

**Key Findings from the**

**#iSPEAK**

**Campus Climate Assessment**  
School of Public Health at Rutgers  
Biomedical and Health Sciences

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## Executive Summary

In Spring 2019, the Center on Violence Against Women & Children (VAWC) administered a campus climate survey to students at the New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) at Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) to assess issues of sexual misconduct on campus. The survey was administered as part of a comprehensive campus climate assessment process that also included focus groups and a resource audit. The climate assessment was conducted at two RBHS campuses (the New Jersey Medical School and the School of Public Health) to pilot the tools and process. The campus climate assessment implemented at RBHS contributes to the ongoing campus climate assessment work that began at Rutgers University in 2014.<sup>1</sup>

This report provides the findings of the survey for SPH. The survey contained six sections: 1) basic demographics; 2) experiences of sexual harassment; 3) experiences of unwanted sexual contact; 4) perceptions of the university and fellow students; 5) awareness of resources, knowledge of what to do in cases of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, and participation in sexual misconduct-related education/activities; and, 6) attitudes about sexual misconduct. The survey was based on the *Not Alone* toolkit from The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault[1] and the ARC3 Campus Climate Survey Instrument[2]. Our measure of sexual harassment is in line with the recommendations from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018 report on the sexual harassment of women[3].

All students enrolled in SPH at RBHS during the spring semester of 2019 were invited to participate in the survey. In total, 177 students participated (a 47% response rate). A majority of the sample identified as female, which reflects the student body at SPH.

The following executive summary highlights key findings from the survey for SPH. A full report of findings follows the summary.

### **Key finding #1: Over one-in-ten SPH students reported an experience of sexual harassment from faculty and/or students, but none reported the experience to RBHS.**

Participants indicated how often they had experienced several sexual harassment behaviors perpetrated by faculty and students: *sexist gender harassment* (e.g., “treated you differently because of your gender”), *crude gender harassment* (e.g., “repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you”), *unwanted sexual attention* (e.g., “made unwanted attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it”), and *sexual coercion* (e.g., “treated you badly for refusing to have sex”).

Just over one-in-ten students reported at least one experience of sexual harassment perpetrated by faculty and/or students; sexist gender harassment was the most common type of harassment experienced by both women and men. None of the participants who experienced sexual harassment disclosed to a formal resource on campus (e.g., Resident Advisor, Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance [VPVA], Title IX), and only 17% of participants who experienced sexual harassment from

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<sup>1</sup> For more information regarding campus climate assessments, please visit the website of the Rutgers’ Center on Violence Against Women and Children, at <http://vawc.rutgers.edu>.

faculty, and 41% of participants who experienced sexual harassment from students, told anyone at all about the incident.

**Key finding #2: Many students who experienced sexual harassment didn't disclose because they didn't think it was serious enough to disclose. Some also feared it would affect their careers.**

Participants who indicated that they experienced sexual harassment from faculty and/or students but did not disclose the experience to anyone were asked why they did not disclose. The most common reason for not disclosing faculty and student harassment was that the participant did not think it was serious enough to disclose (about 90% cited this reason). Among participants who experienced sexual harassment from faculty, 30% said they did not disclose because they were afraid it would impact their career or academics and 25% feared retaliation.

**Key finding #3: Many participants who experienced sexual harassment reported that at least one other person witnessed the incident, but did nothing to intervene.**

Between one-third and one-half of participants who experienced sexual harassment from faculty and/or students reported that at least one other person witnessed the incident. However, the majority of witnesses did nothing to intervene.

**Key finding #4: Unwanted sexual contact since coming to RBHS was relatively uncommon, but many participants reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact prior to attending RBHS.**

In addition to sexual harassment, students were asked about their experiences with unwanted sexual contact. Students were asked six questions about whether they had experienced various types of unwanted sexual contact since coming to RBHS using a scale validated by the Bureau of Justice Campus Climate Validation Study[4]. Participants were also asked whether they had experienced unwanted sexual contact *before* coming to RBHS.

Unwanted sexual contact since coming to RBHS was relatively uncommon (4% of female and 0% of male participants). However, many students reported an experience of unwanted sexual contact before coming to RBHS (27% of female participants and 13% of male participants).

**Key finding #5: Participants perceived RBHS's response to reports of sexual misconduct positively, but are neutral about fellow students.**

Students reported relatively high confidence in the institution's ability to handle incidents of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment and unwanted sexual contact). At the same time, students' own peers received a neutral confidence rating.

**Key finding #6: Participants were somewhat aware of resources.**

Participants rated their awareness of several resources on campus related to sexual misconduct. A total of 35% of students indicated that they were very or extremely aware of Title IX. Even fewer students (14%) were aware of the Office of Employment Equity, which is where incidents of harassment perpetrated by faculty would be reported.

## Full Report

### INTRODUCTION

The issue of sexual violence against students at institutions of higher education (IHE) has gained growing attention as a major problem. The Association of American Universities (AAU) surveyed students at 27 IHEs and found, on average, 11.7% of students, including 23.1% of female undergraduates, experienced nonconsensual sexual contact by force or incapacitation[5]. Researchers have also shown that experiences of sexual harassment are common at IHEs. Using data from two large university systems, researchers from the National Academies of Science, Medicine, and Engineering estimate that rates of sexual harassment of students range from 20-50%. Moreover, women, and especially women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine, are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment[3].

In the Spring of 2019, the Center on Violence Against Women & Children (VAWC) administered a campus climate survey at the School of Public Health (SPH) at Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) as a part of a comprehensive assessment of the climate around sexual misconduct. The survey was based on the *Not Alone* toolkit from The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault[1] and the ARC3 Campus Climate Survey Instrument[2]. Our measure of sexual harassment is in line with the recommendations from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018 report on the sexual harassment of women[3].

This report presents the results for most survey questions. When appropriate, comparisons are made between female and male participants. In some cases, the results are not tabled because the sample size is too small to make meaningful conclusions. In many cases, the percentages in the table do not total to 100% due to missing data from some participants.

### METHOD

The survey used in this report was based on validated tools from the *Not Alone* toolkit from The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault[1] and the ARC3 Campus Climate Survey Instrument[2]. The tool created using an extensive vetting process by the research team over the course of several years. This process began in 2014, when the White House Task Force and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) invited the Rutgers School of Social Work's Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) to pilot a campus climate survey developed by OVW regarding students' experiences, behaviors, and attitudes related to sexual violence. Since 2014, the survey has been modified for use on all Rutgers University campuses as well as at other institutions. Additionally, a dating violence module was added to the 2018 administration at Rutgers University – New Brunswick.

The survey was modified again for use at Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS). This survey was administered at two RBHS schools: The New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) and the School of Public Health (SPH). The survey development process mirrored the process of the campus climate assessments conducted at Rutgers–New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark. This process included three main components: a resource and policy scan, focus groups, and a campus climate survey.

A resource and policy scan was conducted prior to the administration of the survey. The purpose of the resource and policy scan is to systematically document the available resources, programs, policies, and

protocols related to sexual misconduct at RBHS. The resource and policy scan is also used to tailor the survey tool to NJMS-specific resources.

Before the survey was administered, 12 students from the New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) and the School of Public Health (SPH) participated in two focus groups. The purpose of the groups was to collect information about students' understanding and perception of sexual violence and harassment in order to inform the campus climate survey design and educational programming by RBHS.

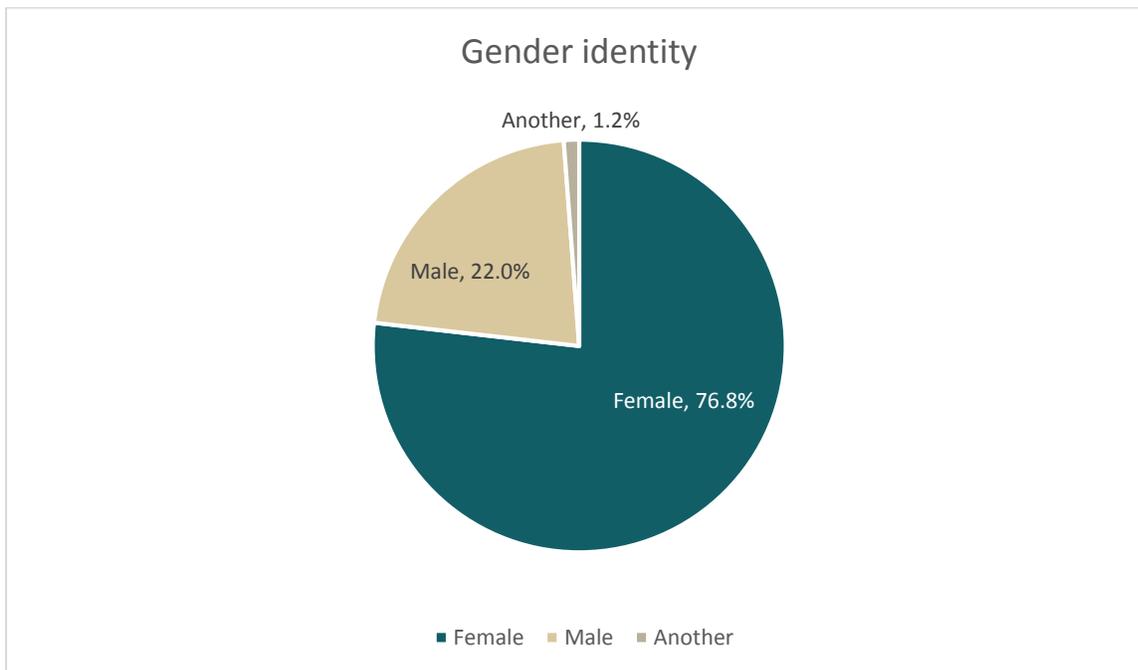
The third component, the campus climate survey, was administered in Spring 2019. The survey was approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board and was programmed into Qualtrics by Rutgers Institutional Research (IR). All participants were provided with an informed consent form and the option to participate in the survey. The survey was open from February 6, 2019 through March 7, 2019. Students were notified about the survey through a range of outreach measures, including direct e-mails, a social media campaign, and posters displayed on campus. All participants received a \$10 Amazon gift card for completing the survey.

The campus climate survey contained seven sections: 1) basic demographics; 2) experiences of sexual harassment from faculty and students; 3) experiences of unwanted sexual contact; 4) perceptions of the university and fellow students; 5) awareness of resources, knowledge of what to do in cases of sexual misconduct, and participation in sexual misconduct-related education/activities; and, 6) attitudes about sexual misconduct. Whenever possible, we used validated, reliable, and published scales. Details about the specific scales are included with findings, below.

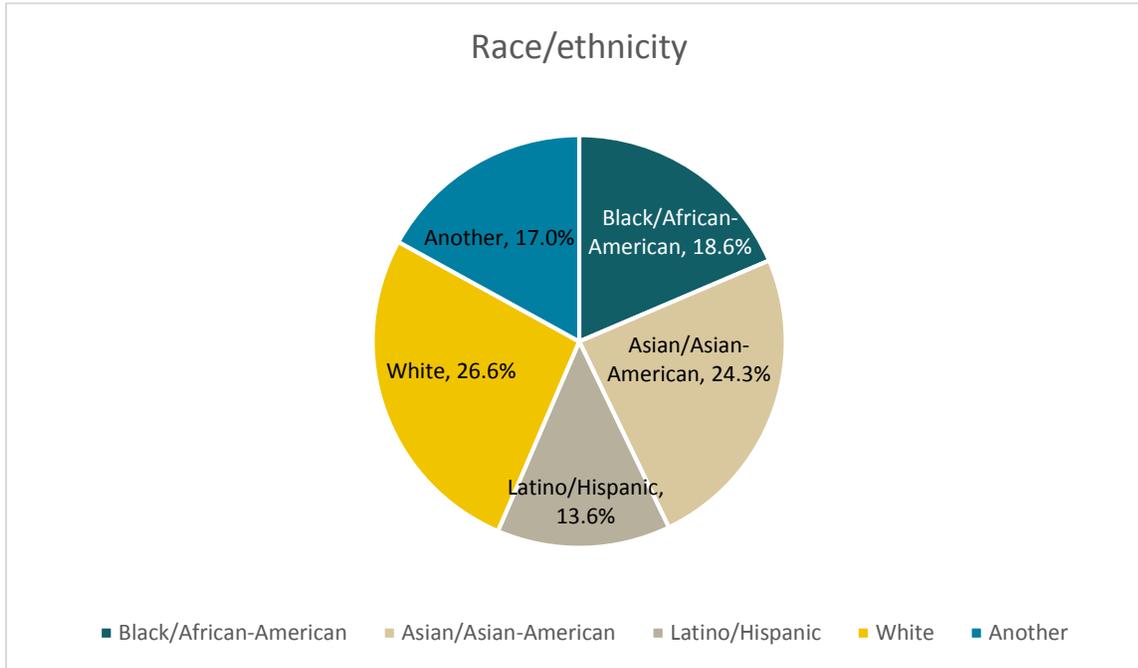
## BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

In total, 177 students from SPH participated in the survey (a 47% response rate). The majority of participants identified as female (77%; see Figure 1), which largely reflects the student body of SPH (73% female). The sample is diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and is similar to the racial/ethnic background of the SPH student population (see Figure 2). Most participants identified as heterosexual (see Figure 3). Most participants take classes on the New Brunswick/Piscataway campus, although a sizeable minority take the majority of their classes at Newark (see Figure 4). A large majority of participants were in the first and second year of their program, although third and fourth year students were also represented in the sample (see Figure 5).

