MAKING VISIBLE: AN EXPLORATION OF TRAINER CONCEPTUALIZATION OF 
PROGRAM CONTENT RELATED TO GENDER, RACIAL, AND SEXUAL IDENTITY 
WITHIN COLLEGE SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION PROGRAMS

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Abstract

While research makes clear that individuals’ gender, racial, and sexual identities and their intersections impact experiences of and responses to sexual and gender-based violence, the literature on college sexual assault prevention programs reflects an overwhelming absence of this type of identity-based program content. This Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study explored the experience of sexual assault prevention program trainers for college campuses conceptualizing their program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity. Through the theoretical framework of Socialization Theory (Hart, 1991), focused attention was given to understanding how trainers’ professional and organizational socialization impact this phenomenon. This study’s findings make visible the significance of sexual assault prevention program content that focuses on the intersections of sexism, racism, and queerphobia and the challenges and rewards trainers experience in conceptualizing this program content’s inclusion and/or exclusion. This study found that while it might appear on the surface that trainers are making simplistic, binary decisions about the inclusion or exclusion of identity-based content, that trainers actually grapple with the complexity of this content and seek nuanced ways to address marginalized and privileged student experiences. This study concludes with contributions to theory and research, and provides implications for practice.

Key words: gender, race, sexuality, identity, intersectionality, college campus, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual assault prevention, trainers, socialization theory.
Dedication

For Michelle, and for every survivor who has ever entrusted me with their story.  
May we someday live in a world free of all forms of identity-based violence.
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I want to say thank you to my participants. As someone who also works on issues of sexual and gender-based violence, I have often felt relatively alone in the academy and in this profession when I raise the importance of addressing the impact of identity. The work of dismantling oppressive and violent behavior and systems can also feel ubiquitous and endless; hearing from each of you about your experiences and getting to spend so much time with your words individually and collectively has given me a sense of connectedness to you and others in this work. I hope you feel your voices and experiences are visible and accurate in this work, and that your collective voices and experiences also give you and other trainers a sense of connection. Thank you to all who engage in conversations, education, prevention, and response related to all forms of identity-based violence.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

‘Sexual and gender-based violence’ is a term used to encompass a continuum of violence and discrimination. It can include, but is not limited to, rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, street harassment, bullying, and the use of dehumanizing language. Research has shown that sexual and gender-based violence is a major problem on college campuses (Cantor, Fisher, Chibnall, Townsend, Lee, Bruce, Thomas, 2015; Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Anderson & Whiston, 2005). It is estimated that one in five female students will experience a sexual assault during their time in college (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007) and 90% of sexual assault survivors know their attacker (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Fisher, Cullen & Turner, 2000). Even though data demonstrates disturbingly high numbers of sexual assaults, research also indicates that reporting of this crime—especially reporting to official authorities—is extremely low (Cantor et al., 2015; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003). While the majority of college sexual assaults are perpetrated by male students, most male students are not perpetrators, and male students are also sexually assaulted, though to a significantly lesser degree then their female peers (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Choate, 2003).

Research has found that a person’s gender, race, and sexuality affect the likelihood they will experience sexual and gender-based violence (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Martin, Fisher, Warner, Krebs, & Lindquist, 2011; Bryant-Davis, Chung, & Tilman, 2009; Krebs et al., 2007; Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003). These identities also inform how an individual who has experienced sexual and gender-based violence may experience more or less biased or discriminatory treatment when or if they engage in resource or justice seeking (such as doctors and clinicians or police and legal avenues, respectively) (Sokoloff, 2008; Tilleman, 2010, Bettcher, 2007; Bryant-Davis et al., 2009). As noted in Crenshaw’s (1989, 1991) seminal works
and coining of the phrase ‘intersectionality,’ gender, race, and often socioeconomic status intersect with one another such that when seeking support and/or justice related to experiences of interpersonal and/or sexual violence, women of color face not only possibilities of sexism, but also of racism and classism. As Nash (2008) notes, “intersectionality, [is] the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, and sexuality” and “intersectionality rejects the ‘single-axis framework’ often embraced by both feminist and anti-racist scholars” (p.2). Intersectionality works to make visible the ever-present multidimensional layers of the human experience, particularly for those with multiple marginalized identities. Also as example, when LGBTQ people seek support and/or justice related to experiences of sexual and gender-based violence, the intersections of their identities can contribute to homophobia, biphobia, and/or transphobia (hereafter referred to as queerphobia) and increase their risk of experiencing various forms of bias including but not limited to being blamed for their victimization based on prejudiced beliefs about marginalized gender and/or sexual identities (Tilleman, 2010).

In an effort to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, colleges and universities often employ people from inside and outside of the university to develop and facilitate programs to help educate college students (Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2011). These programs are most commonly framed as “sexual assault prevention,” though the educational content usually considers broader topics of sexual and gender-based violence and the sociocultural beliefs found to correlate with its prevalence. One such sociocultural belief that is critical to challenge is gender essentialism, particularly as it relates to beliefs about traditional gender roles and as it informs rape supportive attitudes and rape myths (Anderson & Whiston, 2005).
Gender essentialism is the belief that, “differences between males and females are stable, unchanging, fixed at birth, and due to biological differences rather than environmental factors” (Smiler & Gelman, 2008, p.864). Gender essentialism can encompass both the belief that there is an inherent, binary, two-gender system and that in said two-gender system there are set and distinct differences between men and women–physical, emotional, or otherwise–that are naturally occurring rather than constructed and contextual. This essentialized view of gender–particularly related to beliefs about traditional gender roles–has been found to foster rape supportive attitudes and rape myths (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Fonow et al., 1992; Burgess, 2007). Rape supportive attitudes and rape myths function to justify and excuse perpetrator behavior and to shift blame from the perpetrator to the person who was victimized (Burt, 1980, p. 217). An example of a rape myth rooted in gender essentialism is that of victim-blaming, or the ubiquitous charge that a person is somehow responsible for their sexual victimization. Victims of sexual violence are often said to have been “asking for it” based on gendered factors such as how they are dressed or traditional, heteronormative gender roles such as the expectation that women “owe” men sex (Burgess, 2007). Similarly, essentialized notions of men as hypersexual and physically strong can be used to dismiss the victimization of men based on harmful beliefs that men always want sex and/or should be able to physically resist any attack (Bradley et al., 2002).

Gender essentialism and rape supportive attitudes are not only connected to beliefs about gender roles and gender identity, they are also impacted by intersectional identity-specific beliefs about race and sexuality that connect, respectively, to racism and queerphobia (Bryant-Davis et al., 2009; Aosved & Long, 2006; Crenshaw, 1991; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). For example, whereas white-identified women experience victim-blaming, they have been found to receive
greater levels of sympathy and belief regarding their victimization than do their Latina counterparts who are subject to the biased, racialized ideas about Latina women being hypersexual (Bryant-Davis et al., 2009). LGBTQ individuals may experience additional layers of victim-blaming, wherein same-sex flirtation (whether actual or perceived) or the disclosure of a transgender or gender nonconforming identity by an LGBTQ person are used as justification for perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence and murder (Tilleman, 2010; Perkiss, 2013). Further, LGBTQ people of color experience even higher levels of victimization than their white counterparts (Grant, Mottet, Tanis, Harrison, Herman, & Keisling, 2011).

While research makes clear that individuals’ gender, racial, and sexual identities and their intersections impact experiences of and responses to sexual and gender-based violence, the literature on college sexual assault prevention programs reflects an overwhelming absence of this type of identity-based program content (DeGue, Valle, Holt, Massetti, Matjasko, & Tharp, 2014; Anderson & Whiston, 2005). Most research on college sexual assault prevention programs focuses explicitly on women and men and implicitly on cisgender, white, and heterosexual experiences of sexual and gender-based violence, even while many also note the importance of future research paying attention to LGBTQ students, students of color, and/or the intersections of gender, racial, and sexual identity (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Lafrance, Loe, & Brown, 2012; Suarez, & Gadalla, 2010). This qualitative study explores the lived experiences of sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses as they conceptualize their program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity. This study particularly explores how trainers understand their role socialization process through education and training (professional socialization) and work (organizational socialization) as impacting this phenomenon (Hart, 1991).

**Significance of Research Problem**
Given the reality and prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence on college campuses, it is imperative that all efforts be made to understand how best to address and prevent these issues (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Anderson & Whiston, 2005). Not only do colleges and universities have an ethical responsibility to address sexual and gender-based violence, but through federal regulations such as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (commonly referred to as Title IX), they also have legal obligations to do so. Title IX outlaws discrimination on the basis of sex within educational programs that receive federal funding, and has had far reaching impact on colleges and universities (Anderson & Osborne, 2008). While many people have historically thought of Title IX in relation to sports, it has profoundly informed universities’ responsibilities and responses to sexual and gender-based harassment and violence involving students on campuses (Cullitan, 2010; Anderson & Osborne, 2008).

In colleges’ and universities’ efforts to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence, many rely on internal and external sexual assault prevention programs to assist in the education of their students (Vladutiu et al., 2011). Internal programs are developed by paid employees or (paid and unpaid) students, and external programs are developed by outside organizations or consultants who charge fees to facilitate their program or to train university employees or students in its facilitation. Whether universities and colleges or organizations and consultants are motivated to address sexual and gender-based violence as a matter of ethics, compliance, and/or other factors, it is important to acknowledge that there is financial cost and gain to enact programs on campuses, which creates incentive across all to maximize efforts. While research has shown that effectiveness of program content and format varies widely (DeGue et al., 2014; Vladutiu et al., 2011; Anderson and Whiston, 2005), it is important that internal and external prevention education trainers work to develop best practices that accurately
and effectively reach and educate all members of their communities across all identities. The current study contributes to literature on best practices for effective programming aimed at the reduction of sexual assaults and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence on college campuses.

As the title suggests, the significance of this research lies in its making visible the complexity of identity issues related to the experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. On one level, this visibility speaks to filling a gap in the literature related to sexual assault prevention on college campuses. While there is research addressing what should be addressed and included in college prevention programs (DeGue et al., 2014; Vladutiu et al., 2011; Anderson & Whiston, 2005), there is a dearth in the literature regarding trainers’ experiences conceptualizing their program content around identity, particularly within the context of their organizational and professional socialization (including engagement with this literature.) The current study explored the phenomenon of sexual assault prevention program trainers for college campuses conceptualizing their program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity. In doing so, it brings visibility to the complexity of identity-based issues connected to sexual and gender-based violence and to trainers’ experiences conceptualizing relevant program content.

On another level, this research illuminates experiences of and responses to sexual and gender-based violence that are not just fueled and impacted by sexism, but continuously connected to other types of structural violence and oppressive beliefs such as racism and queerphobia (Aosved & Long, 2006; Crenshaw, 1991; Bryant-Davis et al., 2009; Tilleman, 2010; Perkis, 2013). It is vital that educators engage students across all identities about these realities, particularly when challenging notions of gender essentialism and rape supportive
attitudes or rape myths. This research makes visible the significance of sexual assault prevention program content that focuses on the intersections of sexism, racism, and queerphobia for all participants—not just for marginalized participants—and the challenges trainers’ face in this contents’ inclusion and/or exclusion.

Research Question

How do sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses understand their professional and organizational socialization as impacting their conceptualization of program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity?

Positionality Statement

My own biases and positionality as a researcher were important to identify and be conscious of during the research process (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). I came to this research as a scholar-practitioner. My educational background has been grounded in the study of gender at its intersection with other identities and my professional path has been focused on applying this knowledge within higher education settings to advocate for students and educate campuses on intersectional identity-based issues that have impact on personal, local, and global levels. Much of my educational and professional work has centered on issues of sexual and gender-based violence through an intersectional feminist and social justice lens.

Academically and experientially I have studied and seen first-hand the impact that identity-based invisibility, bias, and discrimination can have on students’ experience of sexual and gender-based violence. My work has included supporting student survivors of sexual and/or gender-based violence to help them feel empowered and regain a sense of control. This has invariably meant working with survivors to counter victim-blaming and/or minimizing messages they have received with messages that provide a sociocultural context for various forms of
identity-based oppression and structural violence. My academic and professional experiences have helped me develop extensive research- and practitioner-based knowledge of the impact of intersectional identity-based differences on the experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence.

My beliefs about identity-based difference and violence and the ways in which I have approached my work have been and continue to be informed by my own experiences of professional and organizational socialization. Within the context of my organizational socialization, I have most often been viewed within the organizations I have been employed as falling on the more progressive end of the spectrum regarding issues of social justice. I am aware that this location has at times—as part of my own organizational socialization—required me to adapt or adjust my objective to achieve common ground in order to move issues forward. For example, in my years of working to have intersectional identity-based content included in university trainings, many times only the minimum of content I believe is necessary is included. At times, this has felt like compromising or negotiating what I believed was optimally right with the hope that even if change was incremental, we would eventually reach full equity and social justice on an issue on our campus. In recognizing my biases, I worked diligently to approach this research with ‘epoche’ or putting aside preconceived notions of what was known or what would be found during the research process in order to truly be able ‘to see’ the lived experiences of those within the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

My self-identifications as a genderqueer person, a transracial adoptee with mixed Native American and European heritage, and an ally to sexual assault survivors connect to my passion for this research and contribute to potential bias. My identity as genderqueer means that my gender identity does not fit neatly into binary categories of gender. Despite this self-
identification, most people mistakenly identify me as a lesbian or man. This experience biases me to see firsthand the ways gender essentialism can render certain experiences invisible. Similarly, my racial identity and location as a multiracial person has created moments of invisibility and privilege (when I am read as White) and racial ambiguity and microaggressions (when I am read as a person of color.) These experiences have created different feelings of invisibility as well as internal uncertainty for me about my own self-identification and understanding of where I fit into the binary and monoracial categories of “white people” and “people of color.” However, my racial and ethnic locations, my upbringing in a White home and predominantly White town, and the combination of my skin color with society’s practice of colorism has afforded me the privilege of not having to “see” racism as readily without consciously working to do so. It was important during this study that I remained mindful of this and that I diligently worked to not essentialize or colonize the experience of people of color in my research (Fennel & Arnot, 2008). Given the invisibility I often experience around my identities, it was also important during this research to be mindful of the fact that regardless of how I identify, my participants might have read me otherwise and that this might have impacted how they responded to and/or the level of comfort they felt with me.

