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Understanding and Responding to Campus Sexual Assault: A Guide to Climate Assessment for Colleges and Universities

Center on Violence Against Women and Children

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

Rutgers School of Social Work

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Chapter One: Taking a Comprehensitve Approach to Campus Climate Assessment

Sarah McMahon, Ph.D.   Kate Stepleton, MSW   Julia Cusano, MSW

Sexual violence has been a long-standing problem on college campuses. It is currently estimated that one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college.[1] And while there are fewer reliable estimates, research indicates that approximately 6.1 percent of men are sexually assaulted while in college.[2] There has been a number of calls for colleges and universities to respond to the issue of sexual assault, from organizations such as Students Active for Ending Rape,[3] the American College Health Association,[4] and the National Institutes of Justice.[5] Despite this, progress in reducing sexual victimization on college campuses has been slow, leaving many colleges and universities in need of more feasible and effective solutions. As a result, there is growing interest among researchers, advocates, and lawmakers in responding to the needs of victims on campus and in holding schools accountable to their obligation to protect students from sexual violence.

In January, 2014, President Barack Obama established the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault with a mandate to strengthen federal enforcement efforts and provide schools with recommendations and resources to help reduce sexual violence on college campuses. The White House Task Force released its first report in April 2014, recommending initial steps for schools to take to foster a campus climate that is supportive of sexual assault survivors and intolerant of sexual violence.

By systematically assessing the campus climate regarding sexual assault, colleges and universities can examine the extent to which students report awareness of sexual assault and use of campus resources.[6] This information can provide a baseline for schools to evaluate and tailor their efforts to ensure that students have access to necessary services and are receiving accurate, usable information while at the same time not creating policies that place barriers to survivors getting the services they want and feel they need. In order to create such a climate, schools must critically evaluate themselves to identify gaps in their sexual violence services, policies, and prevention efforts and develop an action plan that is evidence-based, meets federal mandates, and effectively addresses students' needs.

To begin this process, the White House Task Force recommends conducting a campus climate assessment, including a survey of student knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexual assault. This helps to determine the scope of the problem of sexual violence on campus and to assess students' perceptions of the university's response to sexual violence. The survey may be complemented by additional means of data collection to gather more comprehensive campus climate information related to services, school protections, and the prevalence and incidence of sexual violence. Figure 1 outlines one approach for assessing campus climate, from identifying existing resources to surveying students to action planning for improvement. Although the steps outlined

What to Expect from the Guide

As the Rutgers research team completes phases of its campus climate assessment, new resources detailing the process have been released as toolkit chapters. Chapters include:

- Taking a Comprehensive Approach to Campus Climate Assessment
- Fostering Collaborations
- Conducting a Resource Audit
- Conducting a Student Survey
- Gathering Qualitative Data
- Action Planning and Dissemination

Tools for use on your campus, as well as detailed descriptions of the campus climate assessment process at Rutgers have also been released along with these chapters. Check http://vawc.rutgers.edu for

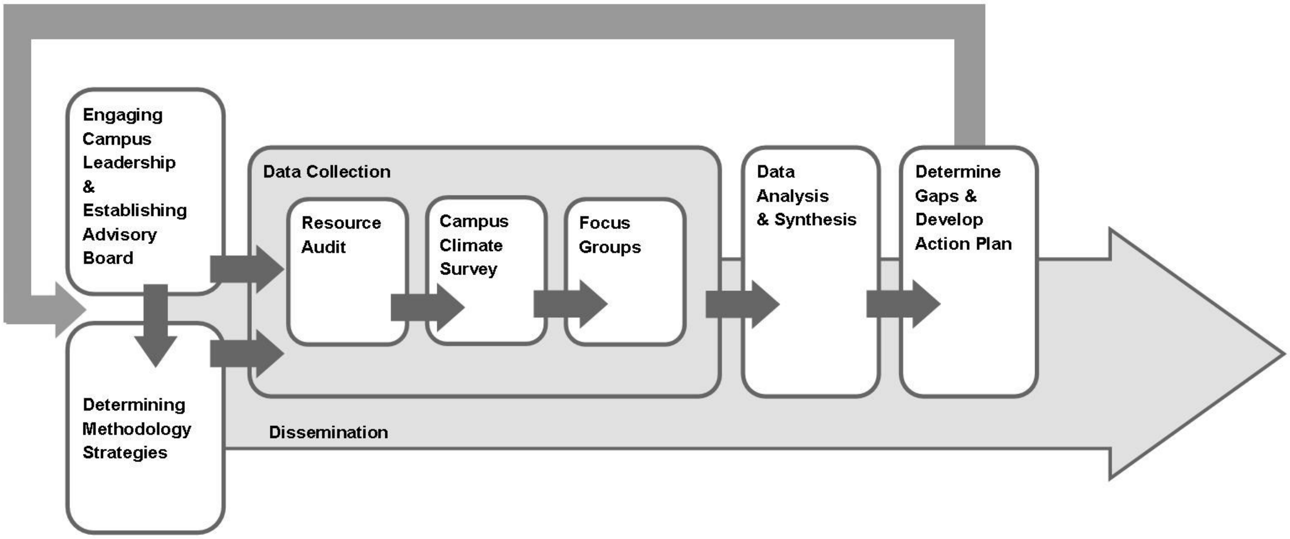

Figure 1. Process and products for conducting a campus climate assessment regarding sexual assault[7]

below are presented linearly, the structure presented here is not necessarily so rigid. Each school is encouraged to think about how this design might be altered or refined to best meet its needs, given its organizational structure, student body characteristics, and available resources.

Researchers from the Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, are piloting an evidence-informed method for assessing the climate regarding sexual assault on the school's New Brunswick campus, following the approach depicted below, during the 2014-2015 academic year. Throughout the campus climate assessment process, the researchers are sharing lessons learned in a guide comprised of serially released chapters. The purpose of this guide is to provide direction, informed by research evidence and best practices as well as the experience of the research team at Rutgers-New Brunswick, on conducting a campus climate assessment.

In this guide, each chapter describes a different step in the campus climate assessment process and is designed to present generalizable steps outlining the assessment process, while providing specific examples of the from the experience at Rutgers-New Brunswick to illustrate how the process may be tailored to fit a school's needs. This guide provides key considerations and lessons learned, comprising a generalizable method that may be adapted to other higher education settings. Certainly each campus has a unique set of needs, opportunities, and constraints. School officials should feel free to adapt any steps and criteria presented in the tool kit to match their capacity, while still upholding rigorous methods.

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7. The conceptual model included in this chapter has been updated based on our experience of piloting the campus climate assessment process.

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Chapter Two: Fostering Collaborations*

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Prior to administering a campus climate survey, colleges and universities are encouraged to build capacity to undertake such a research project and develop a collaborative approach across campus entities. For the purpose of the campus climate assessment, the capacity described in this document refers to the ability to effectively develop, organize, and utilize resources to engage in all steps of the assessment, ultimately catalyzing and driving change on campus.[1]

The pre-planning phase of the assessment process at a college or university must include selecting a group of individuals who are capable of conducting research according to rigorous methods and who are able to generate an effective and feasible action plan based on the assessment results.

In order to accomplish this goal, it is helpful to consider creating two central teams: 1) An Advisory Board to provide input on the project, and 2) A Research Team to oversee the project.

The research team and the Advisory Board are intended to work in collaboration with one another as such partnerships provide a venue for stakeholders from a broad cross-section of the community to interact with one another and jointly promote campus-wide change.[2]

This chapter presents key questions and recommendations colleges and universities may want to consider when building research capacity and campus collaborations in preparation for the campus climate assessment.

CREATING A RESEARCH TEAM

It is vital that the campus climate assessment gathers credible data. To help ensure this, it is important that administrators identify those on campus with extensive knowledge of research, particularly with an understanding of the Institutional Review Board process, development of methodology, survey administration, data analysis, and interpretation of results.

To select a group of individuals with this knowledge, administrators may want to begin by identifying available faculty or research personnel on campus who are interested in understanding the problem of sexual assault on their campus and in the higher education environment. Colleges and universities can look to gender studies faculty, social science faculty, as well as other faculty familiar with relevant research methods as a starting point.

Faculty researchers are ideal for the campus climate assessment because they are familiar with the campus, have established relationships with school entities, and are likely to have a commitment to understanding the substantive content of the assessment. Researchers on campus will also have the knowledge and tools to implement assessments according to rigorous research methods.

However, not all schools have the necessary resources readily available on campus to conduct research. These colleges and universities can consider creating a regional partnership with other schools in the surrounding area to aid with data collection and analysis, or they may look to private firms with the necessary expertise to conduct all research driven assessments.[3]

ENGAGING UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Engaging those in leadership positions on college campuses has been identified as especially critical for a comprehensive approach to addressing campus sexual violence.[4,5] The involvement of those in leadership positions on college campuses not only contributes to available knowledge of campus sexual violence, but also ensures that these participants will be active members in community change efforts to eliminate campus sexual violence. In addition, the involvement of campus leaders offers legitimacy to the project and may encourage the participation of other members of the community.[6]

Therefore, an initial stage of the campus climate assessment process should involve building capacity for the project through the engagement of key stakeholders, partners and decision-makers on campus. Research teams may choose to meet with representatives of senior university leadership prior to engaging in any assessment activities in order to obtain institutional support. Discussion with administrators might include an overview of the project and potential challenges, such as anticipating any parental concerns and describing how the data would be

Possible Talking Points to Engage University Leadership

- Currently pending federal legislation proposes to mandate campus climate surveys for all higher education institutions. By engaging in a comprehensive campus climate process prior to the mandate, the institution can be proactive.
- Many prospective students and their parents and guardians are researching institutions' work regarding campus sexual violence. Engaging in climate assessments demonstrates accountability and leadership.
- Many current students on campuses across the country are calling for a change in how their campus responds to sexual violence. By engaging students in a comprehensive campus climate assessment process, the university has an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to this issue and to doing what is best for their students.
- By engaging in this work, the university can use assessment results to make positive changes on campus ultimately improving its current response to campus sexual violence.

shared, including any troubling findings. Additionally, such a meeting could result in university leaders affirming a commitment to the campus climate assessment process and their intention to use the information to develop an action plan to continue improving the institutional response to sexual violence. Garnering support from this level of leadership can be critical to the success of the project.

CREATING AN ADVISORY BOARD

An Advisory Board can be an essential component of the campus climate assessment process, as it engages a diverse group of individuals on campus with the shared purpose of addressing sexual assault. No individual person or department has a comprehensive understanding of the current institutional infrastructure or the array of contextual factors involved in the problem of sexual violence on campus; therefore an Advisory Board comprised of individuals across divisions and disciplines affords numerous advantages to the campus climate assessment process.[4]

The Advisory Board may provide guidance on which climate survey questions are salient to the university setting and necessary for inclusion, make decisions about the content and methodology of assessments, help to identify gaps in resources at the conclusion of the resource audit, and prepare any reports based on campus climate assessment results.

All of the previously listed activities can be done in collaboration with the research team. However, the Advisory Board can also help to obtain wider institutional and public support for addressing sexual assault on campus, develop the financial and human resources necessary to conduct all components of the assessment, increase the accountability of the project, support the evaluation of the current institutional response to sexual violence on campus, and plan improvements based on the assessment.[5]

To achieve these goals, it is important that the Advisory Board be composed of individuals who are vested in the project and can provide input to guide both the content and process of the campus climate assessment. The Advisory Board can include as many faculty members, staff members and students as a school sees fit. However, it is important to keep in mind that the Advisory Board will be convening throughout the project and availability and time constraints may make a larger Advisory Board cumbersome.

Considerations When Assembling an Advisory Board

When determining who should participate on the Advisory Board, administrators and members of the research team may consider the following questions:

- Who represents the areas of expertise in regard to sexual assault on campus?
- Who most commonly interacts with survivors of sexual assault on campus?
- Which administrators should be represented on the Advisory Board?
- Who are the particular on-campus populations that are vested in the project?
- Who has access to students and can help with the implementation of the survey?

Campuses should also consider including, if applicable, individuals from the Dean of Students' office, a representative from the Title IX office, staff of on-campus victim services entities, staff of on-campus women's centers, an administrator from the office of student conduct, and an administrator from the office of student affairs (or their corollaries) on the Advisory Board.

Members of the Advisory Board, while knowledgeable and committed to improving a school's response to sexual assault, may also have a stake in the results of the campus climate assessment. For instance, negative student feedback about a particular office's services could reflect poorly on representatives of that office who are serving on the Advisory Board. Therefore, it is critical that researchers thoughtfully seek and incorporate input from the Advisory Board while maintaining strict research integrity. In order to avoid bias, the research team may choose to strictly define the roles of Advisory Board members in relation to the research team's activities so that vested Advisory Board members can not influence any assessment results.