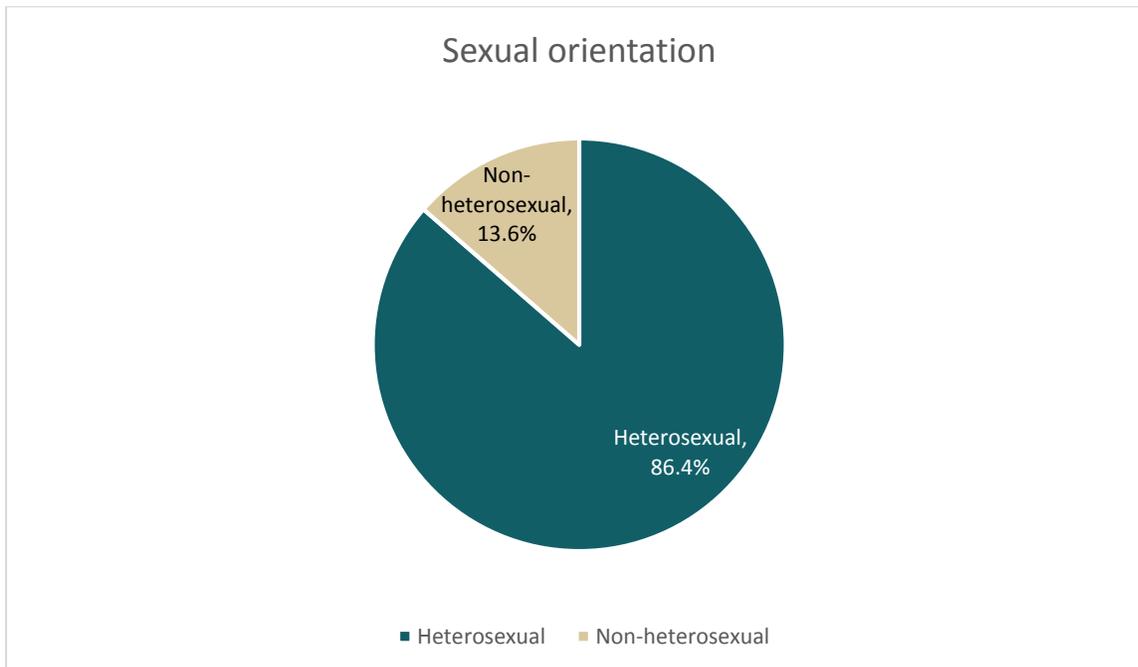
**Figure 1. Gender identity of sample**



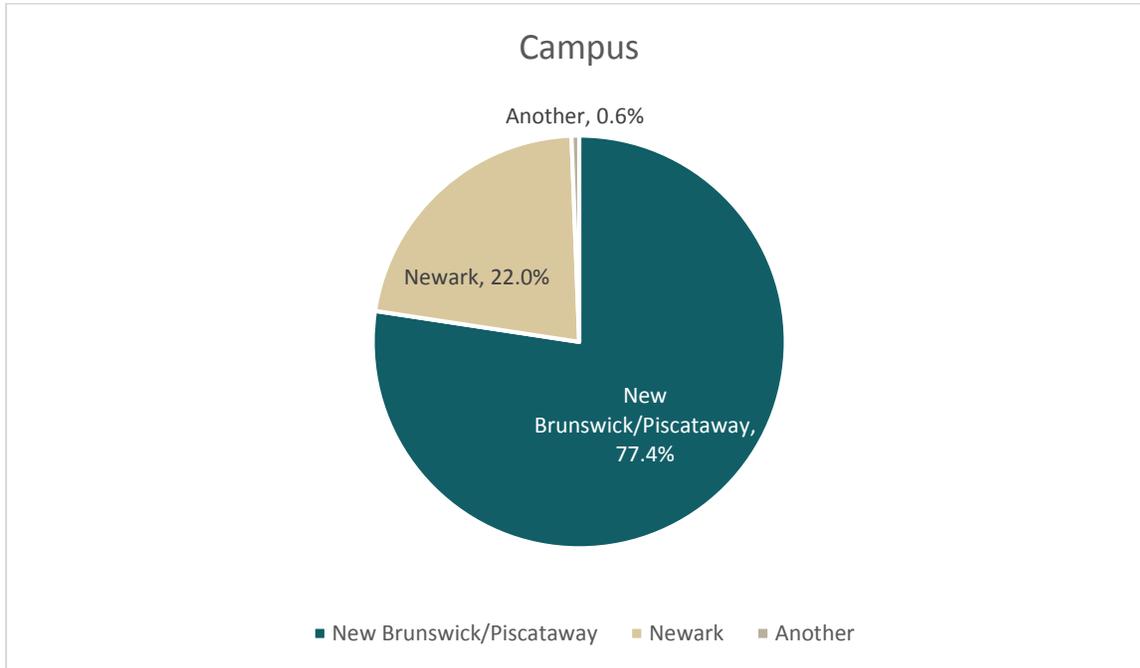
**Figure 2. Race/ethnicity of sample**



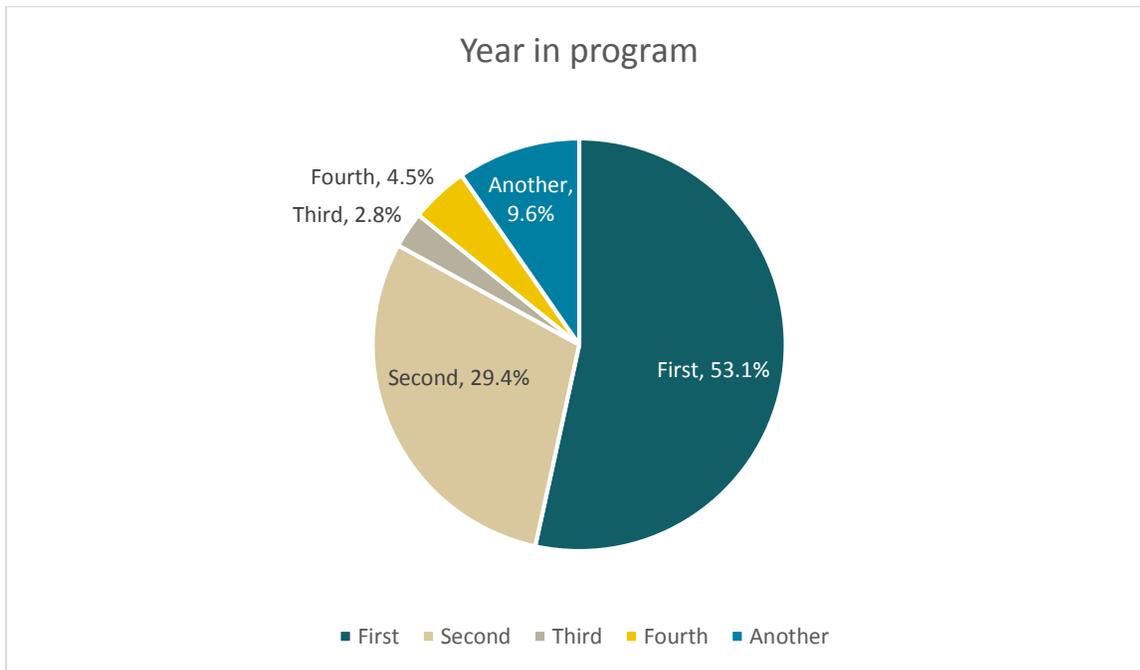
**Figure 3. Sexual orientation of sample**



**Figure 4. Campus on which sample takes majority of classes**



**Figure 5. Year in program for sample**



## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The report on sexual harassment of women from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine[3] defines sexual harassment as a type of gender discrimination with three categories:

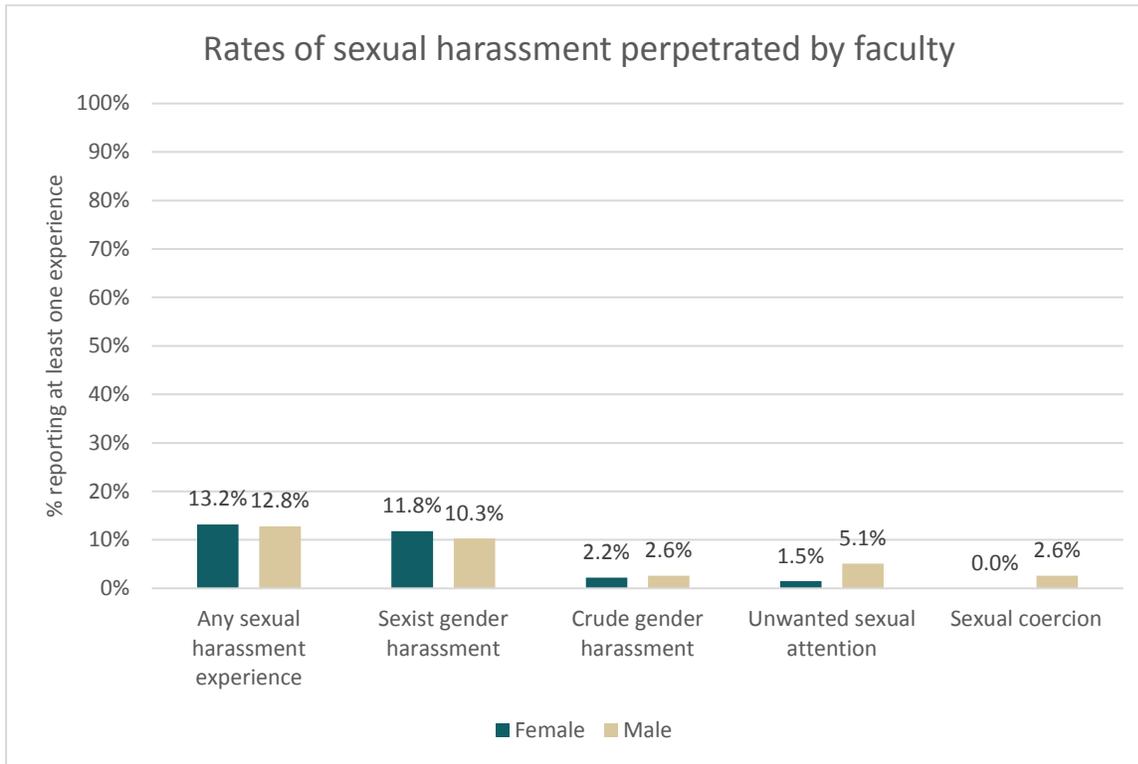
- 1) **Gender harassment.** Gender harassment refers to “a broad range of verbal and nonverbal behaviors not aimed at sexual cooperation but that convey insulting, hostile, and degrading attitudes about” members of one gender[6] (p. 430). Gender harassment can be further divided into two subcategories:
  - a. *Sexist hostility.* Sexist hostility includes behaviors that are demeaning to members of one gender (e.g., jokes or comments about women’s leadership abilities)
  - b. *Crude harassment.* Crude harassment includes using sexually crude terms or making sexually crude jokes about one gender (e.g., referring to a woman as a ‘bitch’ or a man as a ‘pussy’)
- 2) **Unwanted sexual attention.** Unwanted sexual attention refers to sexual advances that are unwelcome (e.g., repeatedly asking someone on a date when they have said ‘no’)
- 3) **Sexual coercion.** Sexual coercion refers to requirements to engage in sexual activity as a condition of employment or promotion (e.g., receiving a promotion in exchange for sex, or being denied an opportunity for refusing to have sex).