Lastly, while I have my own experiences with and relationship to sexual and gender-based violence, I do not identify as a survivor of sexual assault. This positionality afforded me privilege and distance as I navigated this study and the topic of sexual assault. My desire to support survivors was a central driving force in doing this research and it was important that I remained vigilantly mindful of potential bias or oversight related to my role as ally. It was also crucial within this study that I was continuously aware of the often invisibility of survivors and the reality that—whether or not it was disclosed to me—some of my participants may very well be
survivors. It was important that I was sensitive to this possibility in how I crafted questions for my participants and in how explicit I was in our interviews and in writing about experiences of sexual and gender-based violence within this research.

**Theoretical Framework**

Socialization Theory (Hart, 1991) formed the theoretical framework for this research. Socialization theory—encompassing both professional socialization and organizational socialization—broadly refers to the process through which an individual learns and responds to the knowledge, values, attitudes, and behaviors that they are expected to possess or acquire as part of a particular profession and connected to a particular organizational role (Hart, 1991; Heck, 1995; Armstrong, 2010). The role socialization process for sexual assault prevention program trainers occurs through their *professional socialization* (gaining of relevant knowledge and skill) and in their *organizational socialization* (acclimating and responding to the particular values and beliefs of their employers, including beliefs specifically about sexual assault prevention.) Through the lens of socialization theory, this study explored the experience of trainers’ conceptualization of program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity.

Socialization theory focuses on examining the impact of an organization on an individual’s social role development or role socialization within the organization and the interpersonal relationship that exists between the group and individual at all levels of power within the organization (Hart, 1991). Socialization theory focuses on understanding how an individual is professionally socialized within an organization through its group norms, values, beliefs, and knowledge (Smith &Stewart, 1999). Sexual assault prevention programming on college campuses is not developed within a vacuum, but within a professionalized field and a complex system of organizational structures. Colleges and universities often rely on internal
programs, external programs, or a combination thereof in their efforts to address sexual assault prevention on their campuses. Socialization theory provided a useful lens for examining the role socialization of sexual assault prevention trainers through their professionalization in the field generally and within their direct organization and/or partnering organizations specifically.

Within socialization theory, professional socialization and organizational socialization are consistently identified as the two main areas relevant to the role socialization process (Nelson, 1987; Hart, 1991; Heck, 1995; Armstrong, 2010). Professional socialization can be most easily understood as the formal knowledge, skills, and training one receives to become a member of a particular profession (Hart, 1991; Armstrong, 2010). Professional socialization can include a range of experiences, from familiarizing oneself with relevant literature to earning a formal degree or a certification or training within a particular field. Organizational socialization addresses the process by which an individual professional person learns and responds to the knowledge, values, and beliefs of their employer organization in order to be successful within their organizational role (Nelson, 1987; Hart, 1991). Both the individual and the organization are equal participants in the organizational socialization process which occurs regardless of whether it is a conscious or formal process (Nelson, 1987). Organizational socialization is a stronger force in the role socialization process than is professional socialization. As Hart (1991) notes, when conflict of knowledge, values, or beliefs arise between the two, “the salience, immediacy, and power of the work context hold sway over education and training” (p. 452). Depending on the organization’s philosophy, identity, and approach, organizational socialization can work to encourage individuality and creativity or it can function to narrow and homogenize ideas and create group mentality (Armstrong, 2010).
Socialization theorists have developed and applied a stage framework as a means of understanding more deeply individuals’ experiences of organizational socialization. Socialization theorists posit that the stages of organizational socialization one experiences can be linear or cyclical and while there is variation in terms of the number and labeling of stages among theorists, there are commonalities in experiences across all models (Hart, 1991). The most commonly presented stages are the two initial stages, anticipation and encounter (Nelson, 1987, 1990; Hart, 1991; Armstrong, 2010; Smith, & Stewart, 1999). Variation among the stages is most frequently seen within the later and final stages with models referring to these as adjustment or adaptation and stabilization (Hart, 1991; Armstrong, 2010); adaptation and withdrawal (Smith, & Stewart, 1999); or change and acquisition (Nelson, 1987, 1990).

The first stage, anticipation, refers to the period of time before an individual joins the organization. This period is based on the information the individual and organization gather or assume about one another, whether accurate or inaccurate (Hart, 1991). The next stage, encounter, begins the moment the job begins. This stage represents the period of time in which individual and organization balance expectations with reality and can be a positive and negative stressful time for the individual (Nelson, 1990). During the encounter stage, the individual is focused on learning the tasks of their job, clarifying their role, and building interpersonal relationships within their organization (Nelson, 1987). Throughout the encounter stage, the individual is learning the values, beliefs, and attitudes that form the organization’s identity; its internal politics and bureaucracy; and the "sociopolitical tasks" related to role socialization (Armstrong, 2010).

Although there are distinctions among socialization theorists, it is agreed that the later and/or final stages of role socialization are primarily geared towards the process of
understanding and making meaning of the knowledge gained during the anticipation and encounter stages. Across socialization theorists, a stage of adjustment, adaption, or change has been identified followed by a final stage of resolution, stabilization, or withdrawal. Nelson (1987) identifies this process as “change and acquisition,” noting, “individuals, when faced with demands, strive toward some resolution of these demands” (p. 315). The adjustment stage involves the individual adapting, accommodating, or adopting the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs needed to succeed (Smith & Stewart, 1991). The adjustment stage leads to a stage of stabilization during which an individual’s role becomes more or less congruent with the role expectations of their organization, personal and professional conflicts resolve, and the individual feels acclimated to their new role and organizational environment. Alternatively, an individual can resist the adjustment phase and the process of assimilation. Such resistance commonly leads an individual towards a withdrawal phase in which the individual does not feel they can or want to meet the expectations of their organization (Smith & Stewart, 1991).

The final stage therefore illuminates a successful or unsuccessful role socialization process. If role socialization is successful, Nelson (1990) notes that there will likely be quality job performance, job satisfaction, organizational involvement, and retention of the socialized employee. While an obvious outcome of an unsuccessful socialization process would be withdrawal, departure, or termination from the role, Nelson (1990) also notes that unsuccessful socialization can present as “over-conformity” in which the socialized individual so deeply adapts and conforms to the values and beliefs of the organization that a resistance or inability to change develops.

Socialization theory was this study’s theoretical lens for exploring trainers’ lived experiences conceptualizing their sexual assault prevention program content related to gender,
racial, and sexual identity. Socialization theory’s stage framework for organizational socialization also provided a guiding structure for this study’s understanding of trainers’ experience of their professional and organizational socialization as being aligned and/or as having discrepancies and, consequently, how trainers responded in terms of adjustment, adaption, change and resolution, stabilization, or withdrawal. Finally, as organizational socialization stages are not necessarily static and can be cyclical—for example, as professional knowledge or an organization’s understanding of sexual assault prevention change—socialization theory provided a lens through which to examine the evolution of trainers’ lived experience of conceptualizing their sexual assault prevention program content related to identity.

**Notes on Terminology**

Terminology specific to identity has been and can be defined in various and complex ways from user to user and across historical and sociocultural contexts. Language of identities can be empowering and liberating, but can also constrain and disenfranchise human experiences; the meaning we give to words and identities can work to privilege or oppress individuals and entire groups. Words and grammar used to define our identities are most often positioned as polarized binaries such as he/she, man/woman, and black/white. This binary language helps facilitate societal enforcement of essentialized notions of identity-based differences across groups and helps obscure group complexity and the realities of people living outside of a binary. Language and identity descriptors and words can also mean different things to different people. For example, the word ‘queer’ can be empowering for some, but triggering or even offensive to others. There are diverse and deeply held beliefs about who has the right to claim or speak certain words related to identity. It is important to note that the researcher’s use of language and words regarding identity within this study, while likely common, will most likely not be
universally agreed on by all. It is also important to recognize that as language regarding identity has continuously evolved over history, it is likely that even within as little as a year’s time that norms around some of the identity-based language within this study will have evolved.

**Organization of Study**

This study is organized into five chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Findings, and Conclusions. Chapter 1 has provided the statement and significance of the problem, the study’s research question and theoretical framework, and the researcher’s positionality and notes on terminology. Chapter 2 provides a review of college campus sexual assault prevention program literature and literature on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence prevention in general populations to identify how gender, racial, and sexual identities are addressed, both individually and intersectionally. Chapter 3 outlines and explains the study’s interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) research design, including participants and sampling strategy, recruitment, access, and IRB approval; data collection, storage, and analysis; and trustworthiness, quality, and verification of the data and researcher. The findings from the data and data analysis make up Chapter 4. The final chapter engages the findings with the theoretical framework and literature reviewed to draw conclusions from and suggest implications for sexual and gender-based violence prevention on college campuses. Limitations of the current study as well as suggestions for future research are also provided.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Through the lens of socialization theory, this study explores how sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses understand their professional and organizational socialization as impacting their conceptualization of program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity. Within this exploration, gender is examined in terms of gender identity and gender essentialism, and gender, racial, and sexual identity are also examined individually and intersectionally (i.e. what does the literature have to say about race and if or when does it speak explicitly to race at its intersection with gender and sexuality.) Gender essentialism, is defined within this study as the belief that there is an inherent, binary, two-gender cisgender male/female system and that in that two-gender system there are distinct differences between men and women—whether physical, emotional, or otherwise—that are naturally occurring instead of constructed and contextual. Within this study, intersectional attention to identity is given to demonstrate the compounding impact of gender, race (and ethnicity), and sexual identity on experiences of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. Focused attention is paid to understanding how sexual assault prevention program trainers’ professional and organizational socialization impact the phenomenon of their experience conceptualizing program content related to identity.

This literature review aims to examine two bodies of literature to identify how each addresses gender, racial, and sexual identities, both individually and intersectionally: college campus sexual assault prevention program literature and literature focused on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence prevention in general populations. Whereas professional socialization is likely to result in a familiarity with college campus sexual assault
prevention literature among sexual assault prevention trainers it is unclear the extent to which trainers are familiar with literature addressing issues or approaches specific to marginalized and intersectional identities-based differences. Both bodies of literature are central to the framing of this study.

The first section of this review focuses on college campus sexual assault prevention program literature and seeks to understand how gender, racial, and sexual identities are individually and intersectionally addressed in terms of program content, format, and evaluation. This first section begins with an overview of the sexual assault prevention program literature followed by an examination of how the literature handles gender identity and gender essentialism, racial and ethnic identity, and sexual identity. As gender—specifically related to cisgender men and women—is considered across all the literature, it makes for a dense and large body of work. For ease of read and organization, the section on gender identity and gender essentialism has been further broken down into subsections on program content, program format, and program evaluation. The second section of this review examines literature focused on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence prevention in general populations specific to gender, race, and sexuality. This exploration is divided into sections on marginalized gender and sexual identities and marginalized racial and ethnic identities.

Across all literature reviewed, gender identity is explored as a spectrum and seeks to identify if and how cisgender and transgender women and men, and other gender identities such as nonbinary or gender nonconforming identities are addressed. The reviewer critiques both bodies of literature, looking to identify themes regarding inclusion and/or exclusion of gender, race, and sexuality—individually and intersectionally—as relates to sexual and gender-based
violence and sexual assault prevention programs for college students. The final section of the review provides overarching themes drawn from the literature.

**College Campus Sexual Assault Prevention Program Literature**

**Overview of the literature.** There is a wide and growing body of literature specific to sexual assault prevention programs for college campuses (DeGue et al., 2014; Vladutiu et al., 2011; Anderson & Whiston, 2005). This attention is critical, as research has shown that sexual assault is higher for college students than for noncollege students of the same age (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Fisher et al., 2000). Growth in this area of research has increased along with increased attention to these issues by the Obama administration, beginning with the Office of Civil Rights’ “Dear Colleague letter of 2011”; followed by laws such as the 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and its addition of the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE Act), geared at prevention on college campuses; and through the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault. While it is as yet unclear how the Trump Administration will respond to these efforts around Title IX, many sexual and gender-based prevention policies, practices, and personnel were successfully institutionalized across colleges and universities during the Obama Administration.

As it relates to faculty, staff, and students, sexual assault is one aspect of a continuum of sexual and gender-based harassment and violence colleges and universities have an ethical and legal obligation to address. The legal obligation for colleges and universities dates back to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which is federally mandated for all educational programs receiving federal funding, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Although many people often first think of Title IX in relation to sports, it has had far reaching impact beyond this sphere, historically and even more so currently, profoundly informing and impacting
universities’ responsibilities and responses to campus sexual violence and misconduct (Cullitan, 2010; Anderson & Osborne, 2008). Universities are responsible for prevention, response, and reporting efforts related to a continuum of sexual and gender-based violence including but not limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and intimate partner and relationship violence occurring inside and outside of the classroom.