Researchers can further ensure the integrity of the results by maintaining clear and open communication with the members of the advisory board. Specifically, the research team can provide the advisory board members with advanced knowledge of assessment results and project information so that all interested parties can prepare for the release of both positive and negative results with thoughtful planning, supported by the college or university. It is important, particularly if negative results emerge, that researchers and advisory board members keep in mind the goal of the campus climate assessment: to determine the current institutional response to sexual violence and address gaps to better support and protect students.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Once schools construct research teams and create Advisory Boards, the researchers can begin to develop methodology for the campus climate assessment. Meeting with the Advisory Board throughout the process can help keep stakeholders informed as the project progresses.

After the research team analyzes the results of all assessments, the Advisory Board, in collaboration with the research team, will be better equipped to develop an action plan that is evidence-based and meets federal mandates, while also addressing student needs.

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* Chapter was revised in June 2016.

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Chapter Three: Conducting a Resource Audit

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Conducting a resource audit is one of the first essential steps in assessing the campus climate regarding sexual assault. A resource audit is a research method that examines publicly available program information and input from knowledgeable stakeholders to compile a comprehensive listing of the available resources within an organization.[1]

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance to colleges and universities for conducting a resource audit as part of a campus climate assessment. The resource audit directly informs the development and administration of a student survey, the cornerstone of the assessment process. We offer a recommended process for undertaking a resource audit based on research evidence and the authors' experience of conducting a resource audit at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, on the New Brunswick campus in mid-2014.

Throughout this document, we outline general steps on the process of conducting a resource audit. In gray boxes, you will also find examples of decisions the authors made to tailor the audit to the university environment at Rutgers. All research teams will be faced with choices like these, and the examples are meant to shed light on how they can be made. Other gray boxes describe how the process might be altered in a variety of school settings.

THE VALUE OF A RESOURCE AUDIT

A resource audit documents the campus infrastructure for responding to and preventing sexual violence.[2] A significant strength of a resource audit is that it requires minimal resources to conduct and, once completed, produces a versatile tool for administrators, faculty, and students. The resource audit can be used in several ways:

- As a compendium of campus resources: The resource audit generates a compendium of campus policies, protocols, and programs addressing sexual assault. School officials may enhance the audit with user-focused content to create a resource guide for students, faculty, and staff.
- As the basis for campus climate survey questions: Researchers can use the information found in the resource audit to construct questions for the second phase of the campus climate assessment, the student survey. The survey can ask students the extent to which they are aware of the various services on campus, whether they have or would use the services, and what barriers to their use may exist.
- As the basis for evaluating comprehensiveness of services: In order to comply with federal mandates and recommendations, many schools will be obligated to establish new prevention programs and implement new direct services. However, before moving forward with new initiatives, it is essential that administrators first understand the complement of resources already available on campus.[3] As researchers progress through the steps of a campus climate assessment, school officials can compare the listing of resources gathered from the audit, along with student survey results, to best practices and state and federal requirements for responding to and protections against sexual assault. This comparison will help officials to identify gaps in institutional responses to sexual violence on campus. Once these gaps have been identified, campus officials will be better equipped to develop an action plan that is evidence-based and meets state and federal mandates, while also addressing student needs.

BEGINNING A RESOURCE AUDIT

Although collecting campus-wide information may seem like an overwhelming task, it is possible to systematically gather data and produce comprehensive findings. To accurately capture the full range of resources on campus, the resource audit employs a three-phase method of data collection:

- Phase 1: Preparation: Before engaging in the resource audit, it is necessary to make decisions about the specific goals of the audit and, relatedly, who should conduct it.
- Phase 2: Online Search: The second phase is conducted online, using keyword searches and examining departmental websites.
- Phase 3: Interviews: Researchers conduct informational interviews with key stakeholders to ensure that the audit is capturing the full range of resources available

on campus, including those that might not be formally defined or described online.

PHASE I : PREPARATION

Researchers must address several key questions before engaging in the resource audit.

Who Should Conduct the Resource Audit?

Administrators can enlist a team of researchers to conduct the resource audit as part of the campus climate assessment, as they are equipped to implement the audit according to rigorous research methods. Key questions and recommendations for compiling a research team can be found in *Chapter 2: Fostering Collaborations.*

Researchers may also choose to consult their advisory board prior to beginning the resource audit to solicit input on the audit's goals and boundaries.

What Should be Included in the Resource Audit?

The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault has described four distinct categories of sexual assault resources. To capture the full range of resources addressing sexual violence on campus, the following categories must be explored in the resource audit:

- **Sexual Assault Policies**[4] refer to any explicitly codified policy that prohibits sexual assault from occurring on campus, at campus sponsored events, or off campus. These may be found online, in student handbooks, and through the Office of Student Safety, the Office of Student Conduct, Human Resources, and/or the Office of Student Affairs (or their corollaries).
- **Investigative and Adjudicative Protocols** refer to any procedures that a college or university offers students for formally reporting an incident of sexual violence to authorities or to school officials. This also includes procedures for school adjudication of claims of sexual assault on campus.
- **Services** refer to services on campus that provide support to student sexual assault survivors. Examples include crisis intervention services, mental health services, advocacy, and medical services.
- **Prevention programs** refer to any on-campus effort geared towards students to reduce the occurrence of sexual and relationship violence. Prevention efforts can include guest lectures, informational presentations, events to raise awareness about campus sexual assault, related sorority or fraternity events, and other activities aimed at minimizing the risk of sexual assault. Many colleges and universities also present students with information about how they, as bystanders, might act to prevent sexual assault of their peers in potentially risky situations.

Prior to conducting the audit, it is also important for researchers to develop a list of inclusionary criteria to specifically define the type of information to be included in the audit. These criteria will be used to determine whether information from the online search results and stakeholder interviews is related to sexual violence on campus *and* targets the desired outcome(s) of the audit. The primary goal of the audit is to compile a list of resources that can be used to identify gaps in the current institutional response to sexual violence. Therefore, researchers may want to consider the following questions while creating the inclusionary criteria for the resource audit:

- Should the audit capture resources addressing intimate partner violence, dating violence and stalking in

Inclusionary Criteria on Our Campus

We developed a list of inclusionary criteria that we believe enabled us to best capture the full range of resources available on our campus. The inclusionary criteria used on our campus are as follows:

- The result must address sexual violence specifically (including terms such as rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual violence, dating violence, relationship abuse).
- The result must include either a service related to sexual violence explicitly **or** a policy/ procedure related to sexual violence (includes responses to sexual violence or prevention).
- The service must be offered at Rutgers University's New Brunswick campus.
- The policy or procedure described must specifically involve Rutgers students.
- The service's listing must directly state where it is located and a procedure for how students can make an appointment or access the service.

addition to sexual violence?

- Should the audit include services, policies, or prevention programs that address sexual violence ***exclusively*** or services that address other student needs in addition to sexual violence, such as STI screenings done at the student health center?
- What constitutes an "on-campus" resource? Must it be physically on the campus?
- How specific does the information regarding a sexual violence resource need to be in order to be recorded?

The answers to these questions can help guide the development of criteria for the inclusion of resources located during the online phase of the audit. These criteria will also be used for the interview phase and will have implications for who will be interviewed, how information is captured, and how it is recorded. While having defined criteria prior to conducting the resource audit helps ensure that the process is systematic, researchers should feel able to alter the criteria if they prove unsuitable to the process once data collection begins.

For a more expansive audit, researchers may also choose to include resources that do not fall neatly into the categories described above. These may include awareness programs and efforts to disseminate information directed at sexual assault survivors.

PHASE II: CONDUCTING THE ONLINE SEARCH

As a large percentage of college students use the internet to find health and other information,[5] it has been recommended that information about sexual assault be provided to students on the school's website.[6] Therefore, the online phase of the resource audit is essential and will be conducted using, in most cases, a keyword search of a school's website and an examination of relevant departmental websites. Results, once deemed appropriate, should be recorded in the audit.

Keyword Search

Most university websites have a search field where researchers can enter a predetermined list of terms, one at a time, to identify pertinent results. Determining search terms in advance facilitates a systematic online search. These terms are meant to target the existing institutional policies and reporting protocols, direct services, prevention efforts, and awareness campaigns.

Determining if a Search Result is Applicable

When keyword searches return results, researchers may use the inclusionary criteria to determine which of the links are most appropriate to pursue. Following the links, researchers should examine the content of the webpages. If researchers are able to find a specific resource from one of the aforementioned categories (sexual assault policies, investigative and adjudicative protocols, services, or prevention programs) and the result meets the inclusionary criteria, the result should be logged.

Limited Web Presence?

The first phase of the resource audit described throughout this document is conducted online, examining school websites.

If your college or university has a limited web presence, researchers conducting the audit are encouraged to use their judgment in determining avenues which are likely to yield the richest information. The audit may rely more heavily on print materials (e.g., brochures from the rape crisis center, brochures available at health services and the counseling center, etc.) or interviews with key stakeholders to gather information.

Recording Results

When resources that meet the inclusionary criteria are identified, they must be recorded with sufficient detail to inform future steps in the campus climate assessment. A table or spreadsheet can be useful for capturing data. A template for recording results from the resource audit is available for download as a supplement to this chapter. However they record results, researchers should include information that identifies the offices, departments, or contacts associated with each resource. This can help in identifying stakeholders for the next phase of the audit.

Reliability

Measures can and should be taken to ensure the reliability of online search results. Such procedures should ensure that all resources described online are included in the audit that the recorded results meet the predetermined inclusionary criteria.

One method to increase reliability is establishing and implementing a standard procedure for clarifying ambiguous

Suggested Search Terms:

rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual violence, dating violence, relationship abuse, sexual assault resources, sexual violence resources, sexual advocacy programs, sexual assault prevention, sexual violence prevention

results. At any time throughout the online phase of the resource audit, the research team can come together and review any search results that have been marked as ambiguous or unclear by the researcher conducting the audit. Discussing these results on a case-by-case basis, researchers may reach consensus on how whether or not a given resource ought to be included.

To ensure all relevant resources are being identified, other members of the research team may follow the search protocols using a small subset of the original keywords to spot-check results. If numerous discrepancies between researchers' findings, a process for rectifying results or restarting the online search ought to be specified.

Concluding Phase II

It is important that researchers articulate, prior to conducting the online search, some method for determining when to conclude the online phase of the audit. On some campuses, researchers may decide to end the online search when search terms do not generate new results for a specified amount of time, after searching for a predetermined amount of time, or after researchers have identified a certain number of resources. Researchers should aim to ensure that the audit is capturing all relevant resources available on campus, and that further searching would not produce new results. However, as the audit includes multiple methods of data collection, the online phase ought to yield enough information to allow researchers to move forward with interviews with key stakeholders.

PHASE III: KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The third phase of the resource audit includes identifying key campus stakeholders and conducting brief, informational interviews with them. The interview phase of the resource audit ensures that researchers are capturing all relevant resources addressing sexual violence and clarifies their understanding about what is available.

Determining Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders are faculty or staff members that have a role in the provision of sexual violence resources by offering a service, participating in sexual assault policy development, prevention programming or sexual assault reporting and adjudicative processes. They are also those faculty and staff that are most likely to come in contact with student survivors of sexual assault due to the nature of their work on campus.

Choosing the most senior stakeholder at each office, such as the director or chair, has many strengths. For instance, it is more likely that the individual will be familiar with university policies and codes of conduct, knowledgeable about many functions of the department, and more familiar overall with the structure of the department or office. However, when necessary, researchers may choose to select less senior interviewees, for example, to include individuals who interact directly with students.

While there are many ways that researchers can compile a list of key stakeholders, they may consider contacting campus administrators for recommendations or request input from faculty and staff. Other methods for identifying stakeholders include:

- Reviewing the list of resources gathered from the online phase of the audit. Researchers can identify potential interviewees within offices or departments addressing sexual violence.
- Soliciting recommendations from the campus climate assessment's advisory board.
- Using snowball sampling.[7] Interviewees may mention other faculty or staff who might provide researchers with additional information. Members of the research team may also solicit this information in interviews.

Once researchers have a list of stakeholders, requests for interviews can be made. In the interview invitation, researchers can briefly introduce themselves, state the overall goals of the project, and the reasoning behind the interview request. A sample e-mail invitation can be found at the end of this document (Attachment 3.1).

