. She set her drink down on a nearby ledge so she could rummage through her bag to find the phone. She picked the phone up and assured her mom on the other end that she had a safe ride home. Throughout her efforts to find her phone and talk with her mom on the loud dance floor, she hadn't noticed Jonathon slip something into her drink. As hardly any time had passed since she set the drink down, she grabbed it off the ledge and continued to sip it.

Jonathon was also out at the club to celebrate the end of the semester. Jonathon had been to this club before and had no luck getting a girl to come home with him at the end of the night, but this time he wanted to be sure that he'd get some action. He kept his eyes peeled for drunk, distracted women. As soon as he saw Ashley place her drink on the ledge, he casually walked by and slipped the drugs into her glass. Soon after this took place, Ashley began to feel foggy, physically weak, and unable to process her surroundings. Jonathon told her friends he was taking her to the bar to buy her a drink, and they'd meet the group on the dance floor afterward. Instead, Jonathon guided Ashley outside to his car and sexually assaulted her.

Appendix E: Victim Blame Scale

- 1) Ashley should have known to keep an eye on her drink.
- 2) Because Ashley wasn't paying attention to her surroundings, she was at least partially responsible for the assault.
- 3) By leaving her drink on the ledge, Ashley tempted Jonathon to slip something into it.
- 4) Ashley could have prevented the assault from happening had she been more careful.

Appendix F: Perpetrator Blame Scale

- 1) Jonathon is completely to blame for the assault.
- 2) Had there been no drinks left unattended that night, Jonathon probably still would have found a way to assault someone.
- 3) The assault occurred solely because Jonathon wanted it to.
- 4) Jonathon resorted to assaulting Ashley because he is unable to emotionally connect with women. (reverse code)

Appendix G: Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, Short-Form

- 1) If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.
- 2) Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on."
- 3) If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex.
- 4) Many women secretly desire to be raped.
- 5) Most rapists are not caught by the police.
- 6) If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.
- 7) Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.
- 8) Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.
- 9) All women should have access to self-defence classes.
- 10) It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped.
- 11) If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.
- 12) Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighbourhood.
- 13) Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.
- 14) A lot of women lead a man on and then cry rape.
- 15) It is preferable that a female police officer conducts the questioning when a woman reports rape.
- 16) A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen.
- 17) When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was ambiguous.
- 18) Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually

carried away.

19) A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.

20) Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.

Appendix H: Global Belief in A Just World Scale

- 1) I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.
- 2) I feel that a person's efforts are noticed and rewarded.
- 3) I feel that people earn the rewards and punishments they get.
- 4) I feel that people who meet with misfortune have brought it on themselves.
- 5) I feel that people get what they deserve.
- 6) I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.
- 7) I basically feel that the world is a fair place.

Appendix I: Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

Hostile Sexism:

- 1) Women exaggerate problems at work.
- 2) Women are too easily offended.
- 3) Most women interpret innocent remarks as sexist.
- 4) When women lose fairly, they claim discrimination.
- 5) Women seek special favours under guise of equality.
- 6) Feminists are making reasonable demands. (reverse code)
- 7) Feminists are not seeking more power than men. (reverse code)
- 8) Women seek power by gaining control over men.
- 9) Few women tease men sexually. (reverse code)
- 10) Once a man commits, she puts him on a tight leash.
- 11) Women fail to appreciate all men do for them.

Benevolent Sexism:

- 12) A good woman should be set on a pedestal.
- 13) Women should be cherished and protected by men.
- 14) Men should sacrifice to provide for women.
- 15) In a disaster, women need not be rescued first. (reverse code)
- 16) Women have a superior moral sensibility.
- 17) Women have a quality of purity few men possess.
- 18) Women have a more refined sense of culture and taste.
- 19) Every man ought to have a woman he adores.
- 20) Men are complete without women. (reverse code)

21) Despite accomplishment, men are incomplete without women.

22) People are often happy without heterosexual romance. (reverse code)

Appendix J: Demographics

Please specify your current age in years. _____

Please select the option that represents your ethnicity.

- Aboriginal (e.g., First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
- Black (e.g., African, African American, African Canadian, Caribbean)
- East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Polynesian)
- South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh)
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Burmese, Cambodian, Filipino, Laotian, Malaysian, Thai, Vietnamese)
- West Asian (e.g., Arabian, Armenian, Iranian, Israeli, Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian, Turkish)
- Latin American (e.g., Mexican, Indigenous Central and South American)
- White/Caucasian
- Mixed origin (please specify)
- Please specify your ethnicity if it did not appear on this list.

Please select your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Transgender (FTM)
- Transgender (MTF)
- Please specify your preferred gender identity if it did not appear on this list.

Please indicate your sexual orientation.

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Heterosexual
- Queer
- Please specify your sexual orientation if it did not appear on this list.

Please indicate how frequently you attend religious services (*e.g., in a church, synagogue, mosque, etc.*).

- Regularly
- Now and then
- On special occasions
- Never

Please select the option that best describes your political orientation.

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Somewhat conservative
- Conservative
- Very conservative

Please select the college you attend from the list provided.

(drop-down menu)

Agriculture and Bioresources
Arts and Science
Dentistry
Education
Edwards School of Business
Engineering
Environment and Sustainability
Graduate Studies and Research
Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy
Kinesiology
Law
Medicine
Nursing
Pharmacy and Nutrition
St. Thomas More College
Veterinary Medicine
Other

Please indicate your current/intended academic major. _____

Appendix K: Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a 2-part, questionnaire-based study on social attitudes toward sexual assault. Please read this page carefully.