While legislation and relevant government agencies such as the Office of Civil Rights and the National Institute for Justice outline that universities must provide sexual violence prevention programs, they do not mandate content or format (Vladutiu et al., 2011). Government oversight and guidance are evolving and growing, however, with increased federal attention and action focused on policy, procedure, and prevention. One such example is the Campus SaVE Act’s identification of bystander intervention as a necessary component of prevention education on college campuses (Lombardie, 2013).

The aforementioned lack of specific governmental guidance or prescribed required content for sexual assault prevention programs has resulted in colleges and universities determining individual approaches to engage students in sexual assault prevention education. This poses an opportunity for colleges and universities to develop or personalize programs that optimally cater to the specific needs of their student population and campus climate. The personalized programming across schools, however, results in a lack of unified programming; inconsistent terminology, format, and content; inconsistency in what, when, and how overall efficacy is evaluated; and an inability to accurately measure across schools for short- or long-term effectiveness.

Within the body of literature, while most programs frame themselves as “sexual assault prevention programs” and some prevention topics are more commonly found across programs,
there is no universal approach to prevention efforts. This literature review found that among the topics research has identified as relevant in addressing sexual and gender-based violence, these are the most common areas of focus: rape myth acceptance (RMA) (Banyard, Moynihan, & Crossman, 2009; Black, Weisz, Coats, & Patterson, 2000; Bradley, Yeater, & O'Donohue, 2009; Anderson & Whiston, 2005); rape supportive attitudes (Choate, 2003; Frazier, Valtinson, & Candell, 1994; Borden, Karr, & Caldwell-Colbert, 1988; Heppner, Neville, Smith, Kivlighan, & Gershuny, 1999); rape empathy (Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Gidycz, Lynn, Rich, Marioni, Loh, Blackwell, Stafford, Fite, & Pashdag, 2001; Ahrens, Rich, & Ullman, 2011); and bystander behavior (Coker et al., 2011; Banyard et al., 2009; Banyard, 2014; Ahrens et al, 2011).

Among the programs that focus attention and research on RMA, rape supportive attitudes, rape empathy, and/or bystander behavior, various arguments are made for each one’s inclusion in sexual and gender-based violence prevention. Focus on RMA and rape supportive attitudes addresses many common issues related to sexual and gender-based violence. Rape myths are beliefs used to justify a person’s victimization and/or excuse a perpetrator’s responsibility (Burt, 1980). As noted by Kress et al. (2006), “because rape myth acceptance attitudes are believed to be related to eventual completed rapes, a decrease in rape myth acceptance attitudes is a desirable objective of a sexual assault prevention program” (p. 150). Rape myths can be entirely false such as victim blaming beliefs that the person victimized is responsible for their rape because of what they were wearing. Other examples of rape myth beliefs might be sometimes true, but do not speak to larger patterns of victimization. For example, one persistent rape myth is the belief that rape is predominantly perpetrated by a male stranger—most often black—in an alley (Fonow et al., 1992). While this is certainly a type of rape that can and has occurred, the majority of rapes are committed by a known perpetrator and
occur intra-racially (Krebs et al., 2007; Fisher et al., 2003; Fonow, 1992; Fisher et al., 2000). Rape supportive attitudes can include topics such as beliefs in traditional gender roles or stereotypes that most often connect to rape myths (Choate, 2003).

Another approach found in the literature is to engender among audiences empathy for sexual and gender-based violence survivors in order to reduce victim-blaming and decrease sexual and gender-based violence. Programs that include a focus on rape empathy might use vignettes or visualizations intended to help participants understand a rape survivor’s experience, and they may also look to see if addressing RMA and rape supportive attitudes leads to greater rape empathy (Foubert & Newberry, 2006).

Several programs include a focus on bystander intervention. This focus engages audiences by helping them understand the impact they can have in preventing, intervening, and/or responding to situations of sexual and gender-based violence (Banyard et al., 2009). While sexual and gender-based violence—particularly domestic violence and sexual assault—often occur behind closed doors, there are opportunities for bystanders to intervene whether before something escalates, during, or when it is learned about after the incident (Felson, & Paré, 2005). The role of an active bystander is central to discussions of sexual and gender-based violence on college campuses and developing and cultivating bystander intervention practices is a common education and prevention approach at universities, particularly as relates to students (Anderson & Whiston, 2005).

Program content is certainly not the only area within college sexual assault prevention program literature that demonstrates a spectrum of approaches. This is true with program format as well, particularly as relates to audience type and presentation of content. Anderson and Whiston (2005) found in their meta-analysis—and this literature review concurs—programs’
intended audiences can be single sex (male or female) or gender segregated, mixed gender, or some combination of both, and audience size can range from small and intimate to large, auditorium-style settings. Programmatic format can also differ by approach. Programs might use one or a combination of lecture or dyadic, theatrical, role playing, or discussion in their presentation of information and interaction with their audience (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). The differences among sexual assault prevention programs continue as they move into evaluation, ranging from: a posttest evaluation; pretest and posttest evaluation; or a pretest, posttest, and follow up evaluation.

Although this diversity of content, format, and evaluation provides a wealth of flexibility, and varying degrees of positive impact on students have been found across the research, no one model has been determined to be completely effective in prevention and elimination of sexual and gender-based violence on college campuses. Moving from a general overview of program content, format, and evaluation within college campus sexual assault prevention program literature, the following section reviews this literature specific to gender identity and gender essentialism, race and ethnicity, and sexual identities.

**Gender Identity and Gender Essentialism.** Across all of the sexual assault prevention program literature reviewed, gender identity is consistently discussed in terms of program content, format, and evaluation. Its discussion, however, is inconsistent and almost exclusively employs binary terms related to cisgender men and women. The strength of the literature on sexual assault prevention programs is its attention to women in its discussion of sexual and gender-based violence. Indeed, women are rightfully central to the literature and program content based on the statistical information available on female victimization on college campuses. Beyond consideration of women, there is discussion, though minimal, of men as survivors or
potential survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (Vladutiu et al., 2011). The majority of discussion of men is related to gender socialization, masculinity, aggression, and/or their role as active bystanders (Anderson & Whiston, 2005).

In terms of content that addresses gender identities beyond cisgender men and women, no article or program specifically addresses transgender and gender nonconforming identities as relate to experiences of and responses to sexual and gender-based violence. Lafrance, Loe, and Brown (2012) come closest to a discussion of these identities in their mention of transgender and queer (gender and/or sexual identity) student participants in their program. Lafrance et al. (2012) also note that they receive consistent criticism that the program does not draw enough men or focus on LGBTQ issues.

**Program Content.** Overall, the literature illustrates the need to address gender identity and challenge gender essentialism within sexual assault prevention programs as they relate to rape supportive attitudes connected to traditional gender roles and gender-based beliefs, myths, and prejudices (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). Anderson and Whiston’s (2005) meta-analysis on the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs found that challenging gender essentialism as it relates to traditional gender roles and rape myths was more effective than other possible approaches such as increasing rape empathy. Within the literature, a widespread theme identifies the importance of challenging gender essentialism related to rape supportive attitudes, particularly RMA and sociocultural beliefs related to traditional gender roles, beliefs about sexual behavior, and masculinity and aggression (Coker, Cook-Craig, Williams, Fisher, Clear, Garcia, & Hegge, 2011; Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Heppner, Neville, Smith, Kivlghan, & Gershuny, 1999).
While the literature demonstrates the presence of a range of differing reasons for focusing on challenging gender essentialism as relates to rape supportive attitudes and sociocultural beliefs related to gender, these areas of focus directly correlate with victim-blaming beliefs and excusing perpetrator behaviors. As Fonow et al. (1992) note, a focus on challenging gender essentialism as relates to traditional ideas about men and women’s gender roles is important because these beliefs about aggression and passivity, respectively, have been found to increase belief that women are responsible for their victimization (p. 110). Similarly, Choate (2003) notes that prevention programs focus on reduction of RMA because research indicates higher levels of RMA are “associated with increased rates of men's self-reported likelihood to rape in the future and is also strongly related to victim blame” (p. 167).

Bystander intervention is another major theme identified within the literature as promising program content in the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (Banyard, 2014; Coker et al., 2011; Banyard et al., 2009; Ahrens, Rich, & Ullman, 2011). Bystander intervention programs focus on educating students about the importance of bystanders and the means by which bystanders can help prevent, interrupt, and/or respond before or after an incident of sexual or gender-based violence. Whereas some bystander programs speak directly to sexual and gender-based violence, others speak to it indirectly and/or focus on addressing bystander behavior broadly. Banyard et al. (2009) directly confront sexual and gender-based violence with their program, Bringing in the Bystander. Banyard et al. (2009) note that their program challenges social norms related to sexual and gender-based violence and helps participants recognize the full continuum of sexual and gender-based violence they might encounter. Similarly, the interACT Sexual Assault Prevention Program uses scenarios to engage participants in thinking about how they can individually or as a group interrupt behavior that helps sustain
rape supportive attitudes and sexual and gender-based violence, such as moments where a sexist joke is being told or a male bystander’s masculinity is being challenged (Ahrens et al., 2011). In contrast, the program Green Dot does not directly challenge gender essentialism or sexual and gender-based violence within its programmatic content, “instead, this program focuses on the premise that bystanders can make positive behavioral interventions regardless of their adherence to historical myths related to these forms of violence” (Coker et al., 2011, p. 791).

Overall, bystander intervention programs present a unique opportunity for addressing gender identity and challenging gender essentialism, as these programs have the ability to treat audiences as potential bystanders across all genders, rather than essentializing female and male experiences, as is found among some of the other sexual assault prevention program models reviewed within the literature. For example, programs geared towards risk reduction for women were found to frame women solely as survivors and/or potential survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (Breitenbecher & Gidycz, 1998; Gidycz, Lynn, Rich, Marioni, Loh, Blackwell, Stafford, Fite, & Pashdag, 2001). Similarly, among the programs examined in this review, those focused exclusively on men were found to essentialize men as sexual aggressors and/or potential perpetrators (Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Foubert et al., 2010).

**Program Format.** Across the literature, program format development is informed by statistics on sexual and gender-based violence victimization and perpetration, and gender. Bradley et al. (2009) note that, “studies conducted with college men indicate that one out of 13 report having sexually assaulted a woman, and 35% report that they would engage in sexually coercive behavior if they knew they would not get caught for the offense” (p. 698). Foubert et al. (2009) note that, “rapists are almost always (98%) men” (p. 2238). Rothman and Silverman (2007) found that although, “men were roughly half as likely to be sexually assaulted during
their first year of college than were women, 8% of men reported experiencing at least one form of sexual assault (eg, coercion) [and] one-quarter of male sexual assault victims reported that they were gay or bisexual” (p. 288).

Findings such as these are often used within the literature to address a central and contested question regarding program format that connects to both gender identity and gender essentialism. This question is: should sexual assault prevention programs be designed to serve separate female and male audiences, mixed gender audiences, or a combination of both? Of the literature reviewed, the majority of programs used a mixed gender format (Ahrens et al., 2011; Banyard et al., 2009; Black et al., 2000; Borden et al., 1988; Bradley et al., 2009; Coker et al., 2011; Fonow et al., 1992; Frazier et al., 1994; Milhausen et al., 2006; Rothman & Silverman, 2007); some used or evaluated a combination of mixed and segregated formats (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Earle, 2009; Kress et al., 2006; Lafrance et al., 2012); some used men only, gender segregated formats (Choate, 2003; Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Foubert et al., 2010; Heppner et al., 1999); and some used some used women only, gender segregated formats (Gidycz et al., 2001; Breitenbecher & Gidycz, 1998).

Anderson and Whiston (2005) recognize the debate surrounding the gendering of an audience and intentionally focused on this in their meta-analysis on effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs. The authors found that there was some evidence that females might have better outcomes in all-female groups, but men did not in all-male groups and may actually have better outcomes in mixed groups. Anderson and Whiston, however, strongly note that all of this is based on limited data and their research does not give a definitive answer to this question of gendered programs.
Overall, the literature on sexual assault prevention programs reflects very mixed results related to effectiveness of gender segregated groups, mixed gender groups, or a combination of both formats. In reviewing this issue, the specific words of various researchers provide insight into the debate as it connects to gender identity and gender essentialism. In endorsement for mixed gender groups, Black et al. (2000) state that, “coeducational prevention programs focusing on issues related to male and female communication styles and dating expectations have also reported some success in changing rape-supportive attitudes” (p. 592). Frazier et al. (1994) note that, "programs are needed that provide information relevant to both women and men and that allow men and women to learn from one another." (154). In support for gender segregated programming, Earle (2009) references gender-based developmental differences, noting that “male gender prescribes toughness and emotional inexpressiveness” (p. 428). Bradley et al. (2009)—despite the fact that they are evaluating their own mixed gender program—spend significant time arguing for gender segregated programs, even suggesting that in mixed gendered programs, “men who are at high risk for being sexually aggressive will learn strategies used by women to decrease their victimization risk” (p. 712).

Although the literature is specific about the need to challenge gender essentialism as relates to program content, it does not apply this critical analysis to its program formats consisting of gender segregated, mixed gender, or some combination of both types of program. Instead, programs apply evidence of troubling behaviors and beliefs among some men and some women, and use these gender-based trends to justify essentialized conceptualizations of gender in their programs. Some mixed gender programs argue that men and women are so different from one another they could learn entirely different, valuable things from one another. Other programs cite essentialized gender differences as justification for gender-segregated programs. In Bradley
et al.’s (2009) argument for gender segregated programs, they note that mixed gender programs, “target different behaviors for men and women (e.g., victim empathy for men and risk perception for women)” and “only half of the information presented will be directly relevant to the participants” (p. 712). Regardless of how a program genders its audience, at no time does any of the literature challenge gender essentialism as an argument for or justification of a particular audience format; conversely, essentialized ideas about gender are often evoked in that justification.