Interview Procedure

Given that the purpose of the resource audit, as described here, is limited to the identification of available policies, protocols, programs, and services, some of the information that might be captured during each conversation includes:

- If the interviewee works with a *sexual assault policy, investigative and adjudicative protocol, service, or*

Potential Stakeholders:

Depending on your school's organization, the following individuals may be included as key stakeholders:[8]

- Dean of Students
- Residential Housing Administrator
- Chief of Campus Police or Campus Security
- Chair of Campus Judicial Board
- Director, student health services
- Director, counseling services
- Director, athletic department
- Coordinator, fraternities and sororities
- Director, Victim Assistance Program
- Peer Educator(s)
- Coordinator, Title IX Compliance
- Director, Student Affairs
- Director, Office of Student Conduct
- Director, New Student Orientation

prevention program that addresses sexual violence on campus explicitly and what that *direct service, existing institutional policy, prevention effort* ,or *reporting protocol* is if applicable

- Any other offices/departments that the interviewee collaborates with regarding sexual assault resources, such as a separate office that provides bystander trainings to staff or students associated with the office/department
- If the interviewee's office/department works with sexual violence survivors directly

Researchers should determine how best to record the information elicited in the interviews such that it can be efficiently and accurately incorporated into the resource audit. It should be noted, however, that if researchers wish to tape interviews, it will be necessary to acquire approval from the Institutional Review Board and gain the consent of the stakeholders.

Developing Interview Questions

Although identified stakeholders have different roles and responsibilities relating to sexual assault, it is helpful to have a set of common interview questions that can ground each interview. Interview questions can focus on understanding a given service, policy, or prevention program addressing sexual violence and determining how disclosures of sexual violence are handled.

When creating interview questions, it is important to differentiate between process questions (i.e., how do you deal with sexual assault) versus opinion questions (e.g., what works best, where are there gaps in services). The resource audit described in this document is limited to cataloging information regarding sexual assault resources and procedures. Therefore, interview questions are intended to generate information regarding the services, policies, protocols, and prevention programs in which each stakeholder is involved. Interview questions, for the purposes of the resource audit described here, are not intended to capture stakeholders' opinions regarding sexual assault resources on campus. However, researchers may choose to incorporate stakeholders' opinions and perceptions of the resources available to help identify gaps. If this approach is selected, researchers must seek appropriate approvals from the Institutional Review Board.

Stakeholders who are not involved in development or creation of sexual assault resources, but rather interact with a particular population of students, such as student athletes or participants in Greek life, can also provide relevant information to researchers regarding the trainings, services, and prevention efforts that are targeted towards certain subgroups. Therefore, it is important that interview questions are able to elicit this information as well.

Consolidating Data

The desired goal of the three-phase resource audit is to capture the full range of services that are available on campus. In order to create a comprehensive and thorough listing, it is helpful to keep track of all resources in one document. This also makes it easier to compare these resources to best practices and mandates related to university sexual violence services and protections. With this is mind, researchers may choose to incorporate the information gathered from the interviews into the same document where information from the online phase of the audit was recorded, either adding to the list or expanding existing entries.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Once the interview phase of the audit is concluded and researchers have consolidated the findings, the first step of the campus climate assessment process is complete.

Researchers can now begin to prepare the campus for the climate survey and determine the best use for the results of the resource audit. Once the campus climate survey is complete, along with the results of the resource audit, researchers can begin to compare their own campus resources to identify gaps in their services, policies, and prevention efforts available on campus addressing sexual violence and to develop an action plan that is evidence-based and meets federal mandates.

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Understanding and Responding to Campus Sexual Assault: A Guide for Colleges and Universities

Chapter Four: Conducting a Student Survey

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Having assembled a team and an Advisory Board (see *Chapter 2: Fostering Collaborations*) and conducted a resource audit (see *Chapter 3: Conducting a Resource Audit)*, researchers are ready to conduct a campus climate survey. The survey is the centerpiece of the campus climate assessment process, providing data about students' experiences, behaviors, and attitudes regarding sexual assault and their perceptions of the school's response to it. In designing the survey methodology, researchers will be faced with many decisions. Will a random sampling strategy or a census be used? Should incentives be in the form of cash or consumer goods? While there is no "right" choice, each decision has implications for the rest of the project. The purpose of this chapter is to outline these and other core considerations for colleges and universities preparing to conduct campus climate surveys.

In April, 2014, the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (henceforth "White House Task Force") released two documents with valuable information about campus climate assessment at colleges and universities. The more general report[1] and a detailed toolkit[2] offer recommendations that were central to the design of the student survey conducted by the Center on Violence Against Women and Children at Rutgers University-New Brunswick in Fall 2014. This chapter is intended to complement the White House Task Force documents.

WHY CONDUCT A CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY?

As described in *Chapter 1: Introduction,* the student survey is one piece of a comprehensive assessment of campus climate regarding sexual assault. It is informed by the steps that precede it—the development of the project's methodology and the resource audit—and shapes what follows—gathering qualitative data, analyzing findings, and constructing an action plan. Most importantly, a student survey gathers information that can only be gleaned from first-hand reports. This information includes measurements of subjective characteristics, such as students' opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and awareness of campus resources. Surveys may also yield more accurate estimates of the prevalence of sexual assault than statistics from law enforcement, as many victims of campus sexual assault may never report the incident(s) to the authorities.[3]

When designed carefully and thoughtfully, student surveys can also allow researchers to investigate specific questions of interest. For instance, an investigator might be especially interested in what makes undergraduates more or less likely to intervene to prevent a potential sexual assault. Questions or scales about bystander behavior can be inserted into the survey at the design stage to allow for analysis once data have been collected.

Finally, if researchers view the survey as part of the comprehensive assessment process, the findings will directly inform the development of an action plan for improving the campus response to sexual assault. Anticipating that the data will be used in this manner, researchers should design the survey to collect information that will be most useful in identifying and prioritizing needs, as well as in generating and implementing solutions.

PARTNERS

Chapter 2: Fostering Collaborations of this guide articulated the importance of fostering collaborations with key campus partners who serve either as advisors or as implementers of the research design. During the data-gathering phase of the project, it will, in most cases, be necessary to engage additional offices or individuals to support the smooth rollout of the student survey. Working partnerships with an Institutional Review Board and, if possible, an Office of Institutional Research, will be a significant asset to the project.

Institutional Review Board

A campus climate survey requires approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Most colleges and universities have IRB offices with protocols that will be familiar to faculty and researchers, but it is wise to review the specifications for application and approval before beginning any research project. For schools lacking an internal IRB, private review boards are available. It must be emphasized that **data collection may not begin until an IRB has approved the research protocol**.

Before composing the application, researchers should determine whether the project requires a full or expedited review. While institutional requirements may vary, a basic student survey like the one described in this chapter is likely to qualify for an expedited review, provided that it poses no more than minimal risk to subjects. Once again, researchers should consult the specific policies of their IRB in determining which type of application to submit. Further, it is essential that there be sufficient time built into the project's timeline to allow for review and approval of the IRB application and any anticipated amendments. Having a good working relationship with IRB staff can help researchers plan the timing of submissions, track applications and amendments in the review process, and answer any questions about human subjects research in a university setting that may arise.

Institutional Research

Many colleges and universities have an office or designated staff specifically charged with collecting and reporting data, often to federal or state governments, about the school and its students. At Rutgers, for instance, the Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning maintains a warehouse of student data, administers one-time and recurring student surveys, conducts analyses, and reports information to internal and external bodies for planning and evaluation purposes. If a college or university conducting a campus climate survey has institutional research capacity, it is highly recommended that researchers engage them in the process for at least one of the following reasons:

- Institutional research staff have extensive expertise in data collection, survey research, and data analysis.
- They are familiar with the unique characteristics of the institution and its student body, which ought to be considered in the design of the survey and campus climate assessment overall.
- In some cases, the entity responsible for institutional research may have resources, such as staff, software, or funding, to support the campus climate survey.

At minimum, researchers should consult with the institutional research staff of the college or university before beginning a campus climate survey to make them aware of the survey's timeline. At Rutgers, preliminary conversations with the Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning staff yielded valuable insights about scheduling the survey and designing an incentive structure that was likely, in their experience, to facilitate the highest possible response rate. As the project proceeded, the office's staff provided essential support in the design and administration of the online survey.

DESIGN

In designing the methodology for the campus climate survey, researchers must make several fundamental decisions. At each point, the available options have both benefits and drawbacks that ought to be considered carefully. Balancing these pros and cons forces tradeoffs, with response rates and data quality on one side of the equation and cost and feasibility on the other.

Survey Instrument

Constructing a campus climate survey is a process with multiple steps, but researchers need not start from scratch. Beginning with the question, "What do we want to know?" investigators should identify the constructs that are central to understanding the campus climate. The White House Task Force recommends convening a working group to enumerate and define these constructs; the advisory board, school administrators, and even students can be helpful at this stage.

Once researchers have identified what will be measured, they should seek out valid and reliable instruments that tap those constructs. For several of the constructs that

Altering Question Wording to Fit the Sample

The survey administered at Rutgers University-New Brunswick included a well-established scale for measuring Sense of Community.[4] However, the scale was originally used in neighborhoods. Researchers made minor changes to the question wording to make it more relevant for the student sample:

Original question wording:

"I can get what I need in this community."

Revised question wording:

"I can get what I need in this campus community."

The alterations were discussed with the scale's author during the drafting of the survey. In analysis, researchers will examine the revised scale's performance against previous applications to assure that the results are equally valid and reliable.

or questions that have been subjected to trials and evaluation are available, along with their supporting research, for public use. The sample survey disseminated by the White House Task Force includes several "promising practice examples" of these scales and items, as does the pilot survey conducted at Rutgers University-New Brunswick (based on the White House Task Force survey). If there are constructs the research team hopes to measure that do not have validated scales associated with them, investigators should use care in developing them based on available research, pilot testing them, and drawing conclusions.

Informed Consent. In order to provide their informed consent to participate in the survey, students must be given an adequate explanation of the project's purpose, including an explanation of the survey's general content. Informed consent materials should outline any anticipated risks and potential benefits to respondents, explain that participation is voluntary, and emphasize that participants may withdraw from the study without consequence. IRB regulations also require researchers to include details about how the privacy of participants will be protected and how data will be securely stored. Investigators are encouraged to consult IRB guidelines about the scope of information to be provided to students in securing their informed consent.

Students must be informed that they will be asked questions about their experiences, attitudes, and behaviors regarding sexual assault. For some students, receiving the invitation to participate in a survey of this nature may be upsetting. For some, it may bring experiences of trauma to the fore. Some of these students may go on to complete the survey, while others will not. There is, therefore, an ethical obligation to provide information about where to go for counseling or support in communications presented before the survey is even administered. Information about available resources, either on campus or off, should be included in the informed consent materials.[5]

Tailoring Items to Your Campus. Colleges and universities differ widely from one another, meaning that no single campus climate survey instrument will be appropriate in all higher education settings. Does the school serve only undergraduate students or are there graduate programs? Is there a rape crisis and counseling center on campus? Are fraternities, sororities, or social clubs a significant aspect of campus life? These and other characteristics of colleges and universities necessarily influence what is asked in a campus climate survey, as well as how questions are presented. Researchers should draw on the findings from the resource audit to shape questions about students' awareness and utilization of available campus services, programs, and policies.

If researchers are using a survey instrument, scales, or items that have been developed for other schools or settings, it will likely be necessary to add, remove, or edit questions to better suit the particular campus environment in which the survey will be administered. When using validated scales, any alterations threaten the reliability and validity of results. However, minor changes, such as adapting pronouns or other words that do not apply to the population or the setting, may be necessary for the items to be relevant. In these cases, using the items' original wording would sacrifice validity more than the small edits. All alterations to item wording, order, response scale, or any other fundamental aspects of a previously validated scale must be recorded and reported. Researchers should keep a log of edits to a survey instrument noting the original form of the scale or item, the updated form, and a justification of the change.

Social Desirability. As with all research, investigators should consider the potential sources of bias that may

Questions about Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

Researchers should give careful thought to how questions about sex, gender, and sexuality are worded. **Sex** is the biological set of characteristics defining males and females, while **gender** is socially constructed and comprised of behaviors, activities, and attributes typically associated with men and women. **Sexual orientation** refers to one's physical or romantic attractions.

A survey question about gender or sexual orientation should include a range of response options along a continuum that allows students to best communicate their identity. Binary response options should be avoided.

Before conducting the survey, researchers may consider convening a focus group of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) students to identify the most appropriate range response options for these questions.

Matching Survey Responses with Demographic Information

At Rutgers, respondents logged into the online survey by providing their student identification numbers; these numbers were used to match survey responses to student records, from which basic demographic information was pulled. The unique identifiers, in our case the student identification numbers, were then removed from this matched dataset, yielding the final raw dataset.

The school's Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning handled matching records and redacting identifying information. Because students provided their identification numbers, our survey was confidential, not anonymous.