The dominant narrative about sexual harassment in the public sphere tends to focus on sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention, yet gender harassment is the most common type of sexual harassment[3]. For this reason, it is important for any survey of sexual harassment to include all three types of sexual harassment as listed above. In the current survey, we measured sexual harassment using a modified version of the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ-DoD[7]). The SEQ-DoD is a validated instrument and is recommended in the report on sexual harassment of women from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018) because it is behaviorally-specific, avoids using the term sexual harassment in the survey items, and captures the three types of sexual harassment. In the current survey, we used the SEQ-DoD to measure harassment experienced perpetrated by faculty and by students. The SEQ-DoD includes 16 behaviors that capture *sexist gender harassment*, *crude gender harassment*, *unwanted sexual attention*, and *sexual coercion*. Participants indicated whether they had experienced each of the behaviors never (0 times), once (1 time), sometimes (2-5 times), or often (6+ times). Example items include “treated you differently because of your gender” (sexist gender harassment), “repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you” (crude gender harassment), “made unwanted attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it” (unwanted sexual attention), and “treated you badly for refusing to have sex” (sexual coercion). Participants indicated their experiences with these behaviors perpetrated by faculty members and students.

### Sexual harassment perpetrated by faculty

Overall, 13.2% of female participants and 12.8% of male participants at SPH experienced at least one type of harassment from faculty. Consistent with previous research, the most common type of harassment was sexist gender harassment (experienced by 11.8% of females and 10.3% of males). There were no significant gender differences in experiences of sexual harassment from faculty. Rates of each type of harassment are displayed in Figure 6.

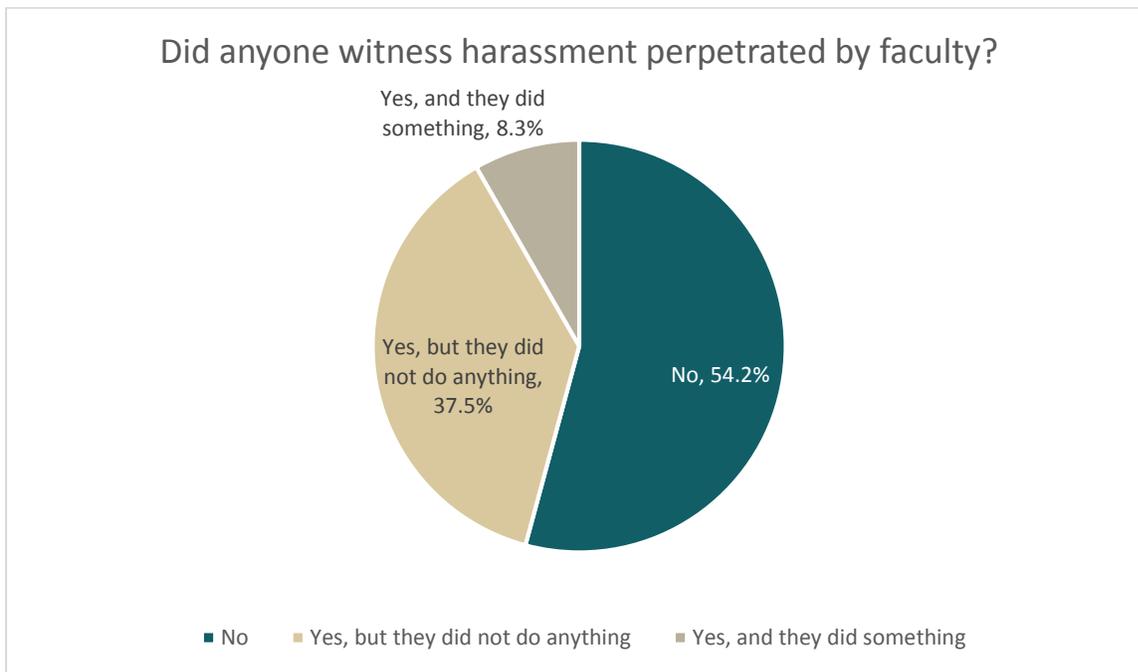
**Figure 6. Rates of sexual harassment perpetrated by faculty**



Participants who indicated at least one experience of sexual harassment from faculty were asked a series of follow up questions about the most serious incident they had experienced. The majority of those who responded to the follow-up questions indicated that the most serious incident involved sexist gender harassment (62.5%) which occurred in the last 12 months (66.7%) and occurred on campus (87.5%). When asked about the perpetrator of the most serious incident of sexual harassment from faculty, the majority (79.2%) indicated a male perpetrator and more than half (54.2%) indicated the perpetrator was a faculty member.

Participants who indicated that they experienced at least one incident of sexual harassment from faculty were asked whether anyone else saw the most serious incident. About half of the participants indicated that at least one other person witnessed the incident (45.8%), but in most cases in which someone witnessed the incident, the bystander(s) did not do anything to intervene (81.8%; see Figure 7).

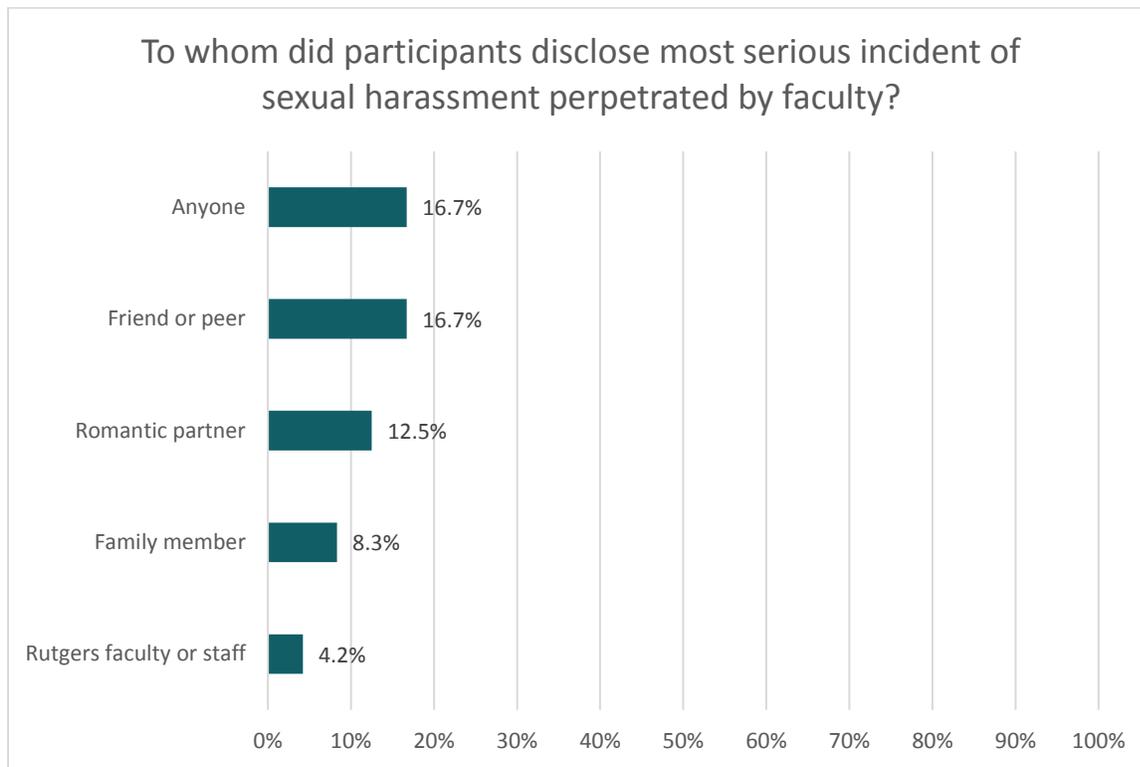
**Figure 7. Among those who experienced sexual harassment perpetrated by faculty, did anyone witness the most serious incident?**



Participants who reported at least one experience of harassment from faculty were asked whether they disclosed the incident to anyone (see Figure 8). Only 16.7% of participants who experienced sexual harassment from faculty disclosed the incident to anyone. The most common disclosure sources were a friend/peer (16.7%) or a romantic partner (12.5%). Of those participants who did disclose an incident of sexual harassment from faculty, most (75.0%) disclosed within the first 24 hours.

None of the participants who experienced sexual harassment from faculty disclosed to a formal resource on campus (e.g., Resident Advisor, VPVA, Title IX, etc.). Additionally, none of the participants who experience sexual harassment from faculty filed a formal complaint about the incident.

**Figure 8. To whom did participants disclose the most serious incident of sexual harassment perpetrated by faculty?**



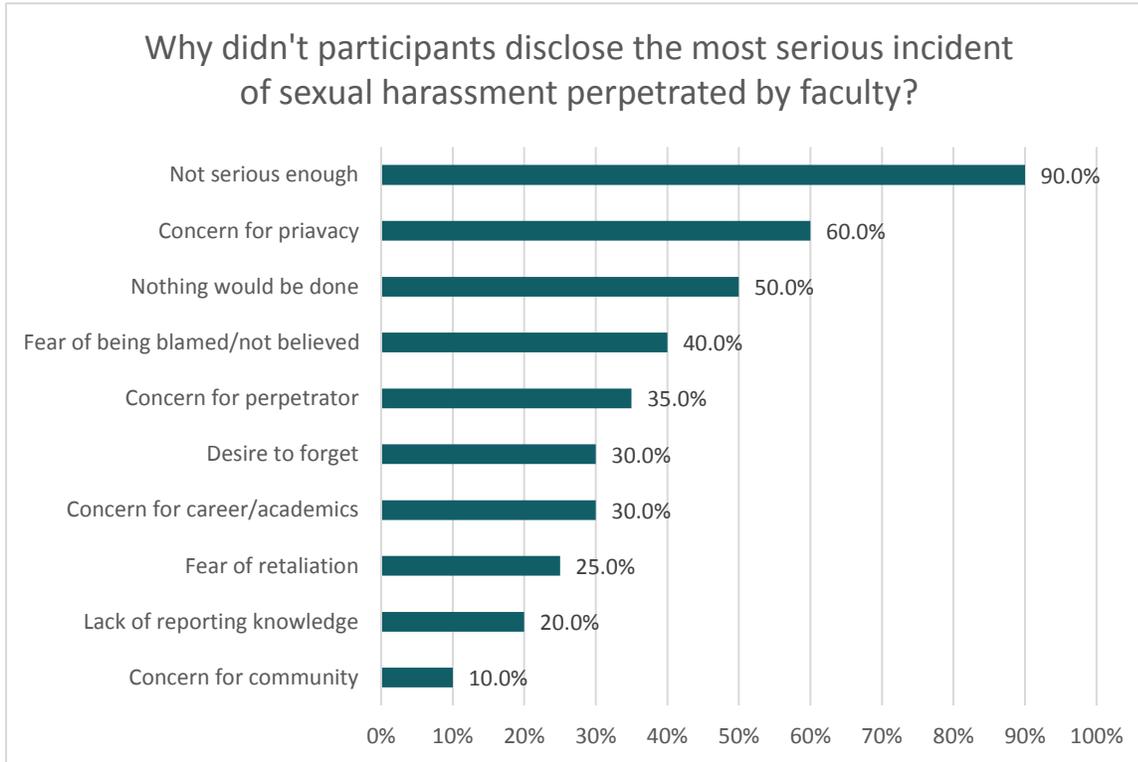
Participants who experienced sexual harassment from faculty and did not disclose to anyone were asked why they did not disclose. Participants were presented with a list of 27 reasons for not disclosing and they indicated whether each reason was true of them. The 27 reasons were then grouped into 10 conceptual categories:

- 1) Fear of being blamed or not believed (e.g., “I thought I would be blamed for what happened”)
- 2) Concern for career/academics (e.g., “I was afraid it would impact by currently employment”)
- 3) Concern for community (e.g., “I was concerned that members of my cultural/ethnic community would not support me”)
- 4) Concern for the perpetrator (e.g., “I didn't want the person who did it to get in trouble”)
- 5) Desire to forget (“I wanted to forget it happened”)
- 6) Nothing would be done (“I didn't think anything would be done”)
- 7) Not serious enough (e.g., “I didn't think what happened was serious enough to talk about”)
- 8) Concern for privacy (e.g., “It is a private matter; I wanted to deal with it on my own”)
- 9) Lack of reporting knowledge (e.g., “I didn't know reporting procedure on campus”)
- 10) Fear of retaliation (e.g., “I was afraid the person who did it would try to get back at me”)

The most common reasons for not disclosing sexual harassment from faculty were because the participants did not think what happened was serious (90% cited a reason in this category) and because they were concerned about privacy (60% cited a reason in this category). Half of participants who did

not disclose sexual harassment from faculty cited that they did not think anything would be done (50%). Although not the most common reason for not disclosing, 30% of participants indicated that they did not disclose because they were afraid it would affect their career and/or academics and 25% were fearful of retaliation (see Figure 9).