**Program Evaluation.** Every program evaluates itself in terms of male and female outcomes, without consideration of participants who may identity as transgender, as having a nonbinary gender, or as having no gender at all. In evaluations, gender is often the stand-alone marker, without intersectional examination of the impact of race, sexuality, or other identities. There is no consistency in terms of what outcome measures are used from program to program, and evaluation itself can be gender essentializing, for example when men in a program are given different evaluation tools than women in the same program (Bradley et al., 2009).

The one exception to this gender essentialization within evaluation was found with Ahrens et al. (2011). Instead of exclusively focusing on gender, the authors identify two groups through their pretest: Class 1, made up of participants who “tended to have higher initial beliefs about the helpfulness of bystander interventions” and Class 2, made up of participants who “tended to have lower initial beliefs about the helpfulness of bystander interventions” (p. 769). While Class 1 had more females and Class 2 had more males, this is noted by the authors without a subsequent utilization of broad generalizations about men and women, and without essentializing gendered behavior among their participants. Through this method of evaluation the authors target one of the very traits their programming seeks to address: beliefs in the helpfulness
of bystander intervention. This practice illustrates there are different approaches to implementing programming that targets key factors without essentializing by gender. Whereas gender may serve some essential functions as a research category, it may not be the most functional category, and reliance on it alone may mask underlying factors and/or serve to essentialize findings by gender without a deeper exploration of other potential explanations.

In terms of recommendations for future research, one of two things tends to happen in the literature: when results from a mixed gender program are mixed or negative, gender segregated learning is suggested or promoted with little to no research-founded context and with no discussion about risks of gender essentialism (Bradley et al., 2009; Earle, 2009; Milhausen et al., 2006). Alternatively, and more frequently, it is recommended that regardless of the gendering of the audience, more research needs to be conducted on the benefits of gender segregated groups, mixed gender groups, or a combination of both formats (Anderson & Whiston, 2005).

**Racial and ethnic identities.** Whereas there is a wealth of rich and complex content related to gender identity and gender essentialism within the college sexual assault prevention program literature, there is a dearth of content specific to racial and ethnic identity. The data within college sexual assault prevention program literature overwhelmingly suggests that race is only necessary to consider in terms of demographics; that incorporating a discussion of race into programmatic content is valuable only when the program audience comprises predominantly people of color; and that while there is need for future study about race, it is not central to the aim of sexual assault prevention programs for college campuses. Although implied across the literature is an assertion that by not speaking to race and ethnicity, programs for college campuses are race neutral or colorblind, in reality they are grounded in a white racial narrative and white privilege.
Whereas every single article reviewed talked about gender, few provide any content on racial identity (Black et al., 2000; Fonow et al., 1992; Heppner et al., 1999; Milhausen et al., 2006) and some address it only in their RMA scale (Black et al., 2000; Milhausen et al., 2006). For example, Black et al. note that in the RMA scale their program uses to evaluate program impact on participants from pretest to posttest, they ask questions as to how varying race or ethnicity of a victim impacts to what degree others believe them. The twenty-plus year study by Fonow et al. (1992) is among the limited research that does attempt a comprehensive inclusion of the impact of race. Fonow et al. identify their sexual assault prevention program as feminist and focus much of their education on the intersections of race and gender as relate to the experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. The program provides education on and challenges the specific rape myth that “rape primarily occurs at night, outdoors, by a Black [male] stranger, who uses a lethal weapon” (p. 112). The authors provide education to counter this persistent stereotype with facts about the higher statistical realities of known and intraracial perpetration, while also acknowledging and validating that some survivors—though not the majority of survivors—have survived these types of rape scenarios. In their literature review, Fonow and colleagues include a section on racism and rape, and in their discussion of their program they include intersectional discussion of gender and race. They are limited in their research, however, as their scope only examines white and black racial identities.

Another study that directly addresses the intersections of race and gender is Heppner et al. (1999). Although race is included in their content, they note that they include “fairly subtle infusions” of “culturally relevant” material (Heppner et al., 1999, p. 21). Heppner and colleagues recruit Black and White participants for their study and are particularly interested in understanding if Black men will be more positively impacted by a program with “culturally
relevant” content than one with a “colorblind” approach (1999, p. 17). Concerning is the authors’ use of “colorblind” to discuss programs that don’t explicitly talk about race, and the authors’ failure to recognize that a white racial narrative is implicitly presented whenever a program is absent discussions of the impact and reality of racism and white privilege. The findings of this literature review as relate to racial identity are consistent with those of Anderson and Whiston (2005), who only mention Heppner et al. (1999) as addressing racial identity and note in their conclusion the need for more research specific to culturally relevant programming.

While content related to racial identity is virtually absent from the sexual assault prevention program literature, nearly all programs discussed in the literature tracked race for demographic purposes. This tracking is conveyed through identification of their participants as predominantly white or through provision of a breakdown of the racial identities present among the study participants. Although there is a sense that researchers recognize the importance of tracking racial identity as a demographic, they do not use this data in their evaluations, nor do they identify race as a relevant factor in their program review. If race is noted, the tendency within the literature is for authors to state that because their audiences were predominantly white there was nothing significant to say about race. This deduction fails to acknowledge that white is a racial identity with implications for their findings and conclusions.

Moving to study evaluation within the college sexual assault prevention program literature, Heppner et al. (1999) and Fonow et al. (1992) are the only studies that explicitly address race in their programmatic content and discuss it in their evaluation. Heppner et al. seek to evaluate if men of color in the control group, particularly Black men, show greater impact from programming with racially culturally relevant programming as compared to “colorblind” programming. The authors found that the culturally relevant programming produced positive
results that suggest inclusion of this content is important to participants of color. Although Fonow et al. (1992) did not evaluate participants by race, they measured their program’s impact on participants’ attitudes related to racialized sexual violence. Fonow et al. (1992) found that, “even though racism was explicitly addressed in the rape-education script and students were given corrective information about the rates of cross-race rape, our intervention was not significant in increasing agreement that white women are more likely to be raped by white men than by Black men” (p. 117). These findings indicate that consciously or unconsciously, gender and race-based rape myths in our culture are deeply held and intertwined. Fonow et al.’s research demonstrates the need for work focused on how to effectively address deep rooted, conscious and unconscious, race-specific ideas about sexual and gender-based violence, if educators wish to truly eradicate rape myth acceptance in all of its forms and among all of its participants.

Where racial identity does become more prominent within the college sexual assault prevention program literature is in the limitations and future recommendation sections (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Bradley et al., 2009; Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Foubert et al., 2010; Frazier et al., 1994; Heppner et al., 1999; Kress et al., 2006; Milhausen et al., 2006). Most commonly race is identified as a factor in need of further exploration as relates to sexual and gender-based violence. One sentiment that appears within the literature is that sample sizes are too small to consider racial differences and that future studies should employ larger samples (Foubert et al., 2010; Kress et al., 2006). Bradley et al. (2009) justify their exclusion of race based on time constraints and note that it did not fit into the scope of their study, but they indicate a need for additional research on race as related to sexual assault prevention. Heppner et al. (1999) is the only study that gathered empirical data on race to back their recommendations for future research dedicated to racial and ethnic identity. The authors also note that while some may worry that this
content “may alienate the majority of White participants that typically attend college rape education workshops. Our findings indicate that the White men who participated in the culturally relevant condition were not adversely affected by the information” (p. 24).

This last finding is significant as overall the literature suggests that authors do not see racial and ethnic consideration as relevant because they do not have large populations of students of color or do not think addressing race is a central part of sexual assault prevention on college campuses. These common conclusions render invisible the experience and needs of students of color within a study, but they also suggest there is no reason for white students to think about their racial identity or the ways their own or other racial identities impact the experience of sexual and gender-based violence. As Heppner et al. (1999) find in their study, the addition of racial and ethnic identity-specific content had no negative impact on white participants’ results. These findings, in conjunction with Fonow et al.’s (1992) findings of deep rooted and persistent racialized rape myths, suggest that not only is this material important for the visibility of students of color, but that future testing is needed to understand the potential positive impact race-specific content could have on students of color as well as white students.

**Sexual Identities**¹. The college sexual assault prevention program literature addresses sexuality in various ways as relate to heterosexuality, particularly as rape myths are often dependent on gender and heteronormative cultural and relationship norms. Sexual assault prevention programs themselves are also gender normative and heteronormative in nature, often describing or using as examples stereotypical dating/hook-up behaviors between men and

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¹ It is important to note that within literature related to marginalized sexual identities, it is often framed as lesbian and gay; LGB (lesbian, gay, and bisexual); LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender); or LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and queer). However, transgender is about gender identity, not sexual identity, and ‘queer’ can be used to speak to either or both gender and sexual identity. Due to ‘transgender’ and ‘queer’ being grouped with sexuality in the literature, some mention of gender identities may get included in this section of the review, but it is important to note the distinction between gender and sexual identities.
women, and failing to describe or include scenarios outside of these gender and heteronormative stereotypes (Lafrance et al., 2012). Such stereotypical examples of rape myth include the belief that if a man buys a woman dinner, then she owes him sexual favors, or the belief that if a woman invites a man back to her house, then sex is expected. Whereas heterosexuality—regardless of whether its identified as such—is found throughout the sexual assault prevention program literature, there seems to be no general population or “mainstream” program that specifically includes content related to or including marginalized sexual identities.

Unlike the focus on capturing demographic data related to (cis)gender and racial identities, attention to sexual identity is rarely included in demographic data. Breitenbech (1998) notes that most of the study’s participants were white, single, and heterosexual (p. 475). Rothman and Silverman (2007) represent the only research that identifies nonheterosexual participants and specifically examines the experience of LGB students with the goal of understanding if a “mainstream program” (i.e. gender and heteronormative program with no LGBT-specific content) has impact on LGB students. Rothman and Silverman (2007) found that sexual assault prevention programs are not only valuable for heterosexual women, but that rates of sexual victimization for LGB (lesbian, gay, and bisexual) people also indicates that prevention efforts would be of value for LGB students. However, Rothman and Silverman (2007) note that their LGB intervention and control groups were too small to establish impact of a mainstream program on nonheterosexual participants.

Beyond Rothman and Silverman (2007), the literature on sexual assault prevention programs provides little else in terms of content, format, or evaluation as it relates to marginalized sexual identities. Lafrance et al. (2012) do not clearly outline to what extent, if any, they include content specific to marginalized sexualities but they note receiving criticism from
program participants for their lack of LGBT content, and also note that they consistently have participants who identity across a spectrum of sexual identities, including straight and LGBT or Q. The authors also acknowledge the heteronormative environment surrounding students on college campuses, and they note a need for future sexual assault prevention programming to address students’ sexual identities and desire. Bradley et al. (2009) acknowledge the existence of same-sex sexual violence, but it is unclear if their programmatic content addresses it in any way. Ahrens et al. (2011) test to see if their participants are likely to “speak up against homophobic jokes” at pretest, posttest, and the follow up, but it is also unclear if they include any program content related to marginalized sexual identities or queerphobia.

Finally, Foubert and Newberry (2006) do not focus programmatic content on LGBT victimization, but they attempt to elicit male empathy for rape survivors by showing participants a video simulating a sexual assault of a man by another man. Foubert and Newberry (2006) stress the heterosexuality of the perpetrator and presumed heterosexuality of the victim and note “they are describing the more common occurrence of heterosexual perpetrators who use rape and battery to exert power and control over another male” (p.134). Given the statistical reality that there are sexual assault survivors of all genders, the potential benefits and harms of such visualizations warrant their own future study. While the authors mention “rape and battery as power and control,” they miss a specific opportunity to challenge gender essentialism as it connects to misogyny and queerphobia. When an individual expresses their gender in ways that fall outside cultural gender norms (i.e., a man perceived as presenting in feminine ways or a woman in masculine ways) a common exertion of power and control by others is to attempt to “police” the person’s gender, which can include perpetrating different types of sexual and gender-based violence. Instead, Foubert and Newberry’s (2006) essentialize their audience,
assuming a homogenized group of heterosexual men, absent survivors who may be triggered by such visualizations.

These implications of Foubert and Newberry’s (2006) work exemplify larger issues within the literature as relates to marginalized sexual identities and consideration of gender identity and expression. Racial identity is captured within the demographic data and most often, though certainly not always, is a visible social identity of participants within a program. Conversely, LGBTQ visibility is not present in the data and LGBTQ identity is often an invisible social identity and/or an assumed identity based on gender expression. Even though the consideration of marginalized sexual identities differs from racial identity in terms of the tracking of participant demographics, there is a comparable tone in the conscious or unconscious assumption—similar to racial identity for students of color—that information related to marginalized sexual identities is relevant only for LGBTQ audiences.

**Marginalized Identities and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Literature**

While literature on college campus sexual assault prevention programs fails to adequately address marginalized and intersectional identity-based issues, a wealth of research outside of this specific body of literature exists, particularly as relates to the intersections of gender and racial and ethnic identities. There is growing attention to examining identity specific to college student populations (Cantor et al., 2015; Aosved & Long, 2006; James & Lee, 2015; Gillum, 2014; Fisher et al., 2003), but the majority of this research focuses on non-college students and often on specific populations such as women of color or LGBT people. This section of literature reviewed aims to address the aforementioned absence of discussion, within college campus sexual assault prevention program literature, of the impact of marginalized and intersectional gender, racial, and sexual identity-based differences on experiences of and response to sexual
and gender-based violence. The review will focus first on marginalized gender and sexual identities, particularly LGBTQ identities, and second will focus on marginalized racial and ethnic identities.