The matching procedure, as well as the subsequent removal of unique information from the final dataset, was thoroughly explained in the informed consent language that students were required to agree to before proceeding to the survey.

affect the results of a campus climate survey. There are many excellent volumes on the topic that researchers may consult to better understand and avoid common sources of bias in survey research.[6] One source of bias deserves explicit note here: social desirability bias. The campus climate survey addresses several issues for which certain answers are more favorable or pro-social, such as bystander willingness to intervene and prevent sexual assault. Researchers should expect some degree of social desirability to influence their findings on scales and items like these. Although it cannot be eliminated, assuring students that their responses are confidential and encouraging them to respond honestly can minimize social desirability bias.

Demographic Information. To better understand the experiences of students, researchers should examine survey results within and across groups. Investigators might dig deeper into the data, once they are collected, by looking at first-year students compared to all others, females compared to males, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) students compared to others, among other groups. This analysis requires some demographic information about each student who takes the survey.

The need to have demographic data raises two issues: confidentiality and respondents' fatigue. First, assuming that the survey is anonymous or confidential (see below), researchers must be on guard against collecting information that can in any way link students to their responses. The nature of the campus climate survey is sensitive and personal, and collection of data ought to be anonymous or confidential to protect participants and encourage honest responding. If students are asked to enter e-mail addresses, identification numbers, or other unique information, they will be dubious about the research team's ability to keep survey responses unconnected. However, some basic information, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, and class year, may be necessary to collect and is common enough as to make individual identification of subjects unfeasible.

Second, reporting demographic information on surveys can be tedious for respondents. Worryingly, it may lead to frustration or careless responding that can impact non-demographic items.[7] Placing minimal demographic at the end of questionnaires can reduce this risk. Another option, if the survey is conducted online and your school's student records are also electronic, is to pull this basic information from the latter and match it to the former. This method requires students to provide some unique identifying information, such as an ID number, to facilitate the matching procedure. Once demographic data have been drawn from student records and merged into the campus climate survey dataset, the unique identifiers must be redacted. Matching student records imposes the minimum burden on students, but it is complex, and students may question the ultimate confidentiality of their responses.

Sampling

One of the most important design decisions to be made in the course of conducting a campus climate survey is how to select students to participate. This decision influences each aspect of the project going forward, including, most notably, the outreach strategy and incentive structure.

Defining the Study Population. Determining who should be surveyed can be challenging. Most colleges and universities enroll a heterogeneous mix of students who will have vastly different campus experiences; in fact, some may not have campus experiences at all. When defining the study population, researchers must decide if all types of students or only some will be sampled, considering, as always, feasibility and the quality of results. Meaningful distinctions between students at colleges and universities might include:

- Graduate or undergraduate
- Full-time or part-time
- Living in on-campus housing, off-campus housing, or commuting
- Taking classes on campus or taking classes online (or a mix)
- Matriculated or non-matriculated
- Domestic students or students studying abroad

At a large, complex institution like Rutgers, sampling from a full roster of enrollees necessarily includes students with little to no campus experience, whose responses to questions about campus resources might be limited (e.g., a part-time, online student living out-of-state). However, limiting the sample population may be messier and might filter out groups of students whose experiences are important in the context of campus sexual assault and should be better understood (e.g., commuting students who spend significant time on campus). Researchers should consider what is gained or lost by including or excluding certain groups of students.

If the student population of a school is highly heterogeneous, the dataset resulting from the campus climate survey must include variables that allow researchers to group students for analysis. Some of these variables may be available from administrative data (if matching student files to pull demographic information), while others must be translated into survey questions. Investigators should think about the characteristics of students' experiences that might affect their responses to survey questions about sexual assault and campus resources (e.g., students taking all of their classes online are unlikely to report high awareness of school policies regarding sexual assault) and ensure that they will be able to distinguish different types of students in the final dataset.

Sampling Strategy. Once the study population has been defined, there are two main sampling strategies researchers might employ: random sampling, in which a representative subset of the population is invited to complete the survey, or census, in which the entire population may participate. Within random sampling, more complex methods, such as stratified or systematic random sampling, may be used to ensure representativeness or oversample certain groups. Deciding which strategy to use involves weighing the pros and cons of each and settling on the method that maximizes the features of the study deemed most important. Some of the benefits and drawbacks of random sampling and a census approach are enumerated in the table on the following page.

Random sampling has many advantages for researchers, most notably that it produces results that are, in theory, generalizable to the entire study population. If the sampling procedures are sound and the response rate sufficient, the quality of the data gathered in this manner will be quite good. Further, if investigators are interested in studying typically underrepresented groups, they can use more complex sampling strategies to ensure that the subsample's size will be large enough to analyze. In the case of a campus climate study, an argument can be made for oversampling members of several groups: LGBTQ students, fraternity or sorority members, and student athletes, for instance. Because the random sample is a small subset of the study population, another advantage of using a random sampling strategy is that outreach is precisely targeted and relatively inexpensive (compared to outreach in project using a census).

However, random sampling is not without its drawbacks. Compared to conducting a census, using a random sample increases the logistical complexity of the project. Assuming a complete list of students in the study population can be acquired, selecting members of the sample is fairly easy with the help of statistical software.[8] The challenges arise with outreach, tracking, and delivery of incentives. Because the sample is, by definition, only a small portion of the total study population, it is all the more important to

More Issues for Survey Design

The White House Task Force documents raise other issues that researchers should consider in designing campus climate surveys, including:

- How far back should students be asked to think for questions about exposure to sexual assault?
- Will the survey be repeated? If so, how often?
- How will the design protect against multiple or repeat responses?

Consult the resources provided by the White House Task Force for more on these and other issues related to survey design.

Table 1. Sampling Design: Random Sampling versus Census

	RANDOM SAMPLE	CENSUS
PROS	• Unbiased and generalizable • Can be used to oversample underrepresented groups • Efficient outreach • Higher response rate	• More inclusive • Incentive drawings are less expensive overall • Incentive distribution is less administratively complex • Public education opportunity
CONS	• Per respondent incentive payments are expensive • Administrative complexity to deliver incentives • Less inclusive	• Lower response rate • Less efficient outreach • Self-selection bias among respondents

achieve a sufficient response rate. Typically, when using a random sample, all selectees who complete the survey receive some sort of incentive for their participation. While maintaining confidentiality, researchers must somehow track which members of the sample have completed the survey in order to deliver incentives to each eligible student. In a medium-sized university, a research team responsible for well-designed campus climate survey using a random sample may need to deliver over 1,000 incentive payments or rewards. Regardless of the type of incentive used, over 1,000 unique transactions will then need to be budgeted for, tracked, and delivered; under any circumstances, this is a daunting administrative task.

A second set of drawbacks to random sampling relate to the broader goals of the campus climate assessment process as a whole. In many ways, campus climate assessments are designed to bring the frequently hidden experiences of students to the forefront. In discussions of campus sexual assault, too often whole groups of people – male survivors, LBGTQ students, and transgender students, for example – are unlikely to come forward with their experiences, or worse, they are ignored or silenced.[9] Even careful, stratified random sampling may omit groups whose experiences would enrich the campus climate assessment's findings. Further, a campus climate survey can be an opportunity for raising community awareness and encouraging students to speak up, together, about the environments in which they learn and live. In this way, the survey itself may serve to improve the campus climate regarding sexual assault. Inviting only a few members of the community to participate through random sampling necessarily limits the effort's inclusiveness and its immediate effect on the campus climate.

A **census**, on the other hand, has the advantage of inviting all students in the study population to participate, maximizing inclusiveness. Rather than targeted outreach, a census design requires a broader public awareness campaign to reach students, creating opportunities for education and community-wide discourse around sexual assault (see *Outreach*, below). However, a census will typically yield a lower response rate (though likely a larger sample size) than random sampling, due in part to the incentive structure the design necessitates. While random sample survey designs often reward each participant for their time, financial constraints generally limit researchers' ability to use the same incentive structure in population surveys. Instead, raffles or drawings for a smaller number of larger prizes may be used to entice subjects to complete a survey. This incentive structure has the advantages of being cheaper and far simpler to administer than one in which each participant receives something. From the perspective of a potential survey-taker, though, a chance to win something, even if it is relatively valuable, is less attractive than a guarantee of receiving a smaller incentive. Thus, compared to random sampling with rewards to all participants, a lower percentage of the total population will complete the survey if all are invited but only a few rewarded.[10] Even if a large number of students participate, if the response rate is low, the data may not fully generalize to the study population.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Once again, there are many choices to be made about how to actually administer the survey to the student population. Again, there are no "right" or "wrong" decisions. Rather, some options will be a better fit in some school environments while others will not. Researchers should weigh each option with respect to feasibility, cost, and effect on data quality before determining a course of action. Some of the decision points that are central to the administration of a campus climate survey are listed below.

Anonymous or Confidential?

The data collected through the campus climate survey must be either anonymous or confidential, and investigators must clearly understand the difference. In the case of an **anonymous** survey, students complete the survey without ever providing any unique identifying information, such as a name, student identification number, or e-mail address. At no point in the survey administration or data analysis is it possible for anyone to connect an individual student with his or her survey responses. Anonymous data collection provides the most protection possible to students, allowing them to safely reveal sensitive or even incriminating information without fear of being identified.

However, it may not be possible to conduct a truly anonymous survey. Researchers may want to keep track of which students have completed the survey and which have not for at least three reasons: First, if the study design includes incentives for participants, it is usually necessary to have some method for tracking who has earned or is eligible for the reward. Second, using some identification system protects against multiple responders who might take the survey more than once. Third, knowing who has completed the survey allows researchers to target reminders and follow-up messages to those students who have not yet participated, sparing those who have already done what was asked from further messages. Reducing the number of unnecessary contacts maintains goodwill–important, in a time when online survey tools are being used to subject students to more surveys than ever before.

When it is necessary to keep track of students who have participated, researchers can conduct a confidential survey. Unlike anonymous data collection, **confidential** research protects the privacy of subjects even as it is possible, at least at some point during the study, to connect an individual with his or her survey responses. If researchers ask students to provide a unique identifier, such as name, ID number, or e-mail address, at any point in the study, the project is confidential, not anonymous. In that case, investigators can guarantee students that only members of the research team (or some subset of the team) will be able to identify them or link them with their responses, explaining in informed consent materials how their privacy will nonetheless be maintained. Whether researchers choose to conduct an anonymous or confidential survey, the distinction must be made clear in informed consent materials with an explicit description of how students' privacy will be protected throughout the course of the research.

Piloting

Before administering the survey to the full sample of students, it is wise to conduct a pilot to identify potential problems and fine-tune the survey process. Researchers can recruit a small convenience sample of students from interested campus groups by advertising, or through other mechanisms to participate in the piloting. These students are asked to take the survey and provide feedback on item wording, the ordering of questions, and any other facets of the process. If the budget allows, the research team may want to provide members of the pilot sample with a small incentive to compensate them for their time and thoughtful input.

What to Look for When Piloting

Students participating in the pilot should consider the following questions as they take the survey:

- Is the language in the survey relevant?
- Are the words and phrases used in the survey clear and easy to understand?
- Do the response choices make sense?
- Are you unsure how to answer any of the questions?
- Does the order of the questions make sense?

Once the pilot sample has been recruited, investigators should give some thought to how they will solicit feedback on the survey instrument and process. One option is to insert spaces throughout the questionnaire to allow students to provide open-ended, written feedback. If researchers are interested in students' reactions to particular items, they can ask more specific questions about the survey. Some researchers may prefer to facilitate discussions with students piloting a survey; however, in the case of the campus climate survey, the sensitive subject matter may make confidential, written feedback the preferred choice. For instance, if the questionnaire employs skip logic, such that only students who report having experi-

experienced any sexual assault are presented with further questions about victimization, any student commenting on those items in a focus group or interview would be identifying him- or herself as a survivor of sexual violence, possibly without intending to do so. Once all of the feedback has been gathered, members of the research team can determine where and how changes to the instrument or the survey process should be made. It may be helpful to keep a log of students' comments and whether or not they will be addressed in revisions to the questionnaire.

Online or Pen and Paper?