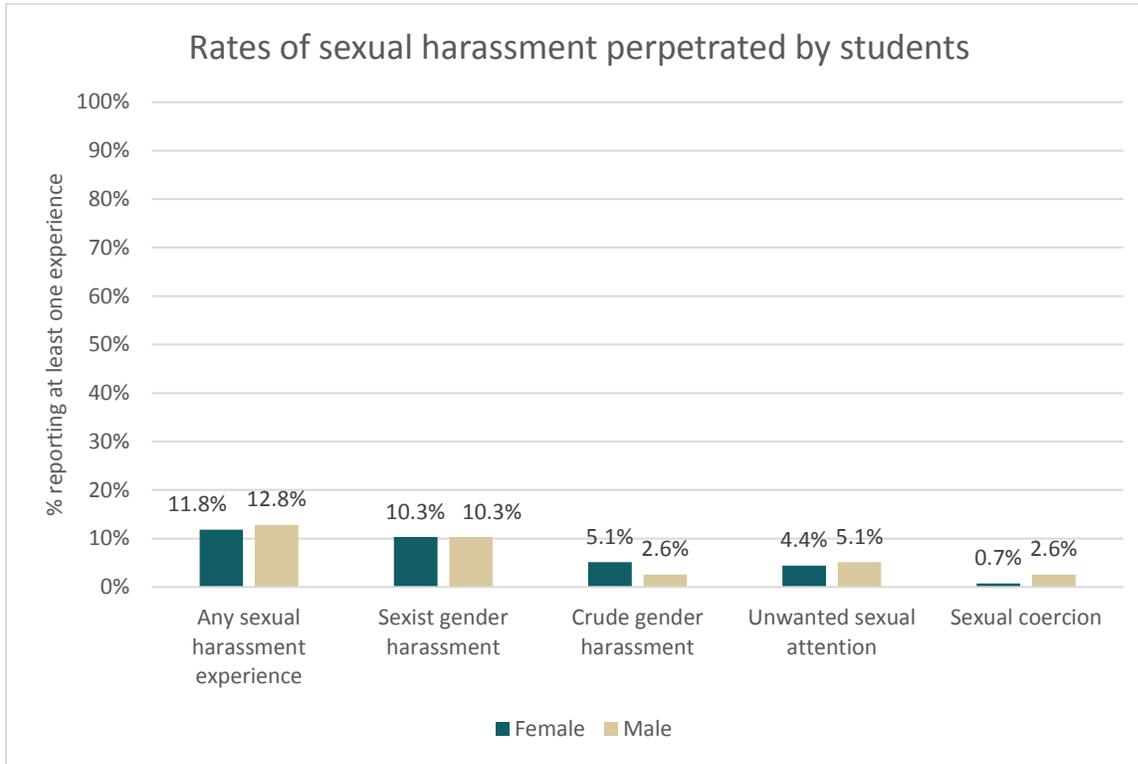
**Figure 9. Reasons for non-disclosure of sexual harassment perpetrated by faculty**



**Sexual harassment perpetrated by students**

Overall, 11.8% of female participants and 12.8% of male participants experienced at least one type of harassment from students. Consistent with previous research, the most common type of harassment was sexist gender harassment (experienced by 10.3% of females and males). There were no significant gender differences in experiences of sexual harassment from students. Rates of each type of harassment are displayed in Figure 10.

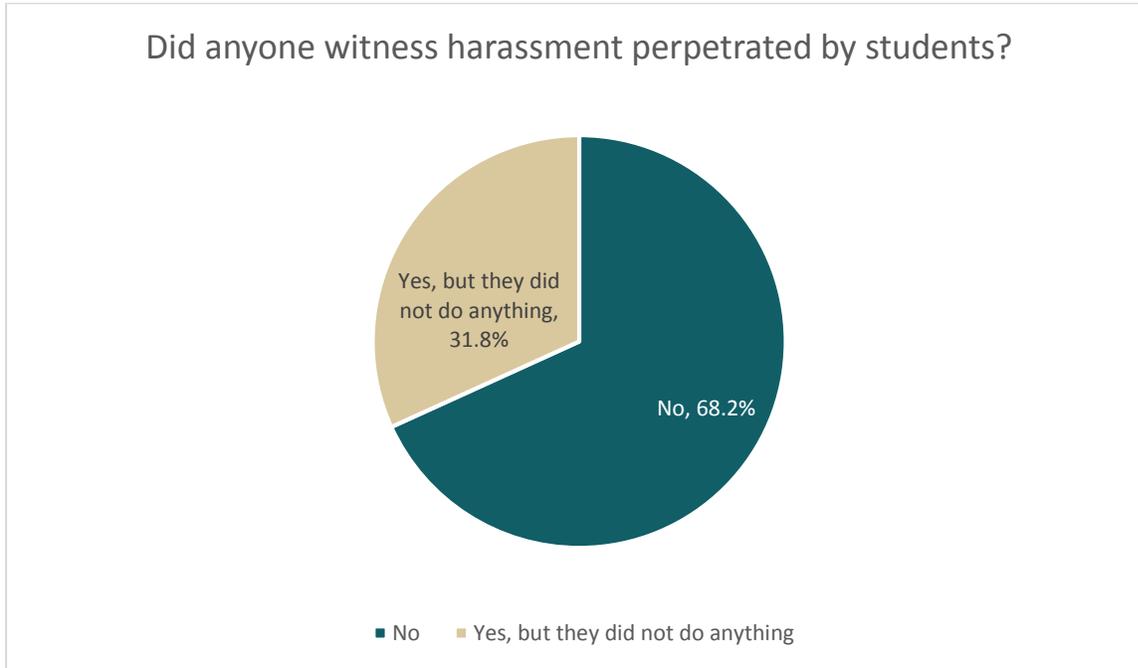
**Figure 10. Rates of sexual harassment perpetrated by students**



Participants who indicated at least one experience of sexual harassment from students were asked a series of follow up questions about the most serious incident they had experienced. Most participants who responded to the follow-up questions were responding to an incident of sexist gender harassment (40.9%) or unwanted sexual attention (36.4%), which occurred in the last 12 months (63.6%) and occurred on campus (72.7%). When asked about the perpetrator of the most serious incident of sexual harassment from students, the majority (72.7%) indicated a male perpetrator and most (81.8%) indicated the perpetrator was a student at Rutgers.

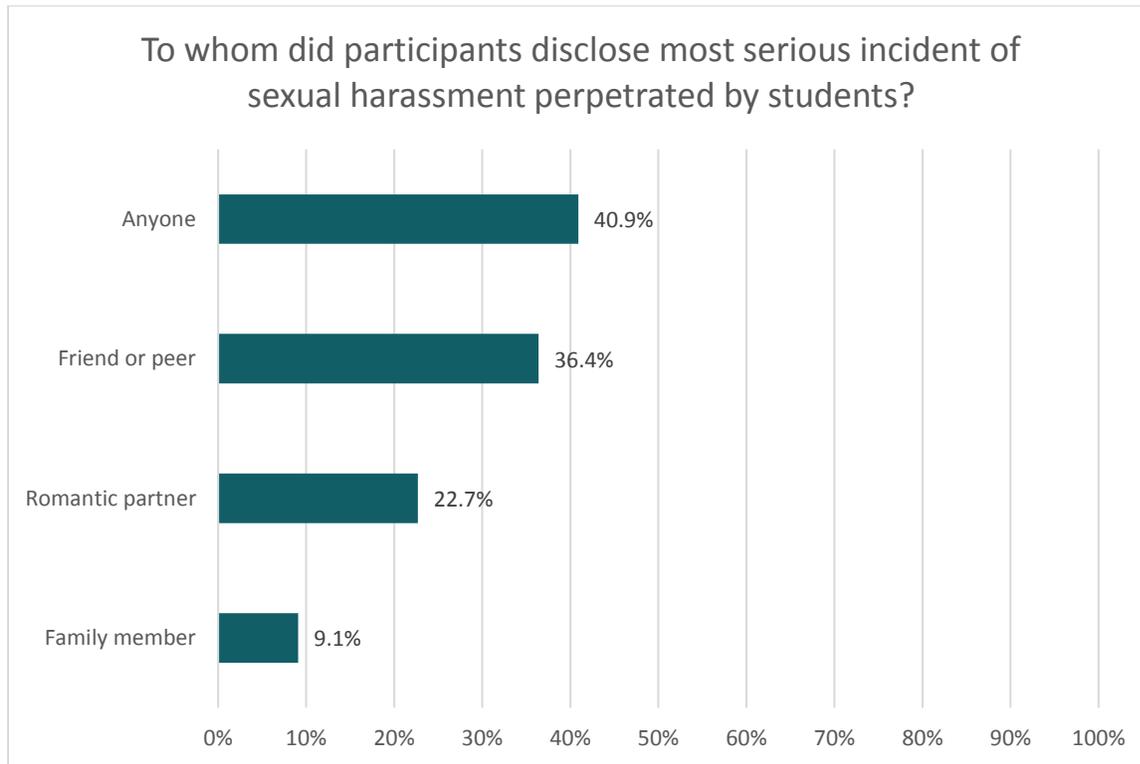
About one-third of the participants indicated that at least one other person witnessed the incident (31.8%), but in all cases in which someone witnessed the incident, the bystander(s) did not do anything to intervene.

**Figure 11. Among those who experienced sexual harassment perpetrated by students, did anyone witness the most serious incident?**



Participants who reported at least one experience of harassment from students were asked whether they disclosed the incident to anyone (see Figure 12). Less than half the participants (40.9%) who experienced sexual harassment from students disclosed the incident to anyone. The most common disclosure sources were a friend or peer (36.4%) or a romantic partner (22.7%). None of the participants who experienced sexual harassment from students disclosed to a formal resource on campus (e.g., Resident Advisor, VPVA, Title IX, etc.). Additionally, none of the participants who experience sexual harassment from students filed a formal complaint about the incident. Of those who did disclose an incident of sexual harassment from students, most disclosed within the first 24 hours (66.7%).

**Figure 12. To whom did participants disclose the most serious incident of sexual harassment perpetrated by students?**

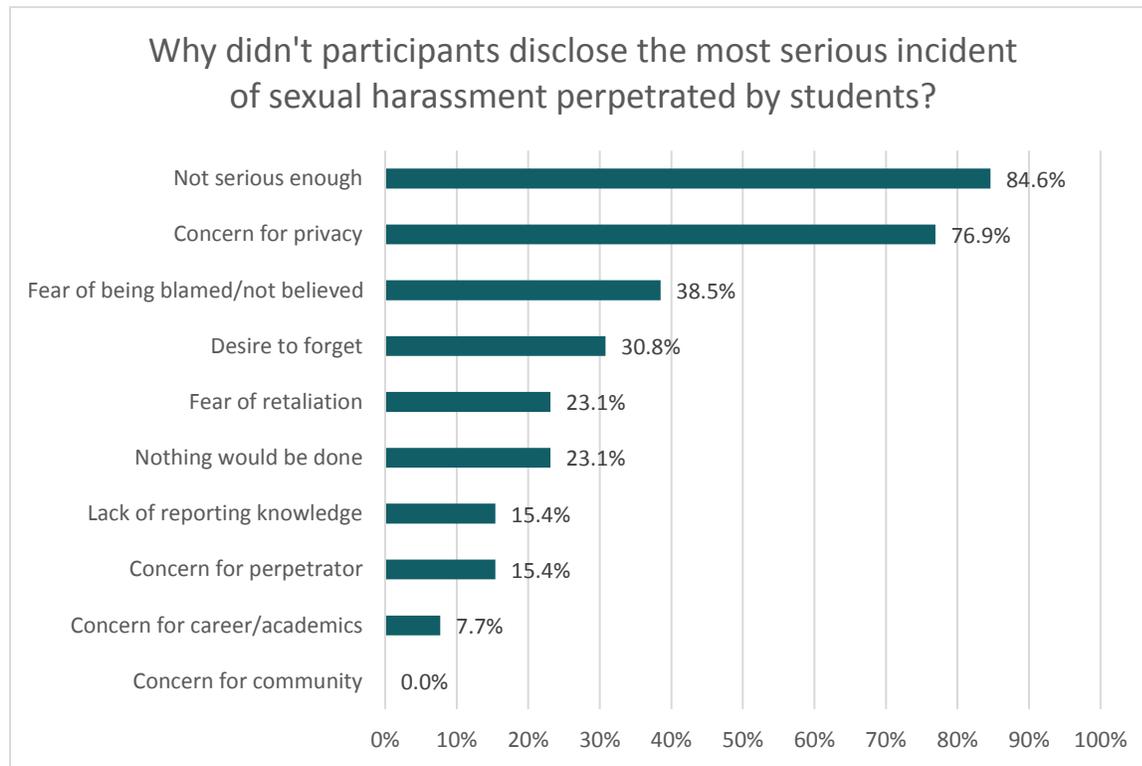


Participants who experienced sexual harassment from students and did not disclose to anyone were asked why they did not disclose. Participants were presented with a list of 27 reasons for not disclosing and they indicated whether each reason was true of them. The 27 reasons were then grouped into 10 conceptual categories:

- 1) Fear of being blamed or not believed (e.g., “I thought I would be blamed for what happened”)
- 2) Concern for career/academics (e.g., “I was afraid it would impact my currently employment”)
- 3) Concern for community (e.g., “I was concerned that members of my cultural/ethnic community would not support me”)
- 4) Concern for the perpetrator (e.g., “I didn't want the person who did it to get in trouble”)
- 5) Desire to forget (“I wanted to forget it happened”)
- 6) Nothing would be done (“I didn't think anything would be done”)
- 7) Not serious enough (e.g., “I didn't think what happened was serious enough to talk about”)
- 8) Concern for privacy (e.g., “It is a private matter; I wanted to deal with it on my own”)
- 9) Lack of reporting knowledge (e.g., “I didn't know reporting procedure on campus”)
- 10) Fear of retaliation (e.g., “I was afraid the person who did it would try to get back at me”)

The most common reasons for not disclosing sexual harassment from students was because the participants felt it wasn't serious enough (84.6% cited a reason in this category) and because they were concerned for their privacy (76.9 % cited a reason in this category). Although not the most common reason, nearly one-quarter (23.1%) indicated that they did not disclose because they did not think anything would be done (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13. Reasons for non-disclosure of sexual harassment perpetrated by students**

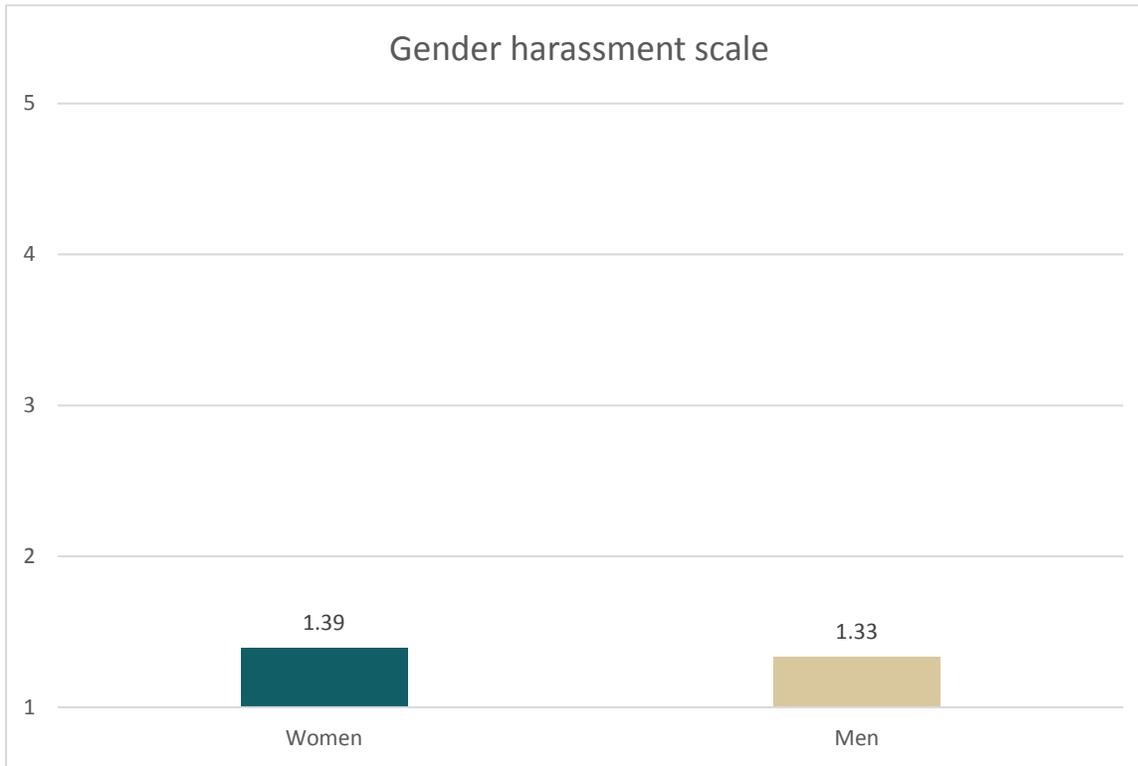


### Experiences of gender harassment

Because gender harassment is the most common type of sexual harassment, we included three additional questions to capture experiences of sexist gender harassment. Specifically, participants were asked to rate their agreement with three statements regarding gender harassment at RBHS. These statements were created by the research team based on the experiences documented in the focus groups. An example statement is, "Since enrolling in RBHS, I have been denied academic opportunities because of my gender." A mean score across the three items was calculated such that a higher score indicates greater experiences with gender harassment.

Overall, participants generally disagreed that they have experienced gender harassment, as evidenced by low overall scores (see Figure 14). Although women scored higher than men, which indicates more experience with gender harassment, the difference by gender was not statistically significant.

**Figure 14. Average scores on gender harassment scale**



*Note.* Higher scores indicate more experience with gender harassment.

## UNWANTED SEXUAL CONTACT

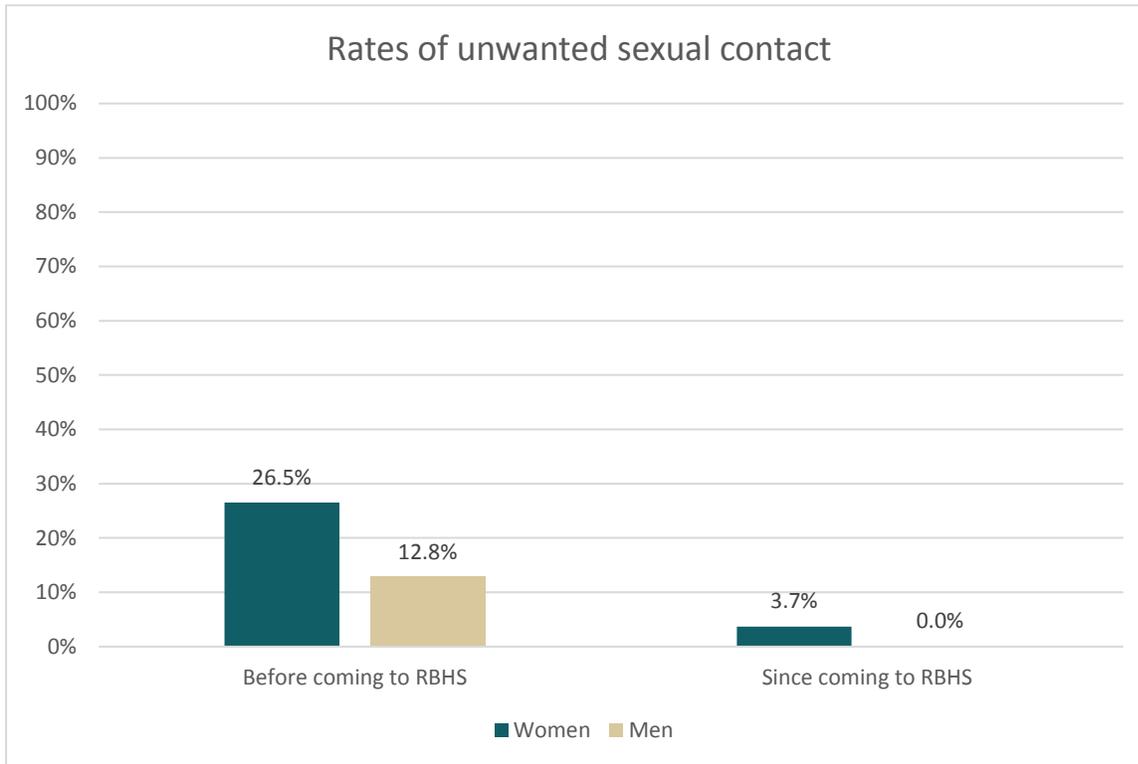
Before asking participants about their experiences of unwanted sexual contact they were provided with the definition of unwanted sexual contact as stated in the Rutgers University Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct[8].

Following the definition, students were asked six questions about whether they had experienced various types of unwanted sexual contact since coming to RBHS using a scale validated by the Bureau of Justice Campus Climate Validation Study[4]. This included:

- Four questions about unwanted sexual contact that involved force or threats of force, explained as: “This could include someone holding you down with his or her body weight, pinning your arms, hitting or kicking you, or threatening to use a weapon against you.”
- Two questions about unwanted sexual contact while being unable to provide consent or to stop what was happening because “you were passed out, drugged, incapacitated or asleep.” One question asks about experiences of this type that participants are certain occurred, and the second question asks about experiences of this type that participants are uncertain occurred.

Because rates of unwanted sexual contact were low, all six types of unwanted sexual contact were combined into one overall experience variable. Participants were also asked whether they had experienced unwanted sexual contact before coming to RBHS. Rates of unwanted sexual contact are displayed in Figure 15. Women reported higher rates of unwanted sexual contact than men before coming to RBHS (26.5% v. 12.8%) and since coming to RBHS (3.7% v. 0%). However, these differences were not statistically significant.

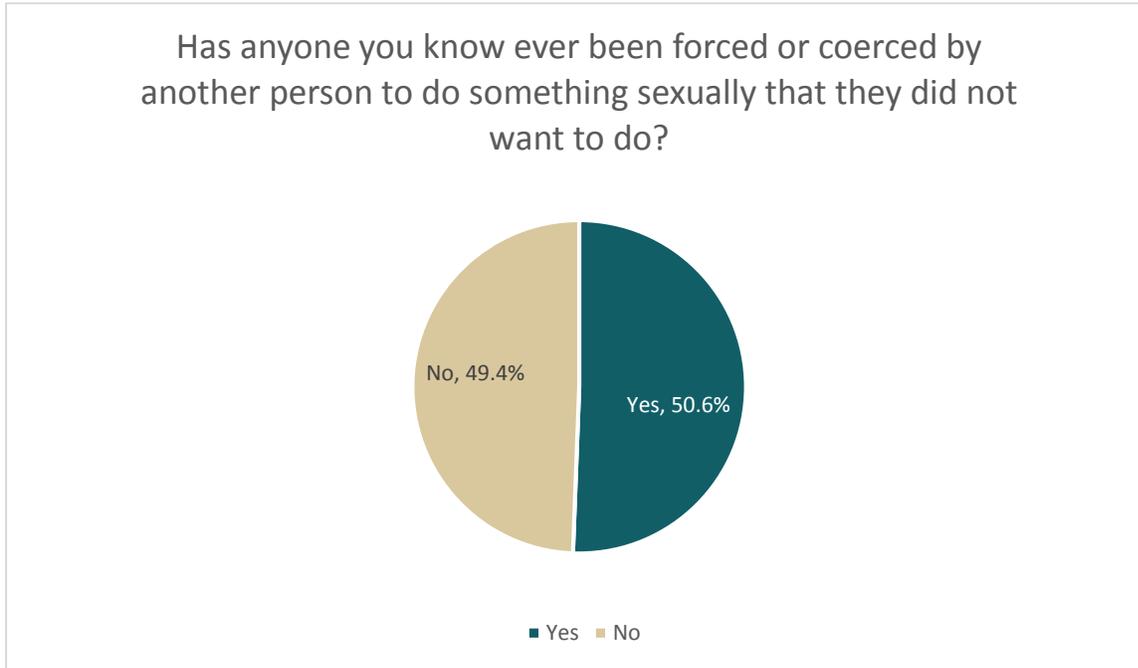
**Figure 15. Rates of unwanted sexual contact**



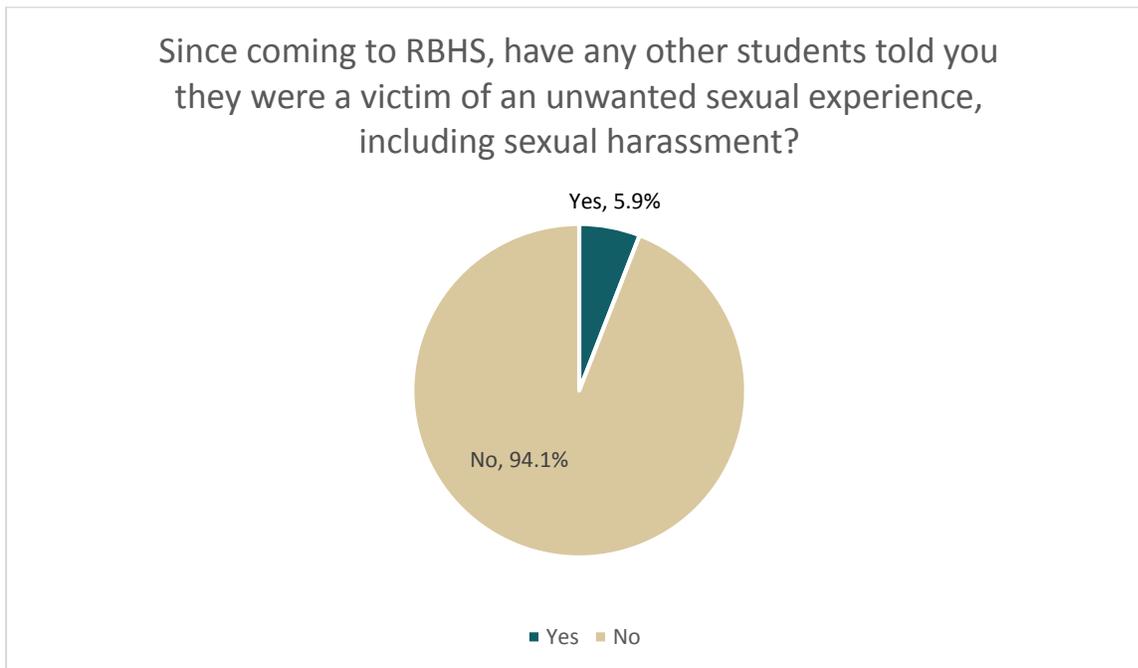
Respondents who indicated at least one experience of unwanted sexual contact since coming to RBHS were asked several follow up questions about the most serious incident. However, because only five participants indicated an experience of unwanted sexual contact since coming to RBHS, responses to these follow-up questions are not included in the report.