**Marginalized Gender and Sexual Identities.** Despite public perceptions of colleges and universities as liberal and tolerant, LGBTQ discrimination on campuses is an entrenched reality (Nagoshi, Adams, Terrell, Hill, Brzuzy, & Nagoshi, 2008). Discrimination can be experienced by students who self-identify with one or more LGBTQ identities, but it can also be experienced by non-LGBTQ students whose gender expression transgresses traditional gender norms and/or who are perceived to have one or more LGBTQ identities. Literature suggests that in response to this student victimization, the scope of Title IX protection on college campuses is increasingly applied to issues of gender identity and expression, and issues of sexual identity and expression among self-identified and/or perceived LGBTQ students (Eisemann, 2001; Fisher, Komosa-Hawkins, Saldaña, Thomas, Hsiao, Rauld, & Miller, 2008; Fineran, 2002).

Research is limited, but growing, on sexual and gender-based violence victimization of LGBTQ people and within same sex relationships (Todahl, Linville, Bustin, Wheeler, & Gau, 2009). Although there is growing research on “LGBT” experience, the T (transgender identity) is rarely included resulting in a failure to “[distinguish] between issues of gender identity, gender roles, and sexual orientation” (Nagoshi et al., 2008, p.522). Cantor et al.’s (2015) college campus survey includes questions about gender identity, including nonbinary gender, and offers valuable insight into the campus experience of those students who experience the highest levels of sexual assault and misconduct: female and transgender, genderqueer, non-conforming, and questioning students (p. iv). Further, Martin et al. (2011) found higher rates of sexual assault before and
during college among bisexual and lesbian women as compared to their heterosexual counterparts.

Literature on LGBTQ identities specific to K-12 populations addresses student experience of harassment and violence, often connected to case law. A national study found that in U.S. schools, 63% of students reported experiencing same-sex sexual harassment and of that population, 86% of said that being labeled gay or lesbian within the harassment was the most ‘distressing’ part (Fineran, 2002). In K-12 perceived and/or self-identified LGBTQ victimization, transgressive gender expression and/or LGBTQ identity can be met with horrific and fatal violence, as well as administrator response rooted in misogyny and queerphobia. In California, a fifteen-year-old male, openly gay student who dressed in traditionally feminine ways, including makeup, was shot and killed by a fellow classmate during class (Fisher et al., 2008). In O.H. v. Oakland Unified School District, (2000), a male student who was accused of being gay was raped multiple times by a classmate and when he reported it to his principal he was told to "be a man" and "just deal with it" (Walker, 2010).

Specific to college and general populations, there is research that aims to examine the complexity of the relationship between the continuum of sexual and gender based violence and gender and/or sexual minorities (Masawa, 2009; Meyer, 2008; Nagoshi et al., 2008; Aosved & Long, 2006; Martin et al., 2011). Masawa (2009) examines bullying and the intersections of racism and homophobia in higher education. Masawa (2009) conveys the presence of bullying by sharing the narratives of two gay men of color. Their experiences illustrate the impact of intersectionality and the complications and challenges resultant of trying to view gendered and racialized harassment and violence as exclusively about race or gender, when both racism and homophobia are operating and informing one another.
Similarly, Meyer’s (2008) research demonstrates the ways the intersections of multiple identities impact the experiences of survivors of identity-based violence and their ability to define an experience of violence as an anti-queer act of violence or an LGBT hate crime. By asking participants to talk through how they perceive the roles of race, gender, and sexuality in their experiences of violence, Meyer (2008) makes clear that for white males, anti-queer violence was easiest to define; for white women, sexism made it slightly more challenging to define; and, for people of color, a mixture of sexism, queerphobia, and/or racism made it even more difficult to define the type of identity-based violence and/or hate crime experienced.

Examination of the violence experienced by self-identified and/or perceived LGBTQ college students is important so policy, procedure, prevention, and response can be implemented to prevent this violence. Equally important for violence prevention, however, is understanding what climate and beliefs of a campus that perpetuates and tolerates LGBTQ-driven sexual and gender-based violence. Nagoshi et al. (2008) studied college students to explore connections between homophobia and transphobia and conservative values, belief in traditional gender roles (“benevolent sexism”), hostile sexism, RMA, and aggression proneness. Nagoshi et al. (2008) found that higher levels of conservative values and hostile sexism was correlated across sex with both homophobia and transphobia; among female participants, higher levels of belief in traditional gender roles and RMA correlated with higher levels of transphobia; and, among male participants greater aggression proneness was associated with higher levels of transphobia. Similarly, Aosved & Long (2006) examined the relationship between RMA and beliefs of sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, classism, and religious intolerance. They found that higher rates of any one particular oppressive belief—such as sexism or racism—was positively correlated with higher RMA.
Research also indicates LGBTQ people face additional barriers and discrimination when seeking resources in response to an experience of sexual or gender-based violence. LGBTQ survivors seeking support have experienced being ‘outed’ as well as having their gender or sexuality become the focus of interrogation or justification for their victimization (Todahl et al., 2009). “Given these findings, LGBTQ persons live in an inherently dangerous environment and reasonably assume that they may be targeted, mistreated, and blamed—even by service providers, law enforcement, and health care professionals” (Todahl et al., 2009, p. 955).

**Marginalized racial and ethnic identities.** While there is a dearth of literature examining the impact of race and racism on sexual and gender-based violence on college campuses, there is a substantial body of literature on general populations and the impact of race and ethnicity, racial bias, and racism. This is particularly true as it relates to the experiences of women of color with interpersonal or domestic violence and resource seeking that this section will review. Research also provides insight into ways in which race plays a role in rape myth acceptance and bystander intervention.

Similar to research on LGBTQ identity that risks and/or conflates and essentializes all gender and sexual identities and experiences together, so too is there risk of doing this across and/or within marginalized racial identities. As Crenshaw (1991) notes, “the problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences” (p. 1242). While the literature presented here on marginalized racial identities is intended to demonstrate the impact of race and racism on experiences of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, it is not meant to suggest that racial identity produces homogenous individual and/or group experiences.
Within the literature there is evidence that for women of color, race and racism directly impact the experience of help and resource seeking, and directly impact the response of agencies such as hospitals, police, shelters, and court rooms. As Bryant-Davis et al. (2009) note, one barrier to reporting by women of color when violence is experienced intraracially or by another person of color is the potential, “belief that they need to choose silence as a way of protecting ethnic minority boys and men from racially biased criminal justice systems” (p. 346). Conversely, research has found that when police are called to a home by a Black woman experiencing domestic violence, police were found to be significantly less likely to arrest the assailant than when responding to a home of a White woman (Robinson and Chandek, 2000). Gillum (2008) found that women of color who had previous negative experiences when involving the police, later took to handling the situation themselves with reciprocal physical violence. Unlike their perpetrators who often did not get arrested, however, some women noted that their own actions often resulted in their arrest (Gillum, 2008). In all of these scenarios, women of color are faced with real risks of racism within the criminal justice system and connected to rape supportive attitudes that work to excuse and ignore their victimization.

Concerns by women of color in help seeking move beyond the criminal justice system. Black and Latina women have been found to worry about whether or not they will be believed or find empathic support, in part resultant of our cultural hypersexualization of Black and Latina women and the ways in which this racist stereotype feeds into rape myths about women of color and sexual availability (Bryant-Davis, 2009). Gillum (2008) sought to understand African American women’s experiences with community response and resources to domestic violence and found their subjects experience dissatisfaction due to a lack of cultural competence possessed by employees of relevant agencies. Maier (2013) conducted a study to specifically
look at sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE). SANEs serve both as collectors of physical evidence and as providers of emotional and resource support. The author’s aim was to understand how SANEs’ own perception of victims’ race and ethnicity impacts their response protocol. What was striking within the findings was that nearly half of the SANEs participants did feel that race had an impact on victim’s decision to report and experiences with resources, but there was no consensus as to what to do about this, with some believing it would be racist to treat victims differently and others feeling it would provide cultural relevancy (Maier, 2013).

Central in all of this research are a combination of cultural and/or racist-based barriers to reporting, resource seeking, and response from service providers. These intersections of race and ethnicity also have impact on bystander intervention specifically. Bystander intervention is based on the theory of bystander effect developed by Latane´ and Darley (1968) in response to the horrific rape and murder of Kitty Genovese in which 38 witnesses were said not to intervene. The theory of bystander effect is that the more witnesses present during an emergency situation (i.e. robbery or an act of sexual or gender-based violence), the more chance there is for a “diffusion of responsibility” or the lessening of responsibility any one individual feels to intervene (Latane´ and Darley, 1968).

As the study of bystander effect and bystander intervention has developed, what has been found is that group cohesion, social norms, in-group and out-group members, and friends versus strangers all impact group response (Levine & Crowther, 2008; Felson, 2000; Saucier, Miller, & Doucet, 2005; Rutkowski, Gruder, & Romer, 1983; Drury & Winter, 2003). As Levine & Crowther (2008) suggest, the bystander effect isn’t just about the number of witnesses’ present, but about the relationship of the witnesses to one another. They found that bystander effect increases among strangers, but, “where particular forms of psychological relations exist between
bystanders, the bystander effect may be less pronounced” (Levine & Crowther, 2008, p.1429). Race serves as one of these forms of ‘psychological relations’ that impact one’s likelihood to engage in bystander intervention. In Saucier, Miller, and Doucet’s (2005) meta-analysis of differences in helping Whites and Blacks, they found that the more risk and difficulty that was involved in an emergency situation, the less likely a White person was to intervene when the victim was Black versus White.

While there is a dearth of literature regarding attention to the impact of race and racism on sexual and gender-based violence within college populations, there are two recent articles worth noting that hopefully signal more focused attention on race and racism on college populations is forthcoming. McQuiller Williams, Porter, & Smith (2015) and James & Lee (2015) both explore attitudes, perpetration, and resource and justice seeking behaviors across racial identity among college students. McQuiller Williams, Porter, & Smith (2015) look at date rape attitudes and behavior and the impact of race, gender, and prior sexual victimization. While James & Lee (2015) look at White and non-White college students’ perceptions of the police and how these perceptions influence reporting sexual assault to the police. Both studies help signal the reality that experiences of and response to sexual and gender-based violence varies across racial identities among college student populations.

**Summation: Synthesizing the Literature**

Through this review of college campus sexual assault prevention program literature and literature focused on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence, it is evident there is a disconnect between how marginalized gender, racial, and sexual identities are addressed in both. There is evidence that college campus sexual assault prevention programs do not identify discussion of marginalized identities as necessary within “mainstream” or “general”
programs, but relevant only within “culturally specific” programming (Gillum, 2009). While numerous well-respected and well-known scholars are writing and examining the impact of marginalized identities on the experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (Crenshaw, 1991; Gillum, 2008, 2009; Coley & Beckett, 1988; Heppner, Neville, Smith, Kivlighan, & Gershuny, 1999), the work of these researchers is not reflected and does not appear within research focused specifically on sexual violence prevention and education on college campus (Anderson & Whiston, 2005; Ahrens, Rich, & Ullman, 2011; Choate, 2003; Foubert, & Newberry, 2006).
Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Question

How do sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses understand their professional and organizational socialization as impacting their conceptualization of program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity?

Methodological Approach and Justification

A substantial body of literature exists on sexual assault prevention programs and their content (Vladutiu et al., 2011; Anderson and Whiston, 2005), but there is a dearth in the literature regarding how sexual assault prevention program trainer's make sense of what to include in their programs and how their professional and organizational socialization—including engagement with this literature—impacts their formation of program content related to identity. Therefore, this study used a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses as they conceptualize their program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity and to understand how their role socialization process impacts this phenomenon. Through qualitative interviews, phenomenological research aims to understand and describe the shared experiences and essential meaning of a particular phenomenon through individuals who have directly experienced or lived through it (Dukes, 1984; Kenny, 2012).

Specifically, this study utilizes an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA was developed within the field of psychology—though is also applied across other disciplines—and builds on the philosophical theories of ‘being’ developed by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sarte (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). Central to IPA is the exploration of a phenomenon, but it also requires the participant and researcher to make
sense of the phenomenon through an interpretive process of analysis (Smith et al., 2009). In this, IPA is both hermeneutic and idiographic (Smith et al., 2009). It’s hermeneutic in that it allows for both the participant and researcher to interpret or make sense of the participants’ experience with the phenomenon (Smith and Osborn, 2008). IPA is also idiographic as it requires the researcher to engage in an in-depth exploration and analysis of particular or individual cases. Because of this, IPA studies most often focus on a small number of participants and one on one in depth interviews.

Connected to the principles of IPA research processes, this study also utilizes a constructivism-interpretivism paradigm (Ponterotto, 2005). This paradigm helps make explicit many of the philosophical assumptions about this research and researcher and provides an understanding regarding the particular lens through which this research is observed. As a constructivist-interpretivist, it is believed that meaning-making of the world we live in and the phenomenon we experience are not innate or singular, but instead are individual and informed by our understanding and experience within a particular socio-historical and cultural moment (Ponterotto, 2005). As Ponterotto (2005) notes, a constructivism-interpretivism paradigm is particularly appropriate for qualitative study and involves “deep reflection” that, “can be stimulated by the interactive researcher-participant dialogue” (p. 129).