With the availability of powerful and flexible online survey software, most colleges and universities have the option of administering the campus climate survey electronically. Compared to pen and paper, online administration has several benefits. First, since students' responses are automatically compiled in a database, online surveys do not require manual data entry, eliminating a major source of errors in pen and paper surveys. Second, the use of skip logic to customize the questions presented to each participant is smooth and seamless online, but cumbersome and error-prone in pen and paper administrations. For example, each student taking the campus climate survey should be asked whether or not he or she has experienced unwanted sexual contact since enrolling in school. Those that indicate having had such experiences are then asked to answer a series of questions about what happened; those that do not report victimization skip to the next section. Online, this transition is undetectable. Students with no reported experience of victimization are unaware that they have surpassed an entire section of the survey. This sort of skip logic, which can be used throughout the survey, allows researchers to ask follow-up questions only of those respondents for whom further questions are relevant. It is possible to incorporate skip logic into pen and paper surveys, but it cannot be similarly automated, causing an increase in complexity that will likely result in poorer quality data.A third benefit of online survey administration is its flexibility across platforms. Many online survey programs allow investigators to make their questionnaires mobile-friendly, so they may be completed on tablets, smartphones, and computers alike. Students need not be sitting in a computer lab or in front of their laptop to take the survey. Rather, they can complete it when and where they like on mobile devices, if desired. This flexibility logically increases the survey's response rate.

Although it will almost always be preferable to administer the survey online, one advantage to pen-and-paper questionnaires should be noted in particular. Provided the survey does not ask for any unique, personal information, a campus climate survey administered in hard copy can be anonymous. Further, students can be sure that their responses cannot in any way be traced back to them, since they can observe that the researcher makes no record matching them to their survey responses. While it is possible to administer an online survey that is anonymous, it is much more difficult to demonstrate to participants that their privacy will be protected. At Rutgers, however, only a few students expressed concern about confidentiality in the online survey. For these reasons, online administration of a campus climate survey will generally be preferable.

When to Administer the Survey

The research team will need to decide when to schedule the survey to maximize both the student response rate and the quality of the data gathered. The availability of online survey tools has dramatically increased the number of questionnaires students are asked to complete, leading inevitably to survey fatigue. When scheduling the campus climate survey, it is best to choose a time when there are few or no other surveys open.

Investigators should also consider the point during the school year that the survey should be administered. If the survey is conducted during the fall, most first-year students will have had relatively little exposure to the campus environment. As the first year of school may be associated with a greater risk of experiencing rape, harassment,

Designing for Mobile Devices

An advantage of online survey administration is the option for students to participate on their smartphones or tablets. However, researchers should be aware that certain design constraints apply on mobile devices. For instance, multiple response options listed horizontally, as Likert-type response sets typically are, will not render well on screens that are longer than they are wide. Vertical lists may be more appropriate.

Some online survey programs, such as Qualtrics, tell researchers whether or not certain questions can be displayed well on mobile devices and offer recommended modifications.

or other unwanted sexual contact,[11] administering the survey too early in the year may yield misleadingly low rates of sexual assault. When possible, it is recommended that schools conduct climate surveys in the spring to ensure that most participants have experienced several months of campus life. Avoiding periods when students are busier than usual, such as exam weeks, or less engaged, like over school breaks, is also wise.

How Long to Keep the Survey Open

Along with determining when to administer the student survey, researchers must also decide how long to make it available. The window ought to be wide enough to allow sample members ample time to complete the survey. At Rutgers, the survey was available for two weeks, such that students had opportunities to participate across several weekdays, weeknights, and two full weekends. Even if a student was too busy to take the survey on a given day, the team expected nearly all students would have some free time in the course of the weeks to participate. Limiting the time frame to two weeks will also ensure that most students who wish to take the survey do not put it off indefinitely. A finite window also allows researchers to have an anchor in the project's timeline around which they can plan their work.

However, if, during the course of the survey's administration, researchers are tracking the response rate and find that they are not observing the participation they anticipated, it is possible to extend the survey window. Maintaining some flexibility in this manner is advisable, since researchers essentially have one chance to gather the best information possible. If a strategy does not appear to be working, there ought to be some room to tweak the approach for better results. It should be noted that researchers should not extend the survey period more than once or twice, lest students grow skeptical about the strictness of the deadlines. Whenever investigators alter their research protocol, however, they must ensure that the IRB has approved of the changes. Writing anticipated changes, like the option to extend the survey period by a few days, can be written into the original IRB application or subsequent amendments prior to the administration of the survey, allowing researchers to make approved modifications without additional review.

MAXIMIZING RESPONSE RATES

Whether using a census approach or inviting a randomly selected sample to participate in the survey, researchers should aim to maximize participation among eligible students. A larger sample almost always translates into better data. Strategies for increasing response rates typically fall into one of two categories: outreach and the use of incentives. Elements of each have been discussed throughout this chapter, as they relate to other components of the survey design. Below is a lengthier treatment of incentives and outreach, highlighting the points that researchers may wish to consider in developing their approaches.

Flexibility in Design

Throughout the two weeks originally planned for survey administration at Rutgers University-New Brunswick researchers received regular updates on the response rate. Shortly before the survey was due to close, investigators decided that extending the survey period by a few days, along with the addition of incentive awards and another round of outreach, could entice more students to participate. Indeed, the survey's response rate grew by several percentage points within the final days of its availability.

Incentives

Certainly, some students will respond to the survey because they are concerned about campus sexual assault, because they value community participation, or because they want their school to establish stronger policies and protocols. Conversely, some students will never take a campus climate survey, regardless of enticements offered by the university or research team. Many students, however, fall somewhere in between, and will take the survey if they are given some sort of tangible reward for their time and participation. Survey researchers commonly use incentives, such as cash payments, gift cards, or entry into raffles for prizes to attract a larger sample of respondents.

Because resources are limited, investigators will usually be required to balance the monetary value of each incentive with the number of prizes or payments to be delivered. In general, research studies will offer large prizes to a few participants, selected in a raffle, or smaller incentives to more, or sometimes all, members of the sample. The incentive structure will typically correspond with the sampling method selected. When a random sampling approach is used, researchers will often encourage participants to join the study by promising each one a small payment for his or her time. Even though the payment may be relatively small, the guarantee of compensation is enough to draw many students into the final sample. As only a small subset of the total population is invited to take the survey, researchers can spread their budget for incentives across all respondents while still providing sufficient compensation for participation.

If a census approach is used, it is unlikely that the research team will have the resources to provide a sufficiently attractive incentive to each student completing the survey. Even with a modest response rate, per-respondent payments quickly balloon in population studies, overwhelming the project's budget. As an alternative, researchers may provide each participant with an entry into a drawing or raffle for prizes that are more valuable but fewer in number.

A Tiered Incentive Structure for Census Design

At Rutgers University-New Brunswick, where all students were invited to participate in the study, those who completed the survey were entered into drawings for cash prizes. A tiered incentive structure was used to encourage students to participate early in the survey period:

- 20 winners of $300, drawn from students who completed the survey in the first three days
- 15 winners of $200, drawn from students who completed the survey in the first week, excepting those who already won
- 15 winners of $150, drawn from all students who completed the survey, excepting those who already won

Additional prizes were added in the final days of the survey period to boost the response rate:

- 15 more winners of $150, drawn from all students who completed the survey, excepting those who already won

The next question for the research team is what exactly to offer as an incentive. Cash, gift cards, and consumer goods, like tablets or smartphones, are often used to motivate students to participate in surveys. When determining what sort of incentive to provide, researchers should consider how attractive students will find the reward and how easy it will be to acquire, account for, and distribute. Because the goal is to entice as many students as possible to take the survey, the incentive should have wide appeal. The experience of the Rutgers team suggests, and research corroborates,[12] that the majority of students prefer cash incentives over gift cards or consumer products. This makes sense: students are limited as to where they can redeem gift cards, making them unattractive if the designated vendor is not universally used. Similarly, if researchers offer tangible goods, like small electronics, students who already own such products will not be attracted by the incentive. If it is possible to offer cash payments, either in small sums to each participant (i.e., in a random sample design) or in larger amounts to randomly drawn winners (i.e., in a census design), researchers are encouraged to do so.[13] However, the best way to determine the incentives that students in a particular setting will find the most attractive is simply to ask. An informal poll of students can provide helpful insight into what will encourage students to participate in the project. This question may also be posed to students during the pilot.

Outreach

To encourage students to participate in the survey, a communications strategy is necessary. The nature of the outreach will depend on whether researchers are using random sampling or a census approach. In random sample designs, researchers will be primarily concerned with inviting the selected subset of students to take the survey and informing them about how they will be compensated for their participation. This communication can take the form of a series of personalized e-mails or letters, strategically planned for maximum impact.[14] An initial note might let students know they have been randomly chosen to participate, describe the study, and explain how to take the survey and collect their incentives. Follow-up messages might remind students who have not yet taken the survey that their input is especially important, emphasizing that they have a limited amount of time to participate if they wish to claim their reward. In a random sample study, outreach will be targeted to a small group of students and limited to three to four points of contact, probably online.

Outreach costs in a random sample study, therefore, are likely to be relatively low.

If the research design calls for conducting a census, on the other hand, communication will occur on a much larger scale, likely incurring greater costs. In this case, outreach takes the form of a multimedia public awareness campaign with the goal of reaching as many students as possible, multiple times. Students absorb information through many different channels, so a successful campus-wide outreach effort will take advantage of the array of communication platforms available. E-mails, poster campaigns, and social media messages should be a part of any school's broad-based outreach. If there are regular newsletters, e-mail blasts, or announcements to students, the research team should aim to include information about the survey in communications in the weeks leading up to administration. Direct messages from known and respected figures on campus, such as a dean or the student council president, can be useful in demonstrating widespread support and buy-in for the project.

Across platforms and for all study designs, messages should be clear, consistent, and extremely concise. They should convey the topic of the study, include all of the necessary information about how to access the survey during the administration period, and emphasize that participation earns each student a chance (or chances) to win a prize. For students who would like more information, the research team may create a dedicated website to house details about the project.

To facilitate clear communication, you may also choose to "brand" your survey. This gives all members of the community an easy way to discuss the project while also creating "buzz" about the survey. At Rutgers, the campus climate survey was named *#iSPEAK* to emphasize that it provided an opportunity for students to share their personal experiences with an audience that valued their input. The name is short, easy to spell, and memorable. Additionally, by incorporating the hashtag into the name when written, the Rutgers research team signaled the intention to use social media in communicating about the survey and solicit student participation in messaging. Across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, members of the Rutgers community used the hashtag #iSPEAK to talk about the survey and ending sexual violence on campus.

Encouraging students to partner with researchers in campus-wide outreach can significantly strengthen the project's communications. Students' participation, from individuals joining an online discussion by using a project-specific hashtag to student groups hosting events for their members, allows students to feel some ownership of the survey, engendering a higher response rate. Ultimately, the hope is that students feel personally invested in their campus community and view the survey as an opportunity to influence their environment for the better. Further, if students are engaged throughout the campus climate assessment process, including interpretation of the data and development of an action plan, efforts to strengthen campus policies and procedures regarding sexual assault are more likely to be successful.

#iSPEAK

Figure 1. *#iSPEAK* logo used in publicizing Rutgers University-New Brunswick's 2014 campus climate survey.

Outreach Avenues

Rutgers University-New Brunswick is a large institution with multiple campuses serving many different types of students. Our research team aimed to use as many outreach avenues as possible to communicate with the largest swath of the population. Some of the ways we publicized the survey included the following:

- Ads in the school newspaper
- Displays on monitors in student centers
- Table tents in dining halls
- Pop-up survey stations in libraries
- Notifications on student web portals
- Door hangers on all rooms in residence halls
- Rubber bracelets with the #iSPEAK logo

A detailed outreach plan describing each activity used on our campus is included in Attachment 4.1.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATION

While the campus climate survey is primarily a tool for gathering information about students' experiences, attitudes, and behaviors regarding sexual assault, it can also serve to educate participants and raise their awareness about the issues addressed. Many students may not know that sexual assault is a serious issue on their campus until the survey asks them direct questions on the topic. Researchers can capitalize on students' interest and attention by providing a detailed list of campus and community resources at the conclusion of the survey, along with information sources for those who wish to learn more.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter has been to lay out some of the central elements of a campus climate survey process, as well as choices to make and issues to consider in implementing such a project. As a complement to the White House Task Force's resources, this chapter details the different ways in which colleges and universities might design and administer a climate survey regarding sexual assault, informed by the authors' experience surveying students at Rutgers University-New Brunswick in the fall of 2014. As schools set out to conduct campus climate assessments, of which a student surveys are a crucial component, the considerations and lessons learned that are described here can serve as a guide.

Throughout the assessment process, however, numerous issues will arise that have not been addressed specifically in this document or by the White House Task Force. When determining a course of action, researchers should always weigh the options, knowing that tradeoffs must be made. For example, increasing response rates will almost always incur greater costs. Most important when making any design choice is ensuring that students and their privacy are protected. Beyond that, investigators should aim to uphold rigorous research standards as much as possible and be realistic about what can be achieved.