All survey participants were asked whether they know anyone who has ever been forced or coerced by another person to do something sexually that they did not want to do (see Figure 16). About half of participants (50.6%) indicated yes. Participants were also asked whether any other students have ever disclosed an experience of unwanted sexual contact to them since coming to RBHS (see Figure 17). A small number of participants indicated that they had received a disclosure since coming to RBHS (5.9%).

**Figure 16. Has anyone you know experienced unwanted sexual contact?**



**Figure 17. Disclosure from other students**



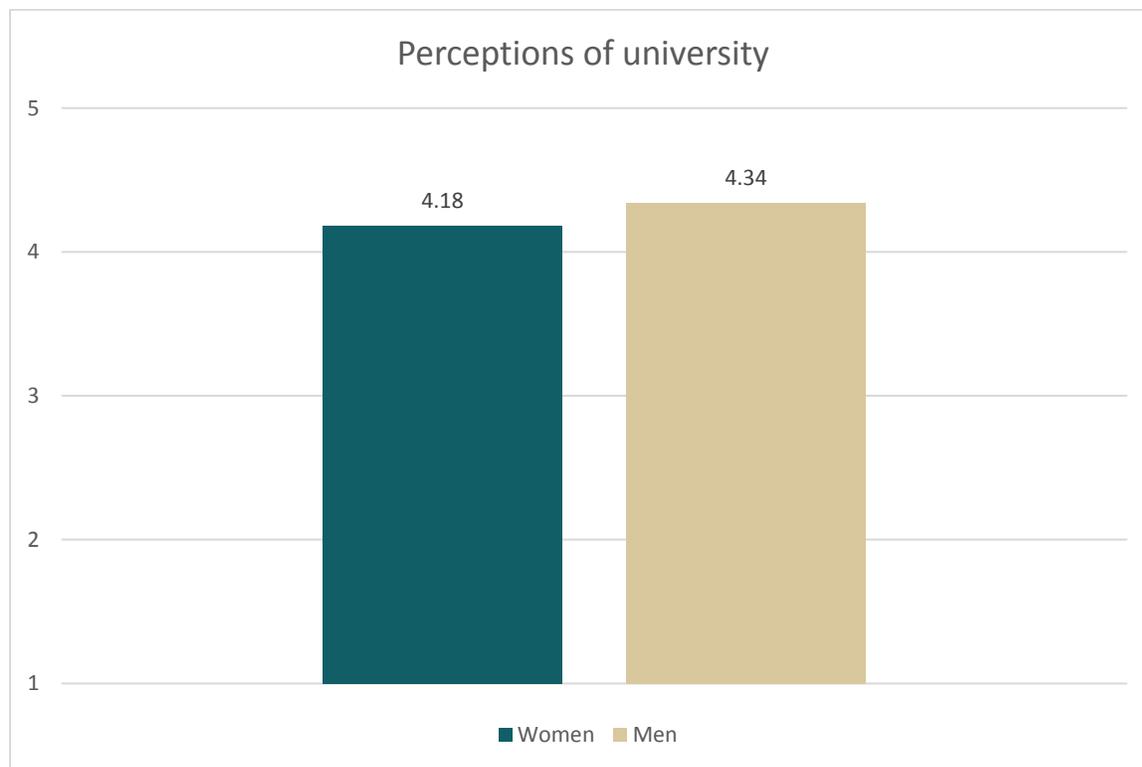
## PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY AND STUDENTS

In their report on sexual harassment, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018) notes that perceived tolerance for sexual harassment (and other forms of sexual misconduct) contributes to incidents of sexual harassment[3]. Therefore, it is important to consider students' perceptions of the climate around sexual misconduct. We used three scales to measure perceptions of the climate. These scales were based on the *Not Alone* toolkit[1].

### Perceptions of the university

First, we measured students' perceptions of how the university would handle a report of sexual misconduct. Participants rated their agreement with seven statements on a 1-to-5 scale, with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions of the university. Example statements include, "RBHS would take the report seriously" and "RBHS would support the person making the report." Average scores for women and men are displayed in Figure 18. Overall, participants rated the university positively. Male participants rated the university more positively than female participants, although this difference was not statistically significant.

**Figure 18. Perceptions of how university would handle a report of sexual misconduct**

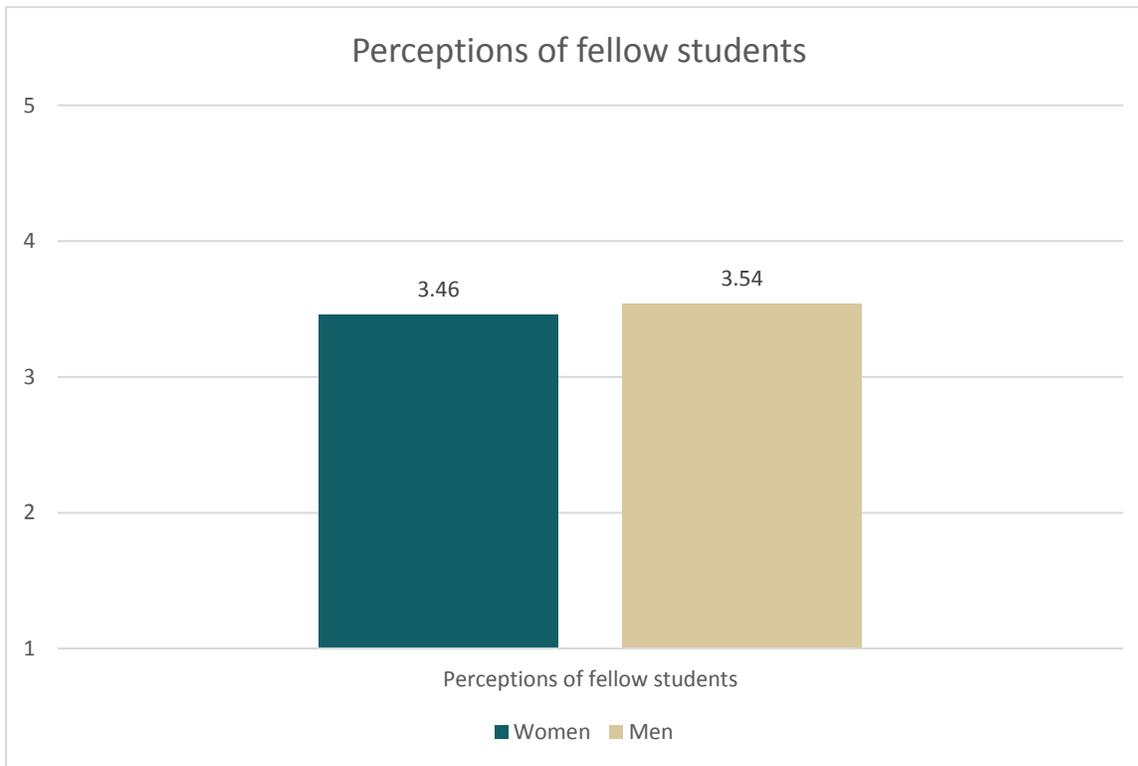


### Perceptions of fellow students

Second, we measured participants' perceptions of how their peers would react to a person reporting sexual misconduct. Participants rated their agreement with three statements on a 1-to-5 scale. Scores were calculated such that higher scores indicate more positive perceptions of fellow students. Example statements include, "Students would label the person making the report a troublemaker" and "the

alleged offenders or their friends would try to get back at the person making the report.” Average scores for women and men are displayed in Figure 19. Overall, participants rated their peers above the midpoint, indicating a fairly positive perception of their fellow students). There were no differences between males and females on perceptions of peers.

**Figure 19. Perceptions of how peers might react to someone reporting an incident of sexual misconduct**

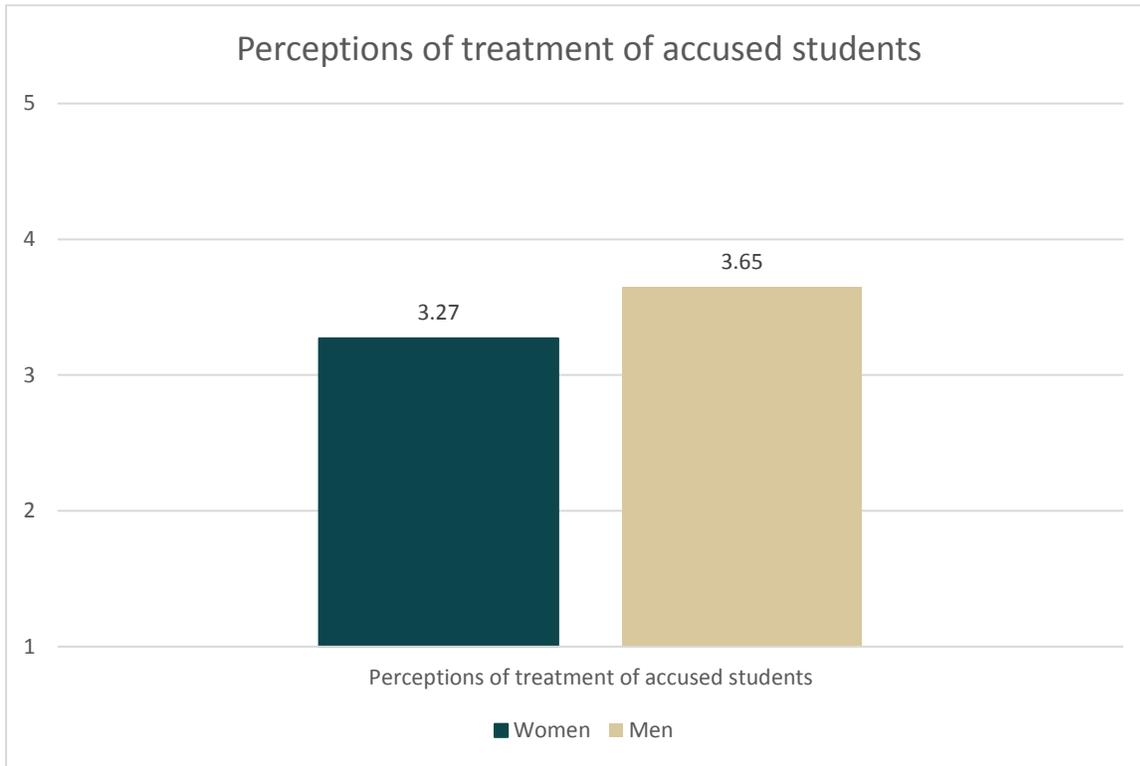


### Perceptions of treatment of accused students

Third, we measured participants’ perceptions of how accused students are treated. Participants rated their agreement with two statements on a 1-to-5 scale. Scores were calculated such that higher scores indicate more positive perceptions of treatment of accused students. Statements include, “At this school, students who are accused of perpetrating sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, are treated fairly” and “At this school, when it is determined that sexual misconduct happened, the perpetrator gets punished appropriately.” Average scores for women and men are displayed in Figure 20. Overall, participants had moderately positive perceptions of the treatment of accused students. Men had significantly more positive perceptions than women.<sup>2</sup> We do not know whether women tend to believe perpetrators are treated too harshly or not harshly enough.