**Participants and Sampling Strategy**

The most important criterion for sampling in a phenomenological study is that all participants have experienced the phenomenon being explored (Moustaka, 1994). As Smith et al. (2009) note for IPA studies, “researchers tend to focus upon people’s *experiences* and/or *understandings* of particular phenomena” (p. 46). In order to deeply engage in the idiographic nature of IPA, it is recommended that participants are a relatively homogenous sample and the
numbers of participants can be as few as one to some that are greater than 15; numbers are often dependent on depth of planned data gathering and analysis of the researcher (Smith et al., 2009; Brocki & Wearden, 2006). The number of participants in this study was seven. For this study, group homogeneity first and foremost meant that all participants shared the experience of being a sexual assault prevention trainer as outlined by this study.

A ‘trainer’ within this study was defined as any professional who is in the role of facilitating one or more sexual assault prevention program for college students. As the work of sexual assault prevention can happen across many types of organizations, a trainer for this study was able to and did have employment directly through a college or university, an outside agency, and/or as an independent consultant, and the role of “trainer” across participants was either their primary job or a main component across a broader portfolio of work. Semantically, it is important to note that an individual engaged in this work—and defined within this study as a trainer—might hold a title other than that of ‘trainer.’ This proved to be true across the majority of the participants in this study, though all met the criteria of “trainer.” What mattered for this study was not the title or employer, but that all participants facilitate sexual assault prevention programs for college students.

While IPA outlines homogeneity among participants, this study utilized maximum variation sampling along with criterion and snowball sampling. The combination of maximum variation sampling and criterion sampling allowed for the creation of a group of participants that was homogenous regarding the phenomenon experienced while also allowing for heterogeneity among the participants in other ways, particularly as it related to the identities of the participants. Use of maximum variation sampling allowed for diversity of participants who had experienced the phenomenon (Patton, 1990). As Patton (1990) states, “any common patterns that emerge
from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and
central, shared aspects or impacts of a program” (p. 172). Given the nature of this study, efforts
in maximum variation sampling were particularly focused on social identities and produced a
trainer sample that offered diversity across racial, gender, and sexual identities, including non-
binary and non-monoracial identities. Attention during sampling was also given to the inclusion
of both internal (university) and external (nonprofits organizations or consultants) trainers who
are employed within universities and/or by external organizations. While the majority of
participants are solely employed by a college or university, there was some variation across
participants through nonprofit work and consulting. For participants who were employed by a
specific college of university, while there is diversity in terms of types of institution, size, and
region, all are Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). As Brown and Dancy (2010) note, a
PWI “is the term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for
50% or greater of the student enrollment” (p. 523). The nonprofit agency represented in this
study serves regional colleges and universities broadly, providing trainings to various
homogenous and heterogeneous campus populations.

In the selection of participants, purposeful criterion sampling was used based on
particular criteria (Patton, 1990) and served to homogenize the participant group around the
phenomenon. The following study criterion was met by each study participant: 1) met the study’s
definition of a ‘trainer’; 2) had served in the capacity of trainer for at least one year (most
participants had done so for a decade or more); 3) facilitated a minimum of six sexual assault
prevention programs (all had facilitated well beyond six programs); 4) were employed as a
university employee serving as an internal trainer; a nonprofit or other external agency employee
serving colleges; and/or a self-employed consultant serving colleges; and, 5) had either created
program content or had some level of flexibility in how they delivered a specific programs script designed and utilized by a specific organization. A questionnaire was at the beginning of the research Interview Protocol (Appendix A) that outlined these questions in full and were administered with potential participants as part of the selection process.

**Recruitment and access**

The researcher engaged in snowball sampling by asking known contacts for recommendations of individuals and organizations who employed people who might be interested and meet the study criteria (Patton, 1990). All study participants were identified through these professional channels and snowball sampling. Because participants are colleagues in the work to end sexual and gender-based violence, no incentives were needed beyond the potential benefits this research could lend to their own work and greater prevention efforts.

**Data Collection**

In Phenomenological research, in-depth qualitative interviews allow for open-ended questions that let participants talk in detail about their experience with and understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Rubin and Rubin (2012) also note that in-depth qualitative interviewing establishes that questions are not just open-ended, but that questions can be malleable and open to variation, which also helps provide optimally rich data from participants. As Smith et al. (2009) outline, the preferred and most common form of data collection is through a semi-structured and in-depth one-on-one interview of 45-90 minutes with each participant and with a range of 6-10 open-ended questions (p. 60). While questions may evolve through data collection process within this study, an Interview Protocol (Appendix A) will be used to provide a framework and consistency in the data collection process. An Interview Protocol (Appendix A) was utilized in this study to provide a framework and consistency in the
data collection process. The protocol was made up of eight questions, with many including subquestions. This format provided structure while also allowing space for questions and discussion between the research and participants to evolve organically during the interview.

Seidman (2006) notes that more important than the number of interviews, is that whatever structure and timeframe is established allows for, “participants to reconstruct and reflect on the meaning their experiences holds for them” (p. 11). Based on this guidance, this study included a three-part process for data collection: first, an initial criteria check and explanation of informed consent; second, an in-depth one-on-one interview that was scheduled and ranged from 60-90 minutes; and third—after interview data was transcribed and received by the participant—opportunity for the participant to provide any additional information or clarifying data, which served as a member check (Carlson, 2011). Each one-on-one interview was conducted via Skype and all were conducted from the researcher’s home office and audio recorded as electronic files.

**Data Storage**

Two copies of all electronic files were saved and password protected. One copy was stored on the researcher’s computer and one stored on an external hard drive and kept in a secure space at the researcher’s home office. In order to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in the recording of the interviews, the saving and storing of the electronic files, and in the transcription of the data.

A professional transcriptionist was used for transcribing the data. Confidentiality of the participants was of the utmost importance and the transcriptionist was required to sign a confidentiality agreement (Appendix C). The only parties who had access to the stored data included the researcher, the Principal Investigator, and the professional transcriptionist.
Participants were also given access to view their own data as part of a member check for accuracy and transparency (Carlson, 2011). Data coding was conducted by the researcher using the qualitative data analysis computer software, MAXQDA. At the conclusion of the research project, all hard copy and electronic data was destroyed in accordance with appropriate data destruction requirements.

Data Analysis Process Overview

After data was collected, stored, and reviewed, the qualitative and mixed methods data analysis software, MAXQDA, was used to code and theme the data. Data analysis within IPA is a fluid process that requires, “moving from the particular to the shared, and from the descriptive to the interpretive” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 79). In this endeavor, researchers can take different approaches to data analysis, but Smith et al. (2009) also offer a six-stage approach to data analysis that was employed within this study. The first four of the six steps are specific to analyzing each individual case or interview, the fifth is specific to repeating this process with each individual case, and the sixth outlines analysis across all of the data gathered. The first step in this process was for the researcher to become immersed in one individual case or data through the process of reading and re-reading. The second step involved the researcher making initial notes throughout the data and making descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments on the data. The next step in the process was taking notes and comments and developing them into themes contained within the individual case. The fourth step was to take the themes that emerged, identify similar themes, and create clusters based on these similar themes. The fifth step repeated these four steps over with the individual case. The goal of the fifth step was to make sure to treat each individual case on its own. While it is recognized that this process would naturally impact the analysis, it was important to try and ‘bracket’ themes generated from the
prior cases (Smith et al., 2009, p. 100). Finally, the sixth step involved analyzing across all of the individual cases to identify comprehensive patterns and themes.

**Trustworthiness, Quality, and Verification**

Several measures were put in place to maximize trustworthiness and quality of the study and to verify the data gathered. These measures include clarifying the researcher’s positionality and bias; applying a feminist approach to the qualitative research and question of trustworthiness; and engaging participants in a member check. These measures helped to prevent any impact on trustworthiness between the researcher and participant, but also had a broader impact on the overall validity of the data, the data analysis, and the findings of the study.

**Clarifying the researcher’s positionality and bias.** The researcher’s professional and personal positionality and biases are both relevant. As outlined in this researcher’s positionality statement in Chapter 1, professionally, all academic and professional pursuits have been dedicated to understanding the role of our intersecting identities in our lives, on college campuses, and in the world, particularly through the lens of gender and as our intersecting identities relate to power, privilege, and oppression. Personally, the researcher’s self-identification as a genderqueer person and a transracial adoptee with mixed Native American and European heritage matters. The salience of these particular intersecting identities has provided moments of marginalization and privilege that impact the way the researcher has experienced the world and views the experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. Finally, while the researcher has experienced forms of identity-based marginalization, inequity, and violence, the researcher does not identify as a survivor of sexual assault.

All of these professional and personal experiences and identities impact the researcher’s position as both ally and member as it relates to aspects of relevant identities within this research
project. While the bias of the researcher is clear in terms of the belief in the need for sexual assault prevention programs to challenge gender essentialism and to include intersectional, identity-based differences for the benefit of all of its participants, it was essential that the researcher be open and honest about these biases during the research process (Creswell, 2013).

**Applying a feminist approach.** A feminist approach to qualitative methodology offers exceptional guidance related to trustworthiness and ethical considerations that were applied to this research project. In general, a feminist approach views the interactive nature of open-ended questions within qualitative research as a process that can help contribute to a collaborative and non-hierarchical feeling among researcher and participants (Kirsch, 1999, p. 25). While a collaborative and non-hierarchical approach is an admirable goal within feminist qualitative research that can build trust between researcher and participants, a feminist approach also reminds that the researcher/participant dynamic requires close oversight by the researcher to limit risk of ethical and human subject issues. Perhaps most notably, while a collaborative approach can enhance trust that a participant feels with the researcher and can reduce the hierarchy of traditional research, it also risks confusing ‘friendliness’ with ‘friendship’ (Kirsch, 1999, p. 30). As Kirsch (1999) notes, “unlike friendships, which are built on reciprocal trust and sharing of personal information, interviews only simulate this context” (p. 30).

**Engaging participants in a member check.** Another area that the researcher was mindful of was that many researchers collect data without providing any feedback to participants during the process of collection (Kirsch, 1999). While this makes sense as to not influence the participants or the data, participants can then feel betrayed or caught off guard to see their words critiqued and analyzed latter in the research process (Kirsch, 1999). In an effort to proactively diminish the likelihood of this potential issue, a member check was employed (Carlson, 2011). A
member check served as a validity tool for the data collected and it helped to verify and establish
the quality of the data. Connected to data analysis and trustworthiness, the member check with
the participants also served to help authenticate the research findings.

**Protection of Human Subjects and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval**

It was of utmost importance within this phenomenological study to secure a Northeastern
University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved plan to protect human subjects and obtain
informed consent prior to conducting any of the data collection. Related, it was also vital that the
researcher was mindful of ethical and human subject considerations that were specific to the
parameters of this study. While IRB approval was required before moving forward with this
phenomenological study, it was imperative that the researcher was being mindful of protecting
the human subjects and minimizing risk throughout the entire development of the research study,
from question development to participant selection and to data collection.

When actually selecting human subjects, it was important to establish clear criteria for the
research participants needed and to select only those that meet the criteria. From this selection of
human subjects, an explicit explanation of the study, its purpose, and the role and purpose of the
participants was thoroughly communicated by the researcher to the potential participant before
any informed consent can was given by a human subject. Even after this occurred, it was
important that within the informed consent process that human subjects were aware that they
were not required at any point to answer any questions that they didn’t feel comfortable
answering, that they are able to drop out of the research at any point in time if they chose, and
that they were aware of any risks as well as potential benefits that might be related to
participating in the study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It was also essential to outline and maintain
confidentiality of the human subjects through both the use of pseudonyms and through securely gathering and maintaining the data collected (Creswell, 2012).
Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

This research study explored the lived experiences of sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses as they conceptualize their program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity. Through the theoretical framework of socialization theory, this study was particularly interested in exploring how trainers understood their role socialization process through education and training (or professional socialization) and work (or organizational socialization) as impacting this phenomenon. Therefore, the research question for this study was: 

*How do sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses understand their professional and organizational socialization as impacting their conceptualization of program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity?*

Participants

Sexual assault prevention program trainers are a relatively small and connected group of professionals within higher education, with many schools only having one person specifically employed in this work. Given this, there was an inherent risk for participants of their anonymity being comprised. Also connected to risk, this study brought to the surface an inherent paradox related to providing a picture of a study’s participants that is important to address here and will be talked about further in Chapter Five. On one hand, in research, gathering complex data about participants’ identities can risk anonymity, but on the other, research needs this complex data to understand all that might be at play in a participant’s experience or in collective experiences. Aware of this tension and these possible risks, the researcher used great caution within this study to balance providing a clear picture of the identities and experiences of the trainers who participated while prioritizing their individual anonymity.
In this study’s efforts to accomplish this, a composite narrative and tables representing the participants’ make up is provided instead of individual profiles of each participant. Use of a composite profile also helped assure that participants dictate when an identity or identities were salient within a particular experience or within their making meaning of an experience. When a participant’s quote is used within these findings to speak to the impact of a particular identity or identities on their experience of conceptualizing their program content, the researcher and/or the participant’s own words provide the context needed to understand the positionality of the participant. The use of composite profile instead of individual profiles not only helps ensure the anonymity of the study’s participants, but it also resists the implicit or explicit urge to essentialize a trainer’s experience based on their social identities. For example, turning one sexual assault prevention program trainer’s experience into the experience of “women of color” or “LGBT people.” It is hoped that presenting participants in this manner helps to destabilize or trouble “identity” and challenge the researcher and the reader to be more conscious of how we make assumptions about peoples’ social identities and how we assign implicit or explicit meaning to our assumptions about those social identities. The use of composition also allows for the wealth and range of diversity to stand out, even within the relatively small population of only 7 participants. This complex diversity represented across all of the participants also contributes to the validity of the findings. As Patton (1990) states, “any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a program” (p. 172).