A topic this chapter has not addressed is what is to be done with the data gathered in the course of conducting a campus climate survey. Researchers should follow established guidelines for data storage and data cleaning, proceeding with analysis and reporting once the team is confident that the data quality is acceptable. A future chapter of this guide will discuss how findings from the student survey can be synthesized with qualitative data, providing a more complete understanding of the campus climate. This understanding ultimately informs the development of an action plan to strengthen policies and protocols for preventing sexual assault, responding to it when it occurs, and supporting victims.

Recommended Citation

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Notes

1. White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. (2014). *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.* http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/report_0.pdf.
2. White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. (2014). *Climate Surveys: Useful Tools to Help Colleges and Universities in Their Efforts to Reduce and Prevent Sexual Assault.* https://www.notalone.gov/assets/ovw-climate-survey.pdf.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Peterson, N.A., Speer, P.W., & McMillan, D.W. (2008). Validation of a brief sense of community scale: Confirmation of the principal theory of sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 36, 1, 61-73.
5. Providing information about campus resources in the informed consent would, by definition, increase students' knowledge of available services and programs, priming them to report higher levels of awareness in the survey. An alternative approach is to provide students invited to take the survey with the phone number and URL for counseling and support offered by an agency external to the school, such as a state crisis counseling center. reduces some of the potential bias while allowing researchers to uphold their ethical obligations to survey participants.
6. Some recommended texts include: Viswanathan, M. (2005). *Measurement Error and Research Design.* London: Sage Publications.; Fowler, F.J. (2009). *Survey Research Methods, 4th Ed.* London: Sage Publications.
7. Ben-Nun, P. (2008). Respondent fatigue. In Lavrakas, P.J. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 743-744). London: Sage Publications.
8. For guidance on calculating sample size, see: Shapiro, G.M. (2008). Sample size. In Lavrakas, P.J. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods* (pp. 743-744). London: Sage Publications.
9. Sable, M.R., Danis, F., Mauzy, D.L., & Gallagher, S.K. (2008). Barriers to reporting sexual assault for women and men: Perspectives of college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 55, 3: 157.
10. It should be noted that, in either scenario, some students will participate in the survey for reasons other than the incentive.
11. Flack, W. F., et al. (2008). "The Red Zone" Temporal Risk for Unwanted Sex Among College Students. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 23(9), 1177.
12. Ryu, E., Couper, M. P., & Marans, R. W. (2006). Survey incentives: Cash vs. in-kind; face-to-face vs. mail; response rate vs. nonresponse error. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 18(1), 89-106.
13. It is possible to provide cash-like incentives to students in the form of pre-paid debit cards, but these often have fees and expiration dates associated with them, making them more costly and their use more limited. Online money transfers have also been used, though these require more effort on the part of the students to accept the payment. To make the incentive maximally attractive to students, researchers should make it as easy as possible to use. Hence, cash will generally be the most desirable option.
14. For more information about strategically planning communications, see: Dillman, D. A. (2011). Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design method--2007 Update with new Internet, visual, and mixed-mode guide. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

RUTGERS
School of Social Work

Center on Violence
Against Women
And Children

Understanding and Responding to Campus Sexual Assault: A Guide for Colleges and Universities

Chapter Five: Gathering Qualitative Data

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Researchers electing to engage in a comprehensive campus climate assessment process may want to consider conducting focus groups with students to complement the data gathered from the survey. While the survey is the centerpiece of the campus climate assessment process, the qualitative data provided from the focus groups can build upon the knowledge gained from the survey. Focus groups can be conducted at any point during the campus climate assessment process; researchers at Rutgers University–New Brunswick conducted the focus groups following the conclusion of the survey to fill in gaps in knowledge that arose from initial survey results.

The focus groups are intended to strengthen the results gathered from the campus climate survey and provide a deeper insight into students' attitudes and knowledge about campus sexual violence. Campuses have flexibility in the number of focus groups they chose to conduct, the types of students and/or student groups to include in the focus groups, the recruitment strategies for focus groups, as well as the location(s) of focus groups. The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance to colleges and universities seeking to conduct focus groups as a part of a comprehensive assessment process.

WHY CONDUCT FOCUS GROUPS?

Focus groups are a recommended component of the campus climate assessment process as the campus climate survey results may not be able to fully inform researchers of students' perceptions of campus sexual violence and of available resources, creating a gap in knowledge. Follow-up focus groups after a survey allows researchers to understand the survey results in greater depth and conduct an "exploratory" investigation into the meaning behind the quantitative data.[1,2]

Focus groups also grant researchers the ability to ask specific subsets of the student population about their experiences with sexual violence. It is critical to make sure that a diverse representation of perspectives is gathered during the campus climate assessment, and in particular, that any underrepresented groups have the opportunity to voice their experiences. Groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning/queer (LGBTQ) students and students affiliated with various cultural centers may have different perspectives on sexual violence than the majority. Focus groups with specific subsets of the student population may also highlight possible gaps in outreach as well as services available on campus for these students. The findings from the focus groups with both the general student body as well as specific subsets of the student population can then be combined with the findings from the survey to develop an action plan for improving the overall campus response to sexual violence.

At Rutgers University-New Brunswick, we conducted two types of focus groups: 1) with those who belong to specific subgroups on campus, and 2) with those who belong to the general student body.

PARTNERS

Each campus needs to identify which "subgroups" are important to include in the focus groups. In addition, research indicates that certain groups are at a greater risk for experiencing sexual violence, such as LGBTQ students, and therefore this is an important group to include. Additionally, research suggests that athletes and fraternity/sorority members may be more at risk of perpetrating sexual violence so these groups are important to consider as well. Hearing from survivors also offers a critical perspective on the topic and allows survivors to have their voices included. Based on the campus, there may be other student groups or populations that are identified as a priority to include in the focus groups.

In order to conduct focus groups with students from the general student body as well as with those from specific subsets of the student population, it is recommended that researchers form collaborative partnerships with diverse stakeholders across campus. *Chapter 2: Fostering Collaborations* of this guide emphasizes the importance of creating an Advisory Board to assist the research team in planning and conducting campus climate assessments. The Advisory Board can provide suggestions for recruitment and may have involvement with specific subsets of the student population. When working with specific subsets of the student population it is important that as researchers we approach these various groups of students with the knowledge that issues of confidentiality may be paramount, especially with LGBTQ students and survivors, and that

Focus Groups Held at Rutgers University–New Brunswick

- Male Athletes
- Female Athletes
- Mixed Athletes
- Female Resident Assistants
- Male Resident Assistants
- The Paul Robeson Cultural Center
- The Center for Social Justice Education and LGBTQ Communities
- Rutgers University– New Brunswick Student Assembly
- The Center For Latino Arts & Culture
- General Undergraduate Male (three different focus groups with undergrad males)
- General Undergraduate Female (three different focus groups with undergrad females)
- Sexual Violence Survivors
- Graduate Males
- Graduate Females
- Greek Males
- Greek Females

focus groups conducted with under-represented groups (i.e. cultural centers) are conducted in a culturally competent way. The Advisory Board may also serve as an essential resource for helping researchers navigate such issues.

When planning for focus groups, researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick relied on connections with campus entities that were established during the preparation and administration of the campus climate survey. For example, researchers chose to conduct a focus group with sexual violence survivors. In order to recruit students for as well as prepare for the survivors focus group, researchers consulted with the Director of the Office of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance, who served as both an Advisory Board member and a collaborative partner throughout the campus climate survey. The Director also helped to recruit student sexual violence survivors in addition to helping researchers draft language to use during the survivor focus group regarding disclosure and support.

DESIGN

Qualitative data collection may take many forms including interviews and focus groups. Interviews, while a good method of understanding individual students' perspectives on certain issues, are very time intensive and may not yield data representing the full range of opinions across a large student body. Focus groups, on the other hand, provide a method of gathering a diverse range of students' perspectives[3,4] as well as a broad understanding of the campus' perception of sexual violence. The pros and cons of each method of qualitative data collection should be weighed within the context of the institution in order to find the best fit for the research needs at that school.

Researchers may use qualitative data as a means to guide the survey or, alternatively, as a method to further understand survey data. Qualitative data collection can occur at any point in the campus climate assessment process depending on the researcher's' purpose in collecting qualitative data. The campus climate surrounding sexual violence is not easily identifiable or measurable, and therefore qualitative data can help shed light on aspects which may be complex and little understood through a survey alone.

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

The focus group guide is the instrument for gathering data through a group discussion. The development of the campus climate survey, discussed in ***Chapter 4****: Conducting a Student Survey* of this guide, began with searching for the answers to the question "What do we want to know?". Creation of the focus group guide should begin with same type of question. Depending on whether the focus groups occur before or after the survey, the guide may contain questions encompassing what will be asked on the survey or follow up questions to the survey. It is important to remember that qualitative data collection is conducted in order to understand specific information, but the data collected is only as good as the questions asked. If the questions asked within the guide are not well phrased or do not address the issues at hand, then students will not speak to their experience or knowledge on the issue. Because focus groups are time limited, it is crucial to select the main areas in which the researchers are interested and center the questions in these areas. A few main issues to consider are the following:

Question order. Often focus group guides start with questions that are general and easy to answer, allowing the discussion to move along to more specific and sensitive questions.[5,6] The general questions introduce participants to the flow of the group, create a comfortable speaking environment, and generate a group dynamic before asking about topics such as sexual violence. Researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick began their focus groups with questions about students' sense of community and the campus climate survey before asking about sexual violence. See Attachment 5.1, Focus Group Guide, for the full guide used for Rutgers University-New Brunswick's focus groups.

Table 1. Focus Group Versus Interviews

	Interviews	Focus Groups
Pros	Detailed information on individuals' opinions	Information from diverse groups and opinions
	Easy to redirect conversation if interviewee goes off track	Participants feed off each other, sparking rich conversation
	Interviewer can specifically tailor questions to each respondent	Capture a large number of students' opinions in a relatively short time period
Cons	Can yield limited useful data if interviewee has little to say on the topic	Can be easily sidetracked by one or two participants
	Time intensive if gathering the opinions of a large number of students	Data can be skewed by those participants who dominate the conversation
	Can miss opinions of key student groups due	Difficult to schedule with multiple participants
	Data collection highly dependent on the skills of the interviewer	Participants can be inhibited from speaking with individuals who differ greatly from each other

Open-ended. Questions on the focus group guide should be open ended.[7] The intent of the questions is to generate dialogue and conversation surrounding the topic at hand. Closed ended questions including "yes" and "no" questions often only elicit a simple one word answer. As an example, Rutgers University-New Brunswick students were asked "What kinds of information have you received about sexual violence since coming to Rutgers University – New Brunswick?" as opposed to "Have you received information about sexual violence since coming to Rutgers University– New Brunswick?" This open ended question allowed participants to not only indicate if they had received information about sexual violence but also explain the types of information they had received.

Probes. Another important aspect of the focus group guide is including appropriate probes which prompt students to further explain their answers or help clarify the question if participants are not providing appropriate information. Probes may take the form of rephrasing the question with different words, giving examples, or asking a related or follow-up question. The focus group guide used by researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick contained many probes which the facilitators could choose to use depending on the individual focus group dynamics.

Word selection. It is important to remember that words matter. Words commonly used by researchers or university administrators may not be understood by the general student body. The language of the questions should be clear, consistent, and use simple everyday words. Other more technical or unfamiliar words, such as sexual assault vs. sexual harassment, may be confusing to students unless definitions are provided.

Sensitive topics. Finally, due to the nature of the focus groups in addressing sexual violence, researchers may wish to include language to prepare students for explicit or sensitive questions. Investigators might include language such as a "sensitive topic warning" within the questionnaire as well as a "check-in" with focus groups participants to ensure no one is feeling unduly distressed. In addition, as discussed previously, questions about sexual violence should not be asked at the start of the group but only after a period of time when participants have become comfortable within the group setting.

INFORMED CONSENT

As with the campus climate survey, respondents in the focus groups must provide their informed consent to participate. The language on the informed consent form may be similar to that of the survey and should be approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) or similar department. The issue of possible distress caused by questions in the focus groups should be covered. Sexual violence survivors might find that questions about sexual violence trigger difficult or painful memories. Similarly, focus group participants might find it challenging or uncomfortable to listen to sexual violence survivors' experiences. However, the opposite might occur as well. Survivors may feel empowered as they are impacting the issue through discussing their personal experience. Other focus groups participants might empathize with survivors and learn about the issue of sexual violence through listening to survivors share their experiences. Researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick received positive feedback after the focus groups with sexual violence survivors. Additionally, during the focus groups none of the participants appeared distressed or left the group as a result of distress caused by the group. Furthermore, researchers should provide appropriate local resources for sexual violence survivors, particularly when conducting focus groups with sexual violence survivors. If such focus groups are being held, researchers may wish to recruit participants from the university's counseling or center that addresses violence to ensure these students are receiving treatment and the focus group is minimally harmful to them.