<sup>2</sup>  $t(169) = 2.32, p = .02$

**Figure 20. Perceptions of treatment of accused students**



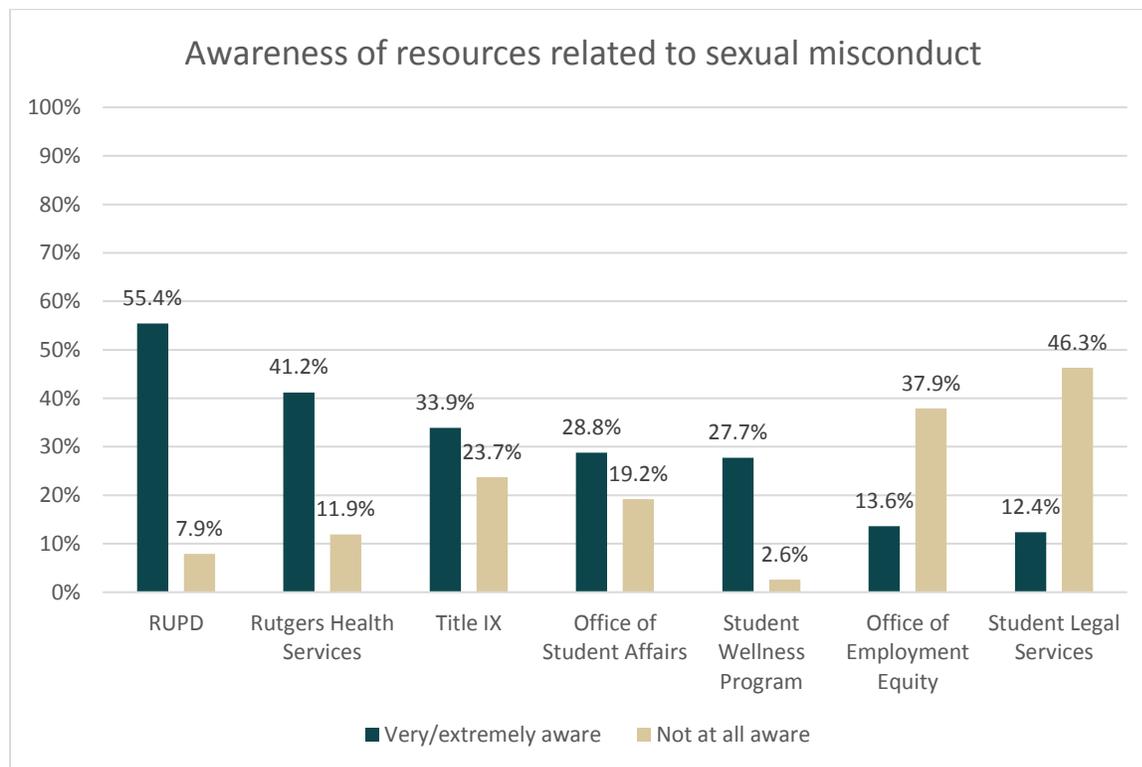
## AWARENESS OF RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT TO DO IN CASES OF UNWANTED SEXUAL CONTACT

In order to estimate students' understanding of campus resources for sexual misconduct, we measured participants' awareness of resources, knowledge of what to do in cases of unwanted sexual contact, and participation in sexual misconduct-related education/activities.

### Awareness of resources

Participants were asked to rate their awareness of several resources on campus related to sexual misconduct. For each resource, participants indicated whether they were *not at all aware*, *slightly aware*, *moderately aware*, *very aware*, or *extremely aware*. The percentage of participants who were very or extremely aware of each resource, as well as the percentage of participants who were not at all aware of each resource, is presented in Figure 21. There were no differences in awareness by gender. Participants were most aware of Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD; over 50% were very or extremely aware) and least aware of Student Legal Services (nearly 50% indicated they were not at all aware).

**Figure 21. Awareness of resources related to sexual misconduct**

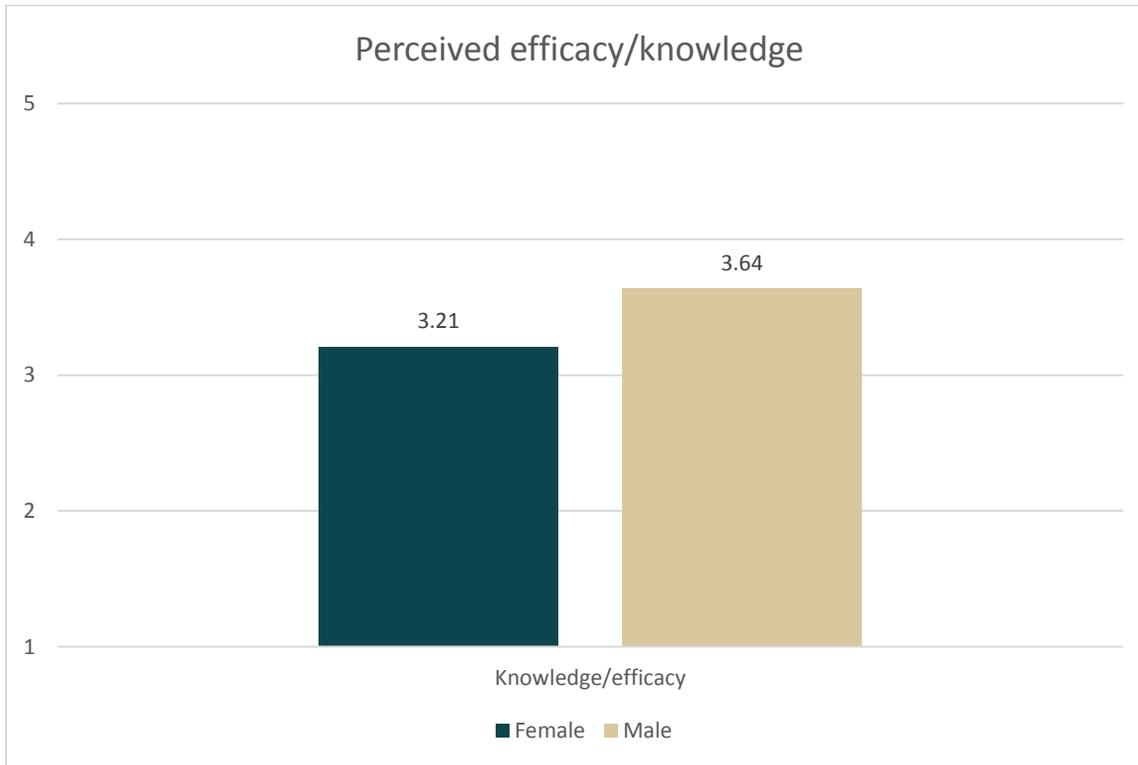


### Knowledge of what to do in cases of unwanted sexual contact

Participants also rated their perceived efficacy or knowledge of what to do if they or a friend experienced sexual misconduct. Participants rated their agreement with four statements on a 1-to-5 scale; higher scores indicate greater efficacy/knowledge[1]. Sample statements include, "If a friend or I

experienced unwanted sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, I know where to get help on Rutgers' campus." Average efficacy/knowledge for women and men is displayed in Figure 22. Overall, participants were moderately efficacious/knowledgeable about what to do if they or a friend experienced sexual misconduct; average scores hovered around three on the 1-to-5 scale. Male participants scored significantly higher on efficacy/knowledge than female participants, which indicates that male participants felt more efficacious/knowledgeable about what to do if they or a friend experienced sexual misconduct.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 22. Perceived efficacy/knowledge about what to do in cases of sexual misconduct**

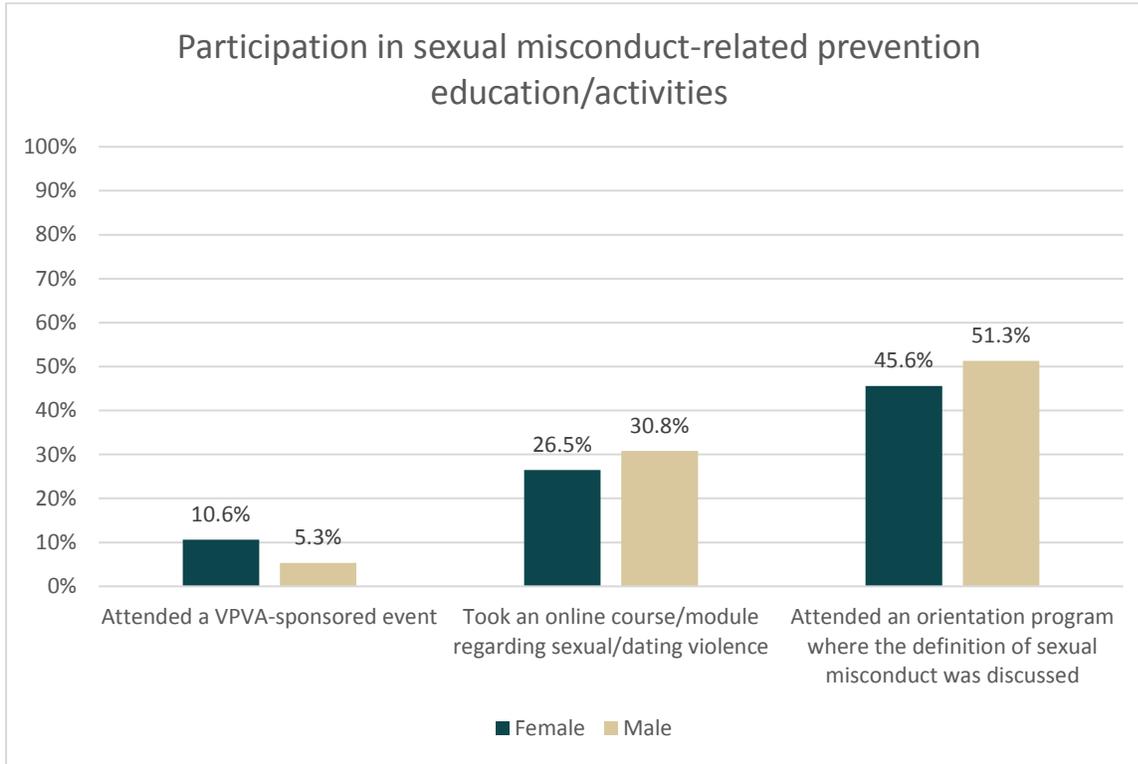


**Participation in sexual misconduct-related prevention education/activities**

Participants indicated whether they had participated in three prevention activities related to sexual misconduct education (see Figure 23). Very few survey participants indicated that they had participated in VPVA sponsored activities (10.6% of female participants and 5.3% of male participants). Although women participated more than men in VPVA sponsored events, this difference was not statistically significant. Around half of both male and female respondents attended an orientation program where the definition of sexual misconduct was discussed.

<sup>3</sup>  $t(169) = 2.24, p = .03$

**Figure 23. Participation in sexual misconduct-related prevention activities**





## ATTITUDES ABOUT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

### Acceptance of sexual violence

Participants responded to two scales designed to capture their attitudes about sexual conduct. The first scale assessed acceptance of sexual violence, or the extent to which participants feel that sexual violence is sometimes acceptable or excusable (e.g., a person who is sexually assaulted while they are drunk is at least somewhat responsible for putting themselves in that position) using the Personal Acceptance of Sexual Violence scale validated by the Bureau of Justice Campus Climate Validation Study [4]. Although acceptance of sexual violence does not perfectly predict perpetration of sexual violence, those who are more accepting of sexual violence may be more likely to engage in sexually violent behaviors[9] and/or may be less supportive of peers who disclose an experience of sexual violence[10].