Central to IPA, all seven participants were sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses who had all experienced the phenomenon of conceptualizing program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity. All participants have served in the capacity of trainer for at
least one year with many serving upwards of ten years and some serving as long as twenty years. All participants have either created their own program content or have some level of flexibility in how they adapt and deliver content connected to a structured and packaged program. Six of the participants are employed as a trainer by a college or university that is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and all six trainers do trainings as one aspect of their job. One of these six participants is also a self-employed consultant serving as a trainer for other colleges and universities and for a nationally recognized violence prevention program. The remaining participant is employed as a trainer at a non-profit organization that serves regional colleges and universities broadly, providing trainings to various homogenous and heterogeneous campus populations. Six of the schools or non-profit organization represented are in the New England area and one is in the Midwest. Four are private research universities, one is a private liberal arts college, and one is a public research institute. The student population ranges across the participants’ colleges and universities from approximately 2,000 undergraduates to 30,000.

Participant employer and types of colleges and universities are represented in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant employer and types of colleges and universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Regional area of employer</th>
<th>Types of College or university</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• College or university (5)</td>
<td>• New England area (6)</td>
<td>• Private research universities (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College or university and self-employed consultant (1)</td>
<td>• Midwest (1)</td>
<td>• Private liberal arts college (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-profit organization (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Public research institute (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Various types of colleges and universities across a particular region of the U.S. (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All six private and public schools are Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While it was not necessarily possible to know in advance how participants recruited for the study might self-identify in terms of their own social identities such as gender, race, and so on, seeking heterogeneity among the participants as it related to their own intersectional identities was consciously centered by the researcher during participant outreach and recruitment. Seeking identity diversity—particularly as it relates to gender, race, and sexuality—felt important given the centering of these identities in the study’s exploration of program content and given that trainers where asked in the interview if their own identities impact what they consider and/or include regarding program content related to identity. Participants were asked to provide as much information as they were comfortable sharing regarding how they identify in terms of gender, race and/or ethnicity, and sexuality; if they would like any additional identities captured within this study; what pronouns they would like to have used for them within the study; and, if they would like to select their own pseudonym for the study given the ways in which names in our culture are often connected or seen as connected to gender, race, and identity. This information is represented in Table 2.

In response to gender identity, the following responses were generated: Female (4), Cis[gender] Woman (1), Genderqueer (1), and Male (1). In terms of race and/or ethnicity: White (3); White American (1); Black or Multiracial (1); Filipino American (1); and (1) Multiracial. Sexuality among participants was self-identified as: Queer (4), Straight (2), and Heterosexual (1). Five of the seven participants offered additional identities to have captured in the study. Collectively these identities are: Cis[gender]; Feminist; Survivor; Christian, middle-class, U.S. citizen, Hearing impairment; First-generation Filipino-American (first-generation college student and immigrant), 1.5-generation immigrant (born outside U.S., but raised within it). Five participants use “she/her/hers” as their pronouns, one uses “they, them, theirs” as their pronouns,
and one uses “he/him/his” as his pronouns within this study. Two participants chose to provide their own pseudonym and five were chosen by the researcher. While some of the identifying information that is separated out might seem identical—for example, “white” and “white American” or “straight” and “heterosexual”—the researcher felt it important to honor participants’ exact self-identification and to let these distinctions in language serve as an additional layer of diversity in terms of how participants relate to their identities.

Table 2: Participant identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race and/or Ethnicity</th>
<th>Sexuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female (4)</td>
<td>White (3)</td>
<td>Queer (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cis(gender) Woman (1)</td>
<td>White American (1)</td>
<td>Straight (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genderqueer (1)</td>
<td>Black or Multiracial (1)</td>
<td>Heterosexual (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (1)</td>
<td>Filipino American (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiracial (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional identities participants wanted captured in this study</th>
<th>Participant pronouns for study</th>
<th>Generation of pseudonym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cis(gender)</td>
<td>“she/her/hers” (5)</td>
<td>Participant chosen (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>“they, them, theirs” (1)</td>
<td>Researcher chosen (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor</td>
<td>“he/him/his” (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian, middle-class, US citizen, Hearing impairment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First generation Filipino American (first generation college student and immigrant), 1.5 generation immigrant (born outside U.S., but raised within it)</td>
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</tbody>
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Emergent Themes

Smith et al.’s (2009) six stage approach was used in the data analysis of this study. This approach required analyzing each interview individually for themes and then analyzing across all of the data and themes to generate collective superordinate and subordinate themes. This study identified three superordinate and seven subordinate themes: Awareness of Organization (1.1 Organizational Connection as Aligned and/or Misaligned and 1.2 Environmental Stabilization); Understanding Their Audience (2.1 Assuredness through Establishing the Goals and Needs of the Audience, 2.2 Validation through Grounding Audience Need in Research, and 2.3 Balancing Experiences with and Knowledge about Specific Student Populations); and Grappling with Group Identities and Identity-Based Content (3.1 Calculating Risk and Reward in Addressing Group Identities and Identity-Based Content and 3.2 Awareness of the Impact of Trainer’s Own Positionality). Superordinate themes recurred across all participants. Superordinate and subordinate themes are also represented in Table 3.

Table 3: Superordinate and subordinate themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate theme</th>
<th>Superordinate theme 2: Understanding Their Audience</th>
<th>Superordinate theme 3: Grappling with Group Identities and Identity-Based Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of Organization</td>
<td>1.1 Organizational Connection as Aligned and/or Misaligned</td>
<td>3.1 Calculating Risk and Reward in Addressing Group Identities and Identity-Based Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Environmental Stabilization</td>
<td>3.2 Awareness of the Impact of Trainer’s Own Positionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Assuredness through Establishing the Goals and Needs of the Audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Validation through Grounding Audience Need in Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Balancing Experiences with and Knowledge about Specific Student Populations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Superordinate Theme One: Awareness of Organization. This first superordinate theme, Awareness of Organization, reflects trainers’ experiences of socialization within their particular organization and its meaning for them and impact on their program conceptualization. All trainers’ spoke to their organizational socialization, or the learning of their organization’s culture and understanding of how it does and does not align with their own knowledge, values, and beliefs. Trainers experienced their awareness of their organization as a relationship of ease and alignment and/or of tension and misalignment between themselves and their organization’s knowledge, beliefs, and values.

When there was ease in alignment, while trainers had an awareness of their organization, they also expressed not really having to think about their organization while conceptualizing their program content. When there was tension in alignment or misalignment, trainers expressed experiencing their organization as an obstacle to conceptualizing their program content. These experiences by trainers revealed the organization as a socializing force able to open the door to and empower trainers’ ideas; serve as a barrier and create conflict for trainers’ in their program conceptualization; and/or close the door to trainers’ ideas and impact morale. Within this superordinate theme, two subordinate themes emerged: Organizational Connection as Aligned and/or Misaligned and Environmental Stabilization.

Subordinate Theme 1.1: Organizational Connection as Aligned and/or Misaligned. The data revealed that through each participants’ organizational socialization they all had an understanding of the culture of their specific organization as it related to its beliefs, values, and knowledge about sexual and gender-based violence. From this understanding, each participant experienced their organizational connection as aligned and/or misaligned with their own personal beliefs, values, and knowledge regarding sexual assault prevention. Through the data, themes of
connection as being aligned or misaligned clearly emerged for each participant, but the data also demonstrates a complexity to each participant’s experience of connection that defies binary categorization as either all aligned or all misaligned. As this section will show, the data reveals it is the whole of their experiences of alignment and misalignment that is continuously—whether consciously or unconsciously—operating underneath their program conceptualization.

Of all of the participants, Julie experienced the most tension and misalignment with her organizational connection. There was urgency in Julie’s tone during the interview that seemed to speak to both the level and salience of misalignment she was experiencing. At different points, Julie noted that, “there's some weird dynamics…” and at another that “there's this underbelly that's pretty dark…” Julie’s experience seems to be exacerbated by the reality of misalignment within her organization occurring on multiple levels. Within her organization, there are competing and polarized views about sexual and gender-based violence that are held by different organizational stakeholders that apply competing pressures on Julie’s program conceptualization. Julie notes that:

Instead of having the bell curve, it's almost like these two polar distributions where you have people… who are incredible cogent, sophisticated in their analysis…and understand these issues in a really interesting and powerful way. Then, they're in a conversation with folks who are just like either thinking that it's very black and white or even worse, some of them... in meetings, in front of me, have felt totally fine saying things that are just incredibly insensitive and thoughtless.

This experience of polarization demonstrates an internal misalignment between competing organizational values, beliefs, and knowledge, but the latter dynamic of insensitivity also highlights what Julie experiences as the most serious of misalignment between her and the
organization. Julie is contending with an organizational belief that questions and discounts some types of sexual and gender-based violence and this is in deep conflict with her own values, beliefs, and professional socialization. As example, Julie notes the belief held by some organizational stakeholders that, "Well, there's consent and then there's miscommunication and then there's coercion and then there's pressure and then there's force." Julie goes on to say that, “In [their] mind, force, that's sexual assault. You know, a little bit of coercion, a little bit of pressure…” There is an exasperation that the researcher senses during moments such as this in Julie’s interview when she talks about her professional experience with and knowledge about sexual and gender-based violence being dismissed and/or minimized within her organization.

The other part of the polarized organizational culture in which Julie is being socialized in her role as a sexual assault prevention trainer is within its progressive and feminist contingent, particularly its faculty. Julie identifies herself as a feminist throughout the interview and as it relates to her experience as a sexual assault prevention program trainer. Despite this serving as an important shared value and point of alignment with some members of her organization, this shared identity does not always result in a cohesive alignment either. Instead, it seems to lend itself to intellectual differences between Julie and her organization. It also creates mistrust from this progressive and feminist contingent of her organization about administrative efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence. Julie speaks to this misaligned connection and its impact on her work noting:

I was in a meeting once with faculty, talking about why we are asking them to be responsible employees in our Title IX. Of course, [Professor X being Professor X] is responding to me, making this very complex, erudite, commentary about the nature of Title IX and interpretation and so on and so forth. And, what the faculty hears and what
they get out of that is, "We don't have to listen to you and we don't have to do this because it's not in our interest and we shouldn't be asked to do this."

Despite Julie’s wealth of expertise in sexual and gender-based violence prevalence and prevention, her experiences of misalignment and awareness of competing cultures and organizational beliefs impact her efforts. Julie appears stuck in the middle of conflict, never quite able to fully move freely in her role or in her program conceptualization.

While Julie’s experience of her organizational connection as misaligned was quite salient throughout the interview, Sara’s was less salient throughout and not immediately apparent in her interview. In fact, through much of the interview, the data demonstrates Sara’s experience of organizational connection as significantly aligned with her own beliefs, values, and knowledge. In many ways, this alignment is true to and most salient within Sara’s experience. Sara notes strong relationships with her colleagues and collaborative efforts on campus have had positive impact. In speaking to her and her colleagues work with a particular Greek organization on campus, Sara notes that initially, “there was a lot of push-back and doubt” from the students and “the implication was that women lie about sexual assault.” Sara goes on to say that through her office’s ongoing educational efforts over time with these students that, “now, they are one of the most progressive groups on campus. There's been some really amazing culture change there.”

During Sara’s interview, she also spoke of robust prevention programs and efforts her office was utilizing, impressive assessment and evaluation efforts of their campus climate, and use of a shared socioecological approach. Sara notes that, “I use the social, ecological model a lot, even when I'm talking to students, to help them situate sexual violence as not, you know, just some people or just one thing that someone does to someone else. It's located within a culture and within a society and is passively tolerated in different ways. I think, my office, definitely, is on
the same page about that.” These experiences seemed to elicit feelings of pride from Sara about this work.

Despite a wealth of data that indicated alignment in Sara’s experience of organizational connection, her experience also held some significant misalignment. Once Sara raised this misalignment, its deep impact on her and in her program conceptualization became clear. Sara’s experience of misalignment reveals a disconnect between her professional training and her organization’s approach. At one point during the interview, Sara was talking about data she had found on sexual victimization among women who are homeless. Sara went on to say that, “this is something we need to be thinking about and it really supports the theory of interlocking oppressions and the fact that this is not an individual level issue, it's larger than that.” While Sara sees this data as relevant, she notes, “that's something that, I think in this point in my job, I know I wouldn't bring that up to my boss, for example, when I was putting something together. Because I think she'd be like, ‘okay, that's horrible and why would our students care about that?’ I think my training has, in public health especially, has put that, or did put that at the forefront.”

While Sara on one hand acknowledges a shared approach within her office, this connection also has its limits. In part, this is related to her organization’s perception of self and its students. As Sara notes, “the institution conceives of itself in a very specific way. Like, for example, ‘this is [XYZ University], we are special.’” In searching for the meaning of this disconnect, Sara also discusses her own professional training and socialization related to prevention efforts. Sara says that “I think my training, in public health especially, has put that, or did put that [theory of interlocking oppressions and systemic issues] at the forefront. We need to briefly think about how this affects different populations, in terms of access and equality and all these different things.” Within this reflection, an internal struggle is illuminated for Sara between
who she was socialized to be through her professional training and what her socialization within her organizational culture is asking of her. There is a literal shifting of present to past tense that she uses when speaking of her approach to program conceptualization.