An additional and unique concern for focus groups is that of confidentiality within the group setting. Anything said within the groups will be heard by all the participants in the group who may then repeat it outside the group. All participants should be informed that confidentiality is not guaranteed due to this dynamic. Additionally, in the informed consent, introduction script, and at the end of the focus group, researchers should request that students consider the group discussion as private and not repeat the information outside the room.

COLLECTING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In order to understand who is participating in the focus groups, researchers may wish to collect demographic information from the students. Such demographic information can help researchers distinguish who participated in the focus groups; how representative they were of the student body; and the diversity of the viewpoints found within the groups. This can be done in a number of ways including having students provide demographic information when registering for the focus group (via a website, email or mail-in form) or collecting such information during the focus group itself. In general, in order to ensure confidentiality of this information, an identification number can be used in place of names on the demographic forms. Researchers should decide which type of information they are interested in collecting including gender, race, age, graduation date, college major, living arrangement, student group affiliation, etc. Additionally, questions may be included which ask students' perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of sexual violence resources or policies. See Attachment 5.2, Demographic Questions for the form used at Rutgers University-New Brunswick to collect such information.

SIZE AND NUMBER

Each campus will have to determine the number of focus groups to conduct based on campus size and student population. For example, colleges and universities with a large athletics program may choose to have an athlete specific focus group, whereas a college with a smaller athletics program may feel that this is not necessary.

While the number of focus groups that campuses choose to conduct may vary based on campuses' demographics, the number of students per focus group should be consistent throughout the project. Based on research as well as the experience of researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, each focus group should strive to have between eight to ten student participants. Focus groups with less than eight participants may result in a limited range of ideas being represented while a large group of participants may be difficult to manage.[8] Researchers are also encouraged to conduct same-sex focus groups when possible, as well as have same-sex facilitators to conduct focus groups.[9-12] Due to the sensitivity of the issues being discussed in the group, it may be inappropriate to invite both men and women to participate in the same group and could dissuade honest, open discussion throughout the focus groups. However, when conducting focus groups with specific subsets of the student population, researchers may not be able to recruit a large enough number of male students and female students within that population to conduct same-sex focus groups. In this case, researchers may wish to conduct mixed gendered focus groups. While there are benefits of conducting same-sex focus groups, mixed gendered focus groups may be the best option for certain student specialty populations, granting researchers the ability to conduct a group with a large enough number of participants. When conducting mixed-gender focus groups, it is recommended that both a male and a female facilitator conduct the group.

PILOTING

Piloting a focus group with several students is a useful method for determining if focus group materials, such as the focus group guide, demographic form, and consent form, are appropriate and clear for students. The pilot should take place prior to conducting the first focus group on campus and should be conducted with enough time so that researchers can make necessary changes to materials.

For the purpose of the pilot, facilitators are interested only in students' feedback of the overall focus group and materials as opposed to students' answers to the questions. Facilitators can lead a discussion with students following the conclusion of the pilot focus group to elicit feedback from students. Facilitators may also wish to ask students additional questions, such as the best time of day to conduct focus groups, best locations to conduct focus groups, and the best method to remind students about the focus groups. Facilitators may also wish to collect written feedback from students. The written and verbal feedback from students can then be compiled and discussed amongst the research team to determine if changes to focus group materials or questions are necessary.

OUTREACH

To foster student participation for the focus groups, a communications strategy may be necessary. Researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick developed an outreach plan; however, because of the strong foundation that was created for the campus climate survey campaign, a large number of students signed up for the focus groups quickly following the initial outreach email and all additional outreach efforts were truncated.

Researchers developing an outreach plan for the focus groups are encouraged to utilize outreach avenues similar to those used for the campus climate survey (see *chapter 4: Conducting a Student Survey*), such as e-mails from university leadership to demonstrate the importance for student involvement, advertisements in electronic newsletters, and popular student publications, social media forums, as well as the use of print materials.

SCHEDULING

When determining the schedule for the focus groups, researchers are encouraged to select dates and times that do not conflict with prior student events, midterms or finals, or holidays to maximize student participation. Based on discussions with students, the research team at Rutgers University-New Brunswick decided to host focus groups in the late evenings on weekdays.

It may be helpful to use a web-based scheduling program and to have a protocol in place. Once an adequate number of students sign up for a focus group slot, researchers are encouraged to determine a method for sending confirmation to students that have been selected to participate in the focus group, as well as a method for sending a reminder to students about the focus group. Appointment reminder software is available to send both text and email confirmation and reminders to students. The box, *Text for Confirmation, Message,* includes language researchers may wish to use for confirmation messages with students.

Prior to scheduling the dates and times for focus groups, researchers may wish to ensure that their institution has rooms available for the focus groups which can comfortably hold student participants as well as offer privacy. Researchers may wish to look at rooms in advance to determine if they appropriately meet these needs and then book the rooms in advance, once a schedule for the focus groups are finalized.

Text for Confirmation Message

Hello,

You have indicated that you are interested in participating in an upcoming (name of project) focus group.

Your participation in (name of project) focus group is very important to us so listed below is the dates for your upcoming focus groups.

DATE:

TIME :

LOCATION:

Please reply to this email with 'confirm' to confirm, or 'cancel' to cancel.

There will be food served at the beginning of each focus group and ___ cash provided immediately following the focus group just for participating!

Your voice is very important to us and we look forward to hearing from you. Join (name of project) focus group to tell us more and be part of the change!

Further questions or to sign up via phone, please contact________________.

Thank you, __________________.

CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

The process of running focus groups should be uniform across the groups to ensure the data is gathered under similar settings. This helps guarantee that data from each focus group is comparable. There are also steps which researchers can take to guarantee the process goes smoothly, data is collected appropriately, and students' rights as human subjects are protected. Researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick developed both materials and procedural checklists to be followed at each focus group. In this way, the procedures used across the groups were uniform.

Rules and Guidelines

Before starting a focus group, the facilitators should introduce themselves, go over the purpose of the group, and detail rules and guidelines for the group. Most participants

The Materials Checklist

- Two writing utensils
- A notepad with sufficient paper for taking notes during the entire focus group
- Name tents/plaques
- Recording equipment
  - two recorders
  - extra batteries
- Consent forms (one copy for the interviewer plus one to keep for the student)
- Extra pens for participants to sign consent forms
- Demographic forms for all participants
- Focus group guide
- Focus group protocol
- Debrief discussion tool
- Resource handouts
- Lock box
- Payment
- Receipts for all participants' payment
- Sign-in sheet

in the groups will have never taken part in a focus group and will be unsure of basics such as when they can speak, how to address other participants, and what the group entails. Additionally, students may be nervous about the knowledge they are expected to bring to the group. The facilitators can help lessen participants' nervousness and make sure everyone understands their contribution through an introduction script. The points covered during this introduction may include those detailed within the informed consent, such as confidentiality and the purpose of the study, as well as new information regarding the flow of the group (interrupting, quiet participants, overlapping comments, etc.). The box, *Key Point or Introduction*, lists some of the main points that researchers may wish to cover. See Attachment 5.4 for the full introduction text used by researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

Table 2. Key Points for Introduction

TOPIC	CONTENT AND CONCERNS
WELCOME	• Introduce facilitators • Thank participants for their time
STUDY INFORMATION	• State the purpose of the focus group and why it is being conducted
GROUND RULES	• One person speaks at a time and participants can respond to each other • Researchers are looking for opinions, not right or wrong answers • Respect time and let others speak if need be • Ask everyone to maintain confidentiality of the other participants • Gain verbal consent to audio record the group • Ask participants to turn cell phones off during the group
PERSONAL DISCLOSURE	• Researchers must understand if their institution mandates some incidents to be reported (e.g., child abuse) and this is articulated to the group • Due to the non-therapeutic group setting, participants may be asked not to share any personal victimization such as sexual assault
CONCLUSION	• Ensure all informed consents and demographic forms are completed • Answer any questions from participants • Start the recording

Table 3. Note Taking versus Audio Recording

	NOTE TAKING	AUDIO RECORDING
PROS	Requires less time and equipment	Very detailed and captures all information
	Less costly to transcribe	Requires less work and people power during the focus
CONS	Less detailed	Data can be lost through technology malfunctions
	More likely to miss critical data	Time intensive and costly to transcribe

Recording

The information shared during the focus groups should be captured and recorded in some manner. This can be done through copious note taking or audio recording. Both methods have pros and cons. See the box entitled *Note Taking versus Audio Recording* for the pros and cons of each method. If the budget allows for it, audio recording followed by transcription of the audio recordings is the preferred methods to ensure maximum capture of the data (participants' quotes) are accurately recorded.[13] Participants of a focus group should be informed of the audio recording process as part of the informed consent process. This information can also be verbalized during the introduction to the focus group. The IRB within each school may have mandatory language on audio recording which has to be included on the informed consent form.

The following Informed Consent Language for Audio Recording was used by the researchers at Rutgers University– New Brunswick:

"This discussion will be audio recorded and then transcribed. Only researchers will have access to the recording. When the audio is transcribed, a number will be used to identify you, not your name. If you say anything that you believe at a later point may be hurtful and/or damage your reputation, then you can ask the interviewer to rewind the recording and record over such information OR you can ask that certain text be removed from the dataset/ transcripts. The recording(s) will be stored in a locked cabinet within a locked office until they are fully transcribed, they will then be deleted from the audio recorder. The transcribed audio recording will be stored electronically on a university server only accessible to research staff with a password."

Participant Identification

Due to confidentiality concerns, researchers may request that participants do not identify themselves by name during the audio recording process. This concern is particularly pressing during focus groups with sexual violence survivors. If participants' names are also not included on the demographic form, using instead a unique identification number for each participant, this gives students an extra assurance that their privacy has been safeguarded. Researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick assigned each focus group participant an identification number which was used on the demographic form and participants also stated their number before each time they spoke. In this way, researchers were able to link demographic information with each and every statement made during the course of the focus group discussion. See the box below, *Mandated Reporting,* for information on mandated reporting under which institutions may be required to report certain types of events.

Facilitators

A critical piece of every focus group is the facilitators who run the group. Some tips include:

- Two facilitators are recommended and should be matched to the sex of the focus group participants.[14]
- The lead facilitator typically asks questions on the guide and probes as needed to elicit more information. The co-facilitator can keep time, check the audio recorder's functioning, deal with unexpected

Mandated Reporting

Mandated reporting is the required reporting of certain types of behaviors or events which are disclosed in settings such as counseling or research. Often any references to child abuse and threats to harm self or another human being are mandated to be reported under various ethical guidelines (e.g., National Association of Social Workers Mandatory Reporting Requirements). Additionally, some institutions may have rules for professors and staff members, including researchers, which require them to report these types of utterances. Additionally, domestic and sexual violence may be required to be reported under the rules of the institution although there may be an exception for research, as opposed to counseling or teaching staff. Researchers should clarify all such rules before starting focus groups and be clear how they will deal with such requirements. Because the researchers at Rutgers University-New Brunswick did not wish to violate the students' confidentiality and trust, as part of the introduction script (see Attachment 5.4), the researchers emphasized that students should not report any personal experience of sexual violence within the focus groups setting. Instead, students were asked to discuss any experiences in the third person ("a friend") in order to ensure that a) students' confidentiality within the group setting was maintained and b) the researchers would not be required to report an incident which a student did not wish to be reported.

events and late comers, and ensure participants state their name or identification number when speaking.

- Both facilitators can assist with setting up the room, bringing supplies and food, consenting participants into the study, paying participants, and creating an environment conducive for the discussion.
- All facilitators should receive training both on conducting the focus groups as well as the questionnaire which will be used.
- Particular qualities to look for in focus groups facilitators include openness, ability to engage with a diverse range of people and experiences, quick thinking, ability to problem solve, skills in facilitating conversation, and listening.[15]
- Good empathic understanding particularly when conducting focus groups with sexual violence survivors, is critical in focus group discussions on sensitive topics.

Eliciting Information and Probing

Each focus group has a different dynamic. Sometimes conversation flows easily and participants are knowledgeable and respond readily to the questions being asked. Other times, participants may be nervous, feel they should say the "correct" thing, do not understand what is being asked, are derailed and speak off the topic of interest, or simply do not have knowledge or strong opinions about the question being asked. These issues can be overcome with advanced planning which includes training for facilitators on effective probing as well as selecting facilitators with prior focus group facilitation or other relevant skills (such as social work training). The research team should be flexible enough to identify troubled spots within focus groups and effectively respond in the group setting itself or by changing the focus group guide if needed.