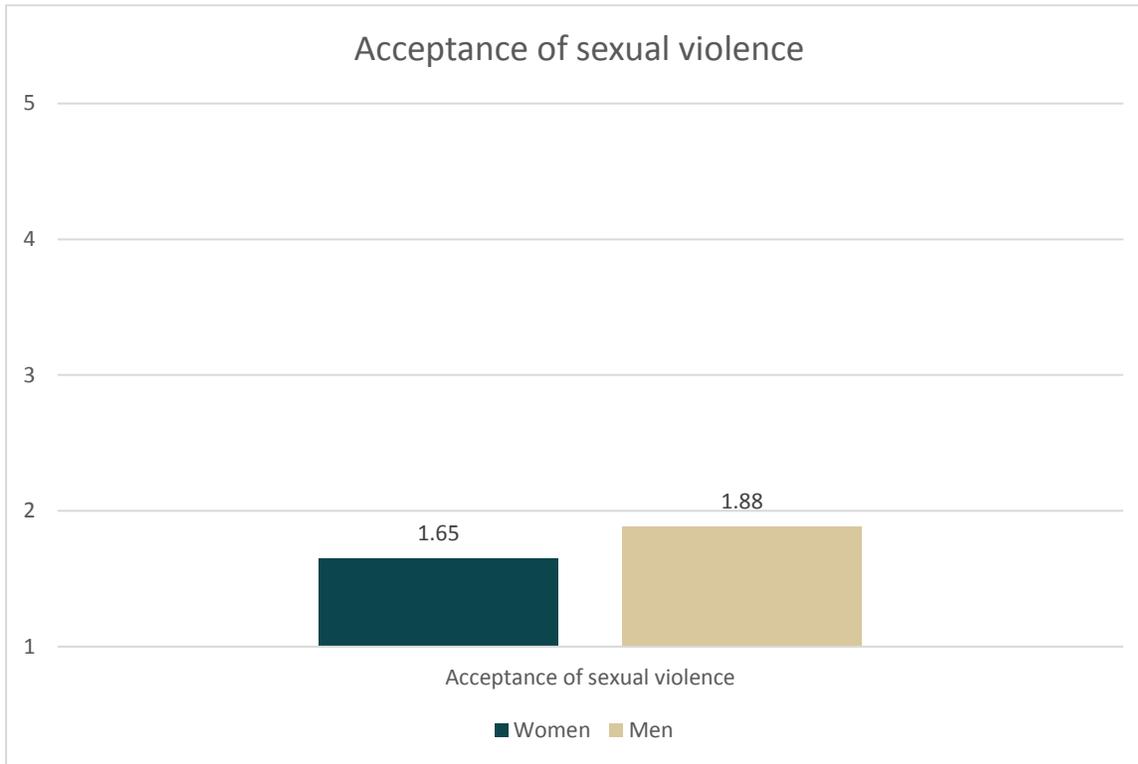
Participants rated their agreement on a 1-to-5 scale with six statements designed to measure acceptance of sexual violence. Higher scores indicate more acceptance of sexual violence. Sample statements include, “Accusations of sexual assault are often used by one person as a way to get back at the other person.”

Overall, participants scored relatively low on the measure of acceptance of sexual violence (see Figure 24). Scores hovered between one and two, which indicates a general disagreement that sexual violence is sometimes acceptable or excusable. However, men scored higher than women on acceptance of sexual violence, and this difference was nearly statistically significant.<sup>4</sup> This finding is consistent with previous research that finds men tend to be more accepting of sexual violence than women[11].

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<sup>4</sup>  $t(170) = 1.83, p = .07$ .

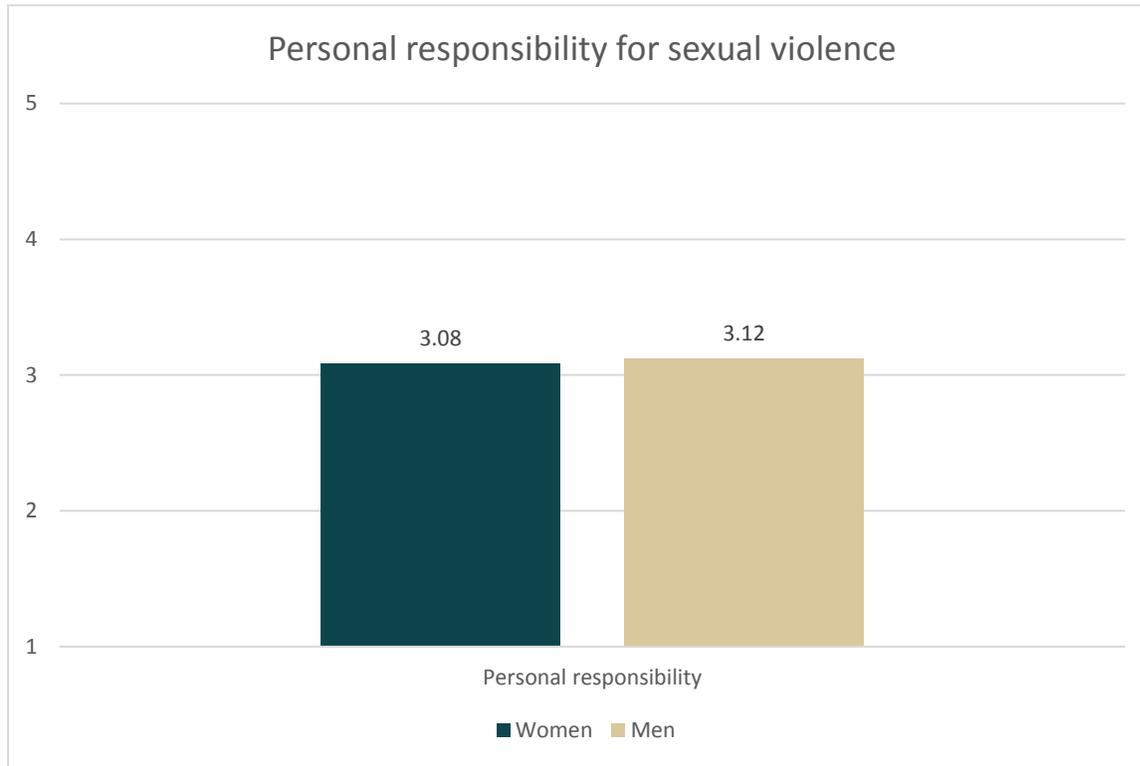
**Figure 24. Acceptance of sexual violence**



### Personal responsibility for sexual misconduct

Participants also responded to a measure of personal responsibility for sexual misconduct. This measure assesses the extent to which participants believe they have personal responsibility for learning more about and preventing sexual misconduct[12]. Participants rate their agreement with 12 statements on a 1-to-5 scale. Higher scores indicate greater feelings of personal responsibility for sexual violence. Sample statements include, “Sometimes I think I should learn more about sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment.” Overall, participants felt moderately responsible for learning about and preventing sexual misconduct (see Figure 25). There were no significant differences by gender.

**Figure 25. Personal responsibility for sexual misconduct**



## CONCLUSION

Research presented in National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report on sexual harassment suggests that 20 to 50% of students experience sexual harassment[3]. Rates of sexual harassment at SPH were much lower; just over 10% of students at SPH report harassment. Consistent with previous research, gender harassment (i.e., demeaning or derogatory remarks about members of one gender) was the most common type of harassment experienced. In the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report, the researchers note that sexual harassment is more likely to occur in male dominated environments [3]. The SPH student body is predominantly female, which may help to explain relatively low rates of harassment.

Although rates of sexual harassment are low, participants who experienced sexual harassment did not report the experience to any formal resource. In fact, most participants who experienced sexual harassment did not tell anyone at all about the incident. There are several reasons why students who experience harassment do not report. The most common reason for not reporting was that participants did not feel the experience was serious enough to report. This finding is consistent with other research that demonstrates that minimizing or normalizing sexual harassment experiences is a common coping mechanism for dealing with sexual harassment[3].

Another reason for not reporting is that participants are not familiar with the resources available to them on campus. At RBHS, incidents of sexual harassment perpetrated by faculty are reported to the Office of Employment Equity, yet only 14% of participants were aware of this office. Additionally, 50% of students who experienced harassment from faculty said they did not report because they did not think anything would be done. If students are unaware of resources for reporting sexual harassment they may be more likely to assume that the school will not do anything in response to a report. Therefore, increasing students' awareness of resources may increase their perception that the university would do something in response to a report and their willingness to actually report.

Rates of unwanted sexual contact (including sexual assault) were also quite low at SPH; less than 4% of women, and no men, reported an experience of unwanted sexual contact since coming to RBHS. The relatively low rates of unwanted sexual contact may be because the population of SPH is mostly graduate students, who are less likely than undergraduates to experience sexual violence[5, 13]. The rates of unwanted sexual contact before coming to RBHS (e.g., as an undergraduate) are consistent with national averages: over 25% of women and 10% of men report an experience of unwanted sexual contact before coming to RBHS.

Participants felt relatively positively about how RBHS would respond to a report of sexual misconduct. In general, they thought RBHS would handle the report fairly and would be fair to both the accuser and the accused. This finding is important because perceived tolerance for sexual misconduct predicts the occurrence of sexual misconduct in an organization[3]. Additionally, survivors' who distrust their institutions are more likely to experience anxiety and other trauma-related symptoms in the wake of sexual misconduct[14].

Students were less confident about how their fellow peers would respond to a report of sexual misconduct. Peer support of survivors is important because survivors are more likely to disclose experiences of sexual misconduct to their peers than to any other resource[10]. Receiving a negative



reaction from one's peers after disclosing an experience of sexual violence is associated with negative mental health outcomes such as depression, PTSD, paranoia, hostility, and substance abuse[15-17].

Finally, while many participants reported that another individual witnessed the incident of harassment occur, very few individuals intervened. Based on these findings, bystander intervention programs may be important to increase prosocial helping behaviors on campus, as well as improve students' perceptions of peer norms.

## Acknowledgements

The research team thanks the many members of the Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences community who contributed to the campus climate assessment project. This report and the project as a whole are the result of the enthusiastic support and participation of administrators, faculty, staff, and students across Rutgers. This report is dedicated to all those who are survivors of sexual and dating violence. We hope our efforts can help contribute to creating campus communities that are free of all forms of violence.

We would especially like to thank the following members of the Rutgers community who provided support to the project:

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The Arts and Sciences Institutional Review Board – New Brunswick

The Center on Violence Against Women and Children, School of Social Work, Rutgers University

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## Glossary of Terms

### **Crude Gender Harassment**

Crude gender harassment is a type of gender harassment that includes using sexually crude terms or making sexually crude jokes about one gender (e.g., referring to a woman as a ‘bitch’ or a man as a ‘pussy’)[3].

### **Gender Harassment**

Gender harassment refers to “a broad range of verbal and nonverbal behaviors not aimed at sexual cooperation but that convey insulting, hostile, and degrading attitudes about” members of one gender[6]. Gender harassment is the most common type of sexual harassment and includes verbal and nonverbal behaviors aimed at sexual cooperation but that convey insulting, hostile, and degrading attitudes about members of one gender.

### **Sexual Coercion**

Sexual coercion refers to requirements to engage in sexual activity as a condition of employment or promotion (e.g., receiving a promotion in exchange for sex, or being denied an opportunity for refusing to have sex)[3].

### **Sexist Gender Harassment**

Sexist gender harassment is a type of gender harassment that includes behaviors that are demeaning to members of one gender (e.g., jokes or comments about women’s leadership abilities)[3].

### **Sexual Harassment**

Rutgers University [8] defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct, or communication of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s education, educational or campus life activities; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or student life decisions affecting that individual; or
- Such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s education or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, demeaning, or offensive campus, work or living environment.
- Sexual harassment may be committed by anyone regardless of gender identity and may occur between members of the same or different sex.

For the purpose of this campus climate survey, we used the definition of sexual harassment presented in the report on sexual harassment of women from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018), in which sexual harassment is defined as a type of gender discrimination that can include gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and/or sexual coercion.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

Rutgers University defines sexual misconduct as a broad range of behaviors focused on sex and/or gender that may or may not be sexual in nature. Sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, gender based harassment, stalking, and relationship violence (including dating and domestic violence) are all forms of misconduct that are prohibited by this policy[8].

### **Unwanted Sexual Attention**

Unwanted sexual attention refers to sexual advances that are unwelcome (e.g., repeatedly asking someone on a date when they have said 'no'). Unwanted sexual attention can include sexual assault[3].

### **Unwanted Sexual Contact**

We use the term unwanted sexual contact to refer to a broad range of nonconsensual sexual behaviors, including sexual assault. Rutgers University defines sexual assault or nonconsensual sexual contact as any one or more of the follow acts[8]:

- Touching of an unwilling or non-consenting person's intimate parts (such as genitalia, groin, breast, buttocks, or mouth under or over a person's clothes).
- Touching an unwilling person or non-consenting person with one's own intimate parts.
- Forcing an unwilling person to touch another's intimate parts.
- Penetrating an unwilling person orally, anally, or vaginally with any object or body part. This includes, but is not limited to, penetration of a bodily opening without consent, through the use of coercion, or through exploitation of another's inability to give consent.
- Penetrating an unwilling person orally, anally, or vaginally with any object or body part by use of force, threat, and/or intimidation.

For the purpose of the campus climate survey, participants were asked six questions about whether they had experienced various types of unwanted sexual contact since coming to RBHS. The six questions were adapted from the Bureau of Justice Statistics Campus Climate Validation Study[4].

The questions included:

- Four questions about unwanted sexual contact that involved force or threats of force, explained as: "This could include someone holding you down with his or her body weight, pinning your arms, hitting or kicking you, or threatening to use a weapon against you."
- Two questions about unwanted sexual contact while being unable to provide consent or to stop what was happening because "you were passed out, drugged, incapacitated or asleep." One question asks about experiences of this type that participants are certain occurred, and the second question asks about experiences of this type that participants are uncertain occurred.

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