Sara’s awareness of her organization and her understanding of its limitations yields a complex negotiation of her own alignment and misalignment with the institution and its values. Sara speaks at times of politics and hierarchy, noting at one point that, “there's also the political side to everything” and at another “that there was also a hierarchy, which I was at the bottom of.” It seems that politics and hierarchy, combined with the organization’s view of itself and its students as exceptional, results not in Sara’s experiencing an overall feeling of alignment, but in her feeling pressure to stay in line with her organization.

The last of the participants to experience significant misalignment within their organizational connection was Sawyer. Sawyer had a strong awareness of the impact of her organization and how it impacts her experience of misalignment. Sawyer was particularly aware of her university being both public and within a relatively conservative state. Sawyer’s understanding of what and who makes up her organization stretches from her local school governance all the way to the federal government. This reality significantly expands the possibilities of how Sawyer sees her organization as impacting her experience of alignment and/or misalignment. While Sawyer has a strong commitment to supporting LGBTQ and other marginalized students, Sawyer speaks of her organization as being “handcuffed by the overall conservatism of the state.” Sawyer also highlights that a significant misalignment for her is an organizational belief that “well, we don’t want to offend the evangelical farm kid from Rural [U.S. Midwestern state] who’s white and cis[gender] in our prevention education training.” Within this organizational culture, Sawyer speaks to these experiences of misalignment as
creating feelings of professional vulnerability in supporting marginalized students and in how she conceptualizes her program content. Sawyer notes:

I’m not an expert on everything, I’m jumping in to do some things and on the one hand I think I do them fairly well, on the other hand sometimes I have to jump into the deep end of the pool without having a lot of like scaffolding… [I’m] holding my own liabilities around that. I think there's that piece and like I said, in a conservative environment like I find myself at this particular institution, in this state and public education, it's like everything is subpoenaable, people could ask for my lesson plans or interrogate lots of things and who wants to take that on all of the time.

While Sawyer speaks about the layers of power above her creating a stressful environment in which to conceptualize her program content, she also notes the ways in which power above her can help shift her organizational culture to be more in alignment with her own values. Most notably, she raises the role of the federal government in issues related to Title IX on college campuses. During the interview, Sawyer mentioned the U.S. government’s use of “Dear Colleague Letters,” which serve as periodic directives to all schools that receive federal funding about various mandatory prevention, response, and inclusion efforts related to sex and gender. Sawyer discusses a May 2016 Dear Colleague Letter that specifically outlines transgender inclusion within Title IX, noting that, “In some ways that puts a lot of federal … in many ways it puts a lot of federal strength to the burgeoning kind of tensions around our campus, around these canned programs that are starting with base assumptions that don’t necessarily reflect the critical issues facing students and the demographics of our students.” Through this awareness, Sawyer conceptualized her organizational connection and experiences of alignment and misalignment as larger than the university itself.
The remaining participants all indicated significant alignment in their organizational connection, while they experienced this alignment differently and held diverse understandings of the meaning of this alignment. John and Zoe both articulated their experiences of their respective organizations as aligned with their own beliefs, values, and knowledge. In speaking to the ways in which John’s organization’s values and beliefs impact his program conceptualization, John noted, “I guess it's hard to separate that out. There's a lot of alignment between my personal and the organization, I guess it does a great deal but just sort of in the same ways.” And Zoe offered the following:

The culture, I think, is administratively slow to change. I think student-wise, it's hungry for change. I think you have these two things coming together, so I think that's the culture, but then values-wise, I actually think that we're largely on the same page. It's the first time I've really thought this through, so bear with me if it gets weird, but I feel like we can all agree ... I think that most people could agree with certain statements, that we want people to be well-treated through processes. We want them to be as speedy as possible. Even getting away from when something happens, we want to be a community where people communicate, where people respect one another, where people take care of one another and look out for one another, and respect their classmates and colleagues. I think we could all get behind that as…We could make a litany of values statements that most people would agree with.

The data showed that alignment impacts their work, but even more notably showed that the ease of alignment they experience allows them to not really have to think about their relationship to their organization in their work or program conceptualization. In fact, for both John and Zoe,
there were pauses during their respective interviews as they formulated their thoughts on their experience of organizational connection.

Katie also identified her experience of organizational connection as aligned and in many ways it too was not particularly salient for her during her interview. While this alignment was not incredibly salient for Katie, she was acutely aware that her experience of alignment was a fortunate position from which to work and was in contrast with the experiences of some her colleagues at other institutions. Katie articulated some of the very different frameworks that can be used in conceptualizing sexual assault prevention programs and outlined how these can cause conflict when misaligned with a trainer’s professional framework:

I think that I have had a very positive experience relative to many of my colleagues on campus. Particularly with my senior administration, I have never had to fight them on prevalence issues. I also have not had to fight them on using a social justice framework, which is really excellent because I think a lot of my colleagues at other schools are working in an environment where it's either a risk management framework or it's a pure public safety framework.

A clear contrast emerges between John’s, Zoe’s, and Katie’s respective experiences of alignment and Julie’s, Sara’s, and Sawyer’s respective experiences of misalignment. Julie, Sara, and Sawyer experience real conflict as they strive to make sense of their organizational connection and its impact on their program conceptualization. On the other hand, while John, Zoe, and Katie also have a clear understanding of their organizational connection, their experience of connection as aligned creates an ease that allows them to move forward on program conceptualization without really having to consider their organization. John’s sense of alignment with his organization is so strong that he struggles to even draw a line between his and
his organization’s beliefs, values, and knowledge about sexual and gender-based violence; Zoe is
able to speak in detail to her organizational culture and shared values, but also notes that “It's the
first time I've really thought this through;” and Katie’s awareness of a personal alignment with
her organization’s culture is motivated in large part by an awareness of other people’s less
“positive” experiences in sexual assault prevention roles.

While John’s, Zoe’s, and Katie’s, experience of alignment with their respective
organizations is rendered fairly invisible as they do their work, Adrienne’s experience of
alignment with their organization was strong and salient. Adrienne was also quite effusive about
their organization, at one point saying, “I love [my organization] so much!” What is strikingly
different from the other participants is that Adrienne came into their own organization with
feelings of trepidation and expecting conflict, but instead found exceptional alignment. Adrienne
notes:

I would say that I was feeling really lucky because [X organization] has been, I think for
the past year and a half, paying attention organizationally to social justice and race. I was
actually really worried coming from a very grassroots, pretty radical organization that I'd
be like, "I'm going to be the radical person of color who is nonbinary and queer and I'm
not gonna shut up.” I found that actually, everyone is very open to learning and that even
though there have been some challenges and things like that, I don't think it's ever a thing
about not wanting to learn. I think it's the unlearning that is taking place and I feel like
that takes a long time. That for me, has been my own learning experience.

Adrienne came into their organization so certain of conflict that a significant part of their
socialization process has been adjusting to the alignment. Instead of misalignment, Adrienne
found an alignment with their organization that is grounded in a social justice approach to sexual
and gender-based violence prevention and program conceptualization that prioritizes considerations of race. For Adrienne, this experience of alignment has led to their “feeling really lucky” to be a part of their organization.

**Subordinate theme 1.2: Environmental Stabilization.** Along with revealing experiences of participants’ organizational connection as aligned or misaligned, the data also revealed participants’ need for and experience of environmental stabilization. Participants’ experiences of their organizational connection as aligned or misaligned revealed a deeper level of meaning for each of them that has become a filter through which they conceptualize their program content. Overall, when a participant’s experience of organizational connection was predominantly that of alignment, this provided ongoing feelings such as freedom, autonomy, and pride. When there was alignment, trainers also experienced an environmental stabilization that allowed for trainers to conceptualize their program content without organizational disruption. On the other hand, when participants experienced misalignment, it seemed to serve as a persistent factor or obstacle and created a range of feelings such as anxiousness, pressure, and vulnerability. When there was misalignment, trainers experienced a need for environmental stabilization in order to conceptualize their program content. The data also revealed that while all participants who experienced misalignment also experienced environmental stabilization, how they accomplished this was not universal.

For Sara, whether conscious or unconscious, where she experienced misalignment, she also experienced a drive to stabilize her environment through her letting go of conflict or adapting to her environment. Misalignment for Sara was most notable when she experienced organizational stakeholders in power—such as her boss—as holding a different approach to and beliefs about the work from her professional training in public health. This came through when
Sara discussed her professional beliefs about the importance of including concepts of interlocking oppression and knowing her boss’ limits around its inclusion in her program conceptualization. With this experience, in order to experience environmental stabilization, Sara didn’t try to bring the issue forward because she felt confident it would be dismissed and cause conflict for her internally and/or within her organization.

Sara’s interview also revealed her use of different approaches to experience environmental stabilization. Another time in Sara’s interview, she also spoke about a group project in which she did try to speak up. Sara was talking about a specific project in which she had invested a lot of time and energy and that she had intentionally grounded in her professional training and research. During a meeting, she brought up her ideas, but one stakeholder in particular was “uncomfortable” with her approach and wanted to change the plan to which Sara noted that, “I'm like, ‘No, but the research says we can't do that,’ so in that context, there was also a hierarchy, which I was at the bottom of, and so it was like it doesn't matter what the literature says, the person in charge doesn't want to do that, so that was incredibly hard for me.” Sara went on to say that, “It got to a point where my boss had several conversations with me about managing my emotions and dealing with that, being more political, all this stuff.”

Sara makes explicit that the pinnacle of this misalignment led her to seek environmental stabilization through her withdrawal and putting her focus elsewhere. Sara notes that this experience “was an issue for a while, definitely. Even now, when I talk about it, I still feel that it just wasn't a process that was, I don't know, had a lot of integrity, so it has actually pushed me in the direction of okay, maybe I do want to do my own research, outside of an institution and do it properly. Yeah, so that's had a big impact and it's not an easy thing for me to reconcile.” As previously mentioned, this misalignment is not particularly salient in Sara’s interview, especially
in the beginning of the interview. When misalignment does surface, it is during Sara’s reflection on a past work conflict that created feelings of misalignment that were quite salient for her at the time. However, over time and within the need to create environmental stability, Sara has learned how to compensate or adapt as a response in order to do her job in ways that have become fairly unconscious to her and are likely not even visible to organizational stakeholders. While it seems there has been some type of reconciliation with the misalignment Sara experiences that allows it to be less salient, it is also clear that this underlying fundamental misalignment impacts how Sara might otherwise conceptualize her program content.

The data also shows Sawyer’s striving for environmental stabilization looks much different from Sara’s. Sawyer’s approach seems to be a combination of direct and explicit challenges to misalignment as well as use of covert challenges to misalignment. In speaking to her experiences of negotiating the impediments of a conservative organizational culture and state, Sawyer uses expressions to describe her strategy such as “figuring out in between ways” and “make sure that there are pathways.” Sawyer’s response to a misaligned organizational connection and her experience of environmental stabilization is to find creative paths as a type of adaptation, particularly when it comes to supporting marginalized students. In supporting LGBT students who are institutionally marginalized at her university, Sawyer talks about the “ways that I signaled a lot of times to populations that I’m a potential pathway, and it’s not enough because they shouldn’t have to find and navigate and get the social capital to figure out the signs, but it’s one way…” Sawyer also talks about making sure to take the time to build a relationship with the LGBT student group on campus. She also works with colleagues to figure out “kind of a creative fix” for policies and practices that create inequities for marginalized students. Lastly, she speaks of working with her staff, where she has some power as an organizational stakeholder, to say,
“here’s what we do have, and you all need to be informed and educated, because you’re in places I can’t be.” Even if Sawyer is not always able to be explicit of her support and centering of LGBT experiences in her program conceptualization, she is able to make sure these students know where to find support within this conservative environment.

Julie, who expressed experiencing the most misalignment with her organization, has attempted different methods to achieve environmental stabilization. Overall, there is a sense that the “chaos” she is experiencing in her organization with organizational stakeholder’s competing knowledge, values, and beliefs has often left her in the position of trying to prove herself. Julie talked about different situations in which stakeholders openly questioned her knowledge or approach to her work broadly and specifically related to identity-based issues. In one instance, Julie reached out to the stakeholder and said, “‘I just wanted to clarify that I'm not making this stuff up. Here's the research I've been doing on this.’ She was more responsive after that. Like I said, interpersonally, she's always very kind to me and very warm but in that context, there's this weird dynamic where essentially nothing is ever really good enough.” Julie has also really utilized collaboration with students as a way to check the pulse of campus need and to move projects forward. She has done this with student groups, but also with students who work in her office. To this, Julie said:

I really try to look for students who have really different backgrounds than mine because it's just not possible, sometimes, for me to see what's important always to everyone. Being able to have different voices has been incredibly important in terms of that. Because I think there are real limitations in terms of not always being mindful of, ‘Oh, how does this sound to people?’ or ‘What are the assumptions that are being made here that I'm just not even aware of?’ ‘How can I do a better job?’
Utilizing research and student collaboration has helped Julie navigate the competing and polarized organizational culture in which she is trying to conceptualize her program content while providing her with some feelings of agency and environmental stability.

Even with participants for which there was organizational alignment, the data still revealed them as having experiences of environmental stabilization. Katie, for example, feels the pressure of being a one-person office. Katie notes:

I am a one-person shop so I really try to write down everything that I do because I rely really heavily on other trainers from other departments, so I have kind of knit together this training core of people from [our identity and activism center], our campus safety, the dean's office, office of student life, so I have had to put together, I could go and use stuff out of my head and make an album, things like that, that's fine, but from the perspective of trying to get other people on board with a common program and make sure that it is delivered the same way each time, I make scripts for everything.

For Katie, her need for environmental stabilization resulted in her creation of common shared script for programs that anyone would be able to follow and building a team that can help her in this prevention work. Katie’s experience of environmental stabilization comes through her