Researcher: Sydney Cherniawsky, MA candidate, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, sydney.cherniawsky@usask.ca, 306-966-1773

Supervisor: Dr. Melanie Morrison, Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, melanie.morrison@usask.ca, 306-966-2564

Purpose and Procedure: In the first part of the study, you will be asked to read and briefly review a list of strategic tips. In the second part of the study, you will be asked to read a non-graphic sexual assault scenario and fill out several questionnaires. You will also be asked to report basic demographic information about yourself (e.g., age, gender). The purpose of this research is to develop an understanding of social attitudes toward sexual assault. We ask you to be as honest as possible in your responses. You may choose not to respond to any question that you are not comfortable answering. The study should take approximately 30 minutes.

Potential Risks: The present study refers to sexual assault and may be upsetting. Please know that you can exit the browser and withdraw from the study at any time, with no penalty. Further, you may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher using the information provided above.

Potential Benefits: Your participation in this study will allow you to have more experience with psychological research and contribute to a better understanding of social attitudes toward sexual assault.

Compensation: Participants going through SONA will earn 1% credit toward their overall mark in a first or second year psychology course. Individuals participating through PAWS will be entered to win one of six \$50.00 prizes.

Storage of Data: The data will be kept on a password-encrypted computer or a locked filing cabinet in Dr. Melanie Morrison's laboratory for a minimum of seven years, at which point the data may be destroyed beyond recovery. Any identifying information will not be included with the data. Only aggregate data will be used in the researcher's thesis and journal articles, as well as in conference presentations or posters.

Confidentiality: Your data will be kept completely anonymous. We will not collect any personally-identifying information. Consent forms will not be linked with the data. The data from this research project may be published and presented at conferences. Once you click "submit", it will be pooled with other students' data and will be unidentifiable, with no personally-identifying information linked to your data. Data will be collected using Voxco, a Canadian survey software. Data will be stored on Canadian servers and subject to Canadian laws and regulations.

Right to Withdraw: You may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty or loss of compensation. However, once you complete the study, you no longer have the option to withdraw your data, as they will be pooled anonymously with other participants' responses.

Questions: If you have any questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact the researchers at the email addresses or phone numbers provided above. This project was reviewed on ethical grounds by the U of S Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Research Ethics Office toll free at 1-888-966-2975 or ethics.office@usask.ca. If you would like to know the results of the study, you are encouraged to contact the researchers for a summary. We ask you to please refrain from discussing the study's details with other possible participants until after June 2018.

Resources: If you are in need of immediate support throughout this study, please contact the Saskatoon Sexual Assault Crisis Centre's 24-hour crisis line (306-244-2224) or the University of Saskatchewan's Student Counselling Centre (306-966-4920).

Consent to Participate: I have read and understood the description provided above. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

Select the appropriate button.

- I **consent** to participate in this study.
- I **do not consent** to participate in this study.

Appendix L: Debriefing Form

We would like to thank you for participating in our study! We very much appreciate your time and cooperation. The purpose of this study was to measure whether exposure to victim-focused sexual assault prevention tips (i.e., “Watch your drink at the bar”) would lead participants to hold victims more accountable for their sexual assault. Additionally, we were examining whether exposure to perpetrator-focused sexual assault prevention tips (i.e., “Don’t have sex with someone who is unconscious”) would lead participants to hold perpetrators more accountable.

In Part 1 of the study, you were asked to read and summarize one of three lists: one list contained victim-focused sexual assault prevention tips; one list contained perpetrator-focused sexual assault prevention tips; and one list contained tips about how best to study at university. In Part 2, all participants were asked to read a sexual assault scenario. You were also asked to fill out some attitudinal questions and provide basic demographic information.

In terms of our hypotheses, we are predicting that participants who were assigned to read and summarize the victim-focused prevention tips (compared to the other conditions) will attribute more blame to the victim and less blame to the perpetrator of the sexual assault.

This research has important implications going forward. Victim blaming has harmful consequences, in that it can amplify the already negative effects (e.g., depression, anxiety, PTSD, reduced self-esteem) felt by many individuals who experience sexual assault. Further, placing onus on people to constantly protect themselves from potential sexual assault, rather than holding perpetrators fully accountable, creates a culture that tolerates sexual assault. By examining the influence of victim-focused prevention tips on victim blaming, the present study aims to inform the development and refinement of institutional approaches to sexual assault prevention.

If you would like to know the results of the study, you are encouraged to contact the researchers for a summary. We ask you to please refrain from discussing the study’s details with other possible participants until after June 2018.

If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of the study, please contact the research supervisor, Dr. Melanie Morrison, or the student researcher, Sydney Cherniawsky (MA candidate). Importantly, if the content in this study has caused you distress, please contact the [Saskatoon Sexual Assault Crisis Centre’s 24-hour crisis line \(306-244-2224\)](#) or the [University of Saskatchewan’s Student Counselling Centre \(306-966-4920\)](#).

Thank you so much for your participation! We are so grateful for your time and the effort you put into participating in our study.

Sydney Cherniawsky, MA candidate
University of Saskatchewan
sydney.cherniawsky@usask.ca

Dr. Melanie Morrison, Professor
University of Saskatchewan
melanie.morrison@usask.ca