Incentives

Focus groups can last from 60 to 90 minutes which is a long time period for busy students. Researchers should offer appropriate incentives to draw students to participate in these groups.[16] If no incentive is offered, some students may still participate in the groups however these are most likely to be students who have deep felt opinions or an investment in the issue. These students may know more than the average student about issues such as sexual assault policies or resources. Thus their views and knowledge, while important for that subset of the population, do not represent those of a typical student. The incentives offered must be large enough to draw even students who otherwise might not participate in a focus group on an issue such as sexual violence. A common incentive is cash payments and the provision of food during the focus groups. If cash is used, a plan for transporting the cash, ensuring its safety during the group, and dispersion to participants with receipts should be created before the focus groups begin.

ANALYSIS

Conducting focus groups and gathering the data is only one step in the qualitative data process. Next, all the information has to be analyzed. The whole process of analysis is beyond the scope of this guide but there are several important points to remember.[17]

- Transcription is the first step and can be costly and time consuming.
- Analysis is also a lengthy process which begins with developing a coding scheme. Coding is a process of identifying pertinent themes which standout in the focus groups.
- Coding can be used both to look at the themes common across the focus groups and differences between different focus groups (e.g., different understanding of sexual assault policies between differing student groups).
- The coding scheme may follow the questions asked on the focus group guide.
- Coders should be trained and come to an agreement on the codes before starting analysis.
- There are several well respected software packages (e.g., Atlas.ti and QSR NVivo) for coding qualitative data. Software packages such as these can expedite the coding process.
- A small but significant percent of transcripts should be double coded, independently coded by two researchers, to ensure reliability between the coders.
- At the end of the coding process, it is recommended that institutions have a plan in place to compare the findings from the survey with those from the focus groups.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has briefly touched on some of the issues which researchers will face when gathering qualitative data. The issues covered here are only some of a host of considerations researchers should take into account. There are many options and elements of qualitative research which may be included in this type of data collection. Additionally, this chapter examines qualitative data collection through focus groups while other institutions may find interviews or other methods of collection more appropriate for their university. The key point to remember is that qualitative data is one piece of a large assessment process. Qualitative data may help clarify and explain gaps in quantitative data or further elaborate reasons behind trends seen in quantitative data. But both types of data collection should be used by institutions in order to comprehensively assess the campus climate on sexual violence and ultimately create a plan to address the issues raised by such an assessment.

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Against Women
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Understanding and Responding to Campus Sexual Assault: A Guide for Colleges and Universities

Chapter Six: Action Planning and Dissemination

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A primary function of campus climate assessment is to provide information that can be used to improve both the prevention of, and the response to campus sexual violence. In order to effectively improve the institutional responses to sexual violence, researchers should engage in a collaborative and comprehensive assessment process and consider, at the onset of the project, who should be involved in discussions about subsequent action planning, as well as discussions about the best methods for disseminating such information.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance to colleges and universities on developing an action plan based on findings of campus climate assessments and on disseminating such information to the campus community. Throughout this document, we outline general steps for developing an action plan that can be tailored to campuses' unique student bodies and climates. In gray boxes you will also find examples of decisions the authors made when action planning and disseminating information at Rutgers University–New Brunswick.

HOW TO ACTION PLAN AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION

Researchers are encouraged to engage in a collaborative research process from start to finish. By involving key stakeholders, community members, and researchers throughout all aspects of the research process, campuses may be better equipped to effectively use assessment results to create sustainable action and eventual social change on campus. There are several principles to keep in mind when utilizing a collaborative research process that results in subsequent action planning on campus which are based in part on a Community-Based Participatory Action model,[1] as well as on the research team's experience at Rutgers University–New Brunswick.

Key principles outlined in this chapter include: building on the strengths and resources already available on campus, integrating knowledge and action, and disseminating findings and knowledge gained to all partners and the campus community.

Building on Strengths and Resources Available on Campus

It is important that before researchers and administrators move forward with new initiatives on campus, they first determine the current campus infrastructure and resources already available on campus.[2] Campuses are encouraged to critically evaluate their current systems to identify not only gaps in their sexual violence services, policies, and prevention efforts, but also areas in which they are thriving in.[3] A resource audit is one tool that can be used to provide this information (see chapter 3 of this guide for information about resource audits).

Once researchers have a listing of the resources that are already of available on campus, researchers in they can collaborate with campus administrators to compare such resources to best practices and state and Federal mandates regarding campus sexual violence. This comparison will help officials to identify gaps in institutional responses to sexual violence on campus. Identifying these gaps is an important first step that officials can take to begin determining what action steps are necessary to address students' needs on campus.

Integrating knowledge and Action

In order to create improvements on campus that are evidence informed and meet students' needs, it is essential that researchers work in equal collaboration with both campus administrators and campus service providers to ensure that improvements made on campus are based on assessment findings.[4] Researchers are encouraged to meet regularly with administrators, Advisory Board members, and other key stakeholders on campus to share the results of the assessments, as well as offer recommendations for possible improvements on campus. Researchers may want to utilize a continual process, meeting with key stakeholders multiple times during data analysis to present both preliminary data and final assessment findings to give stakeholders both the time and the data necessary to effectively draft campus improvements.

Any improvements made on campus should focus on eliminating barriers to services as well as eliminating barriers to reporting, increasing students' awareness of campus resources, increasing students' understanding of how to report sexual violence, as well as on improving prevention programming, such as increasing active bystander intervention. While researchers should be transparent with all assessment findings, when presenting findings to campus administrators and key stakeholders on campus for the purpose of action planning, researchers may want to focus on the following findings:

- Victimization rates for the general student population as well as specialty populations, including but not limited to students who identify as LGBTQ and as Greek life members
- Utilization rates for on-campus services
- Students' awareness of campus resources
- Students' understanding of the campus' adjudicative process
- Students' perception of sexual violence as a problem on campus
- Students' perception of the campus' response to sexual violence

Addressing these key findings should be a major component of any campaign that is designed and implemented on campus for addressing sexual violence. In order to create an effective campaign and implement effective, sustainable improvements on campus, a combination of outreach, education, programming, and policy changes on campus may be necessary. It is important that all improvements are both evidence-informed and based on the results of the campus climate assessment. For examples of specific activities implemented at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, see the box entitled *Outreach, Education, Programming, and Policy Activities Implemented at Rutgers University–New Brunswick as Part of the Campaign*: "*The Revolution starts here. End sexual violence now.*"

Actual improvements created on campus will vary based on the resources allocated to this work, which is why an influential Advisory Board and obtaining University leadership's support at the onset of the assessment process are key.

Disseminating Findings and Knowledge Gained to All Partners and the Campus Community

Once researchers administer the campus climate survey, focus groups, data analysis, and action planning, it is vital that campuses provide this information to the campus community and general public. According to the White House Task Force Report (2014) colleges and universities are encouraged to not only conduct campus climate sur-

Outreach, Education, Programming, and Policy Activities Implemented at Rutgers University–New Brunswick

- Introduced "*The Revolution starts here. End sexual violence now.*" campaign to students with a PSA shown during New Student Convocation. The PSA features Rutgers University–New Brunswick administrators and student leaders in a call to action for the entire New Brunswick community 'to join the revolution to end sexual violence'.
- Created and distributed new brochures and handouts to students living on and off-campus within the New Brunswick community to increase familiarity with sexual violence resources.
- Launched a new website that provides a one-stop-shop for information and resources regarding prevention, reporting, and survivor services. The website also provides information about University events connected to the campaign and information about the results of the #iSPEAK campus climate survey and is used as a primary means to communicate important information about sexual violence prevention, education, resources and reporting.
- Engaged in poster campaigns about bystander intervention and consent.
- Asked all students at Rutgers University–New Brunswick to complete a web-based education program that covers topics including consent, healthy relationships, bystander intervention, resources, policies and reporting options.
- Conducted in-person training for staff, faculty, administrators and student groups on Title IX, VAWA, and how to support students who might come to them for assistance.
- Adopted a comprehensive policy to address student sexual violence, relationship violence and stalking and the University's response to, investigation of, and adjudication of reports of these behaviors.

veys, but to also develop a thoughtful strategy about how to present the findings to the community. Campuses should therefore consider multiple methods of releasing the assessment results in a manner that is both transparent and easily understandable to students, university faculty/staff and administrators, as well as the public.

It is critical that colleges and universities develop a thoughtful strategy when considering best methods for presenting this information to their multiple audiences. Some questions to consider include: “What are the main take home messages?” and “When is the best time to release this information?” It is best to disseminate information to the campus and general community as soon as possible after the data are analyzed.

For additional questions and guidance that campuses can consider when developing a dissemination strategy see Prevention Innovations’ (2014) *Communicating and Using Climate Survey Results.*[5]

While all research teams will be faced with many questions when creating a dissemination plan, such as the ones outlined throughout the Preventions Innovations’ document as well as throughout this chapter, the guidance and examples provided are meant to shed light on how such questions can be addressed and adapted for campuses’ diverse environments and student bodies.

University Communications. Time to develop a coordinated communications plan should be incorporated into the planning and schedule for the project. It may be helpful for researchers to meet with key university leaders, including the university communications office, to develop a communications plan that considers all important audiences (students, faculty, campus leaders, the public, news media, etc.). This includes the development of products for internal and external groups, briefings for key individuals, and preparing for possible media attention by creating a media release, drafting responses to questions from media sources or the community, as well as publically releasing findings and the action plan. Building in time to plan the steps to publicly share the results is something that is useful to consider when developing a timeline for a comprehensive assessment.

Formal Reports. Researchers may want to consider drafting a final report that is complete with all assessment findings from the survey and focus groups which can be used as a resource for the general public, media, and the campus community. Researchers should meet with University administrators prior to releasing results to ensure that the campus is committed to a transparent process and prepare for any feedback that the university may receive. Universities may choose to be transparent with all or the majority of their findings or to limit the information released to the campus and public at large. While there may be good reasons to limit the information released to the public, such as timeliness of completing all analysis, key information such as victimization rates should be shared with the campus. This is important to negate perception that institutions of higher education are concealing incidents of sexual violence from the public. In order to demonstrate a willingness to address the issue and raise students’ awareness of the scope of the problem, it is important to consider which data are most vital to share and to do so in a timely manner. In an effort to make findings of the campus climate assessment clear and easily understood, campuses should consider both a formal report and an executive summary or key findings report. These brief reports are able to convey the most important information about the campus climate assessment quickly and in a digestible manner for those who do not have the time or interest in reading a lengthier report.

Dissemination to students. It is essential that campuses provide students with comprehensive, easily accessible information regarding sexual violence on campus, which includes the findings from all campus climate assessments. Campuses should determine the best method for relaying assessment findings to students, particularly focusing on campus victimization rates, students’ perceptions and knowledge of services and resources available on campus, overall perception of the campus’ response to sexual violence on campus, and improvements made on campus based on assessment findings. Infographics, social media, and presentations for various student groups are useful ways to disseminate this information. See the results infographic that was created for the results of the #iSPEAK campus climate survey administered at Rutgers University–New Brunswick as an example.

Researchers may want to create a specialized dissemination plan for relaying information to the groups of students who were actively engaged in the assessment process. This can be an important aspect of the campus climate assessment process as it demonstrates that the university values students’ voices as well as actively engages students in the change process.

EVAULATING THE ACTION PLAN: CAMPUS REASSESSMENT

The White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault (2014) recommends that colleges and universities plan for sustainable and effective changes on campus. In order to create such changes, colleges and universities should reassess the campus climate in regards to sexual violence to ensure that policy and program changes are producing desired results. This type of programmatic assessment may require a rotation of campus climate surveys to measure victimization on campus over time. This rotation of campus climate surveys can also give colleges and universities the opportunity to measure additional forms of violence on campus, including dating/ intimate partner violence and stalking. Surveys can utilize either a census sampling design or a random sample of students on each campus to reduce the cost necessary to administer the surveys. The hope is that as the surveys become more embedded in the culture of the campus, students will require less monetary incentives in order to respond and, instead, will begin to feel that their voice truly matters to university administrators.

As part of the cyclical process, the action plan that is implemented on campus cannot be systematically evaluated for effectiveness until the process is completed and then reassessed. Therefore, it is essential that improvements made on campus are evidence-based and made in collaboration with key stakeholders on campus to best ensure that all improvements are likely to improve services for students, and not create additional barriers to effective services.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has briefly touched on some of the decisions that researchers and administrators on campus will face when action planning and disseminating information to the campus community. The issues and recommendations covered here are only some of a host of considerations researchers should take into account. Action planning on campus will depend on numerous factors that are unique to each university and college environment. However, it is imperative that researchers and administrators work collaboratively to ensure that services and programs put into place on campus will help survivors of sexual violence and help with the prevention of sexual violence on campus and not create further barriers to services for students in need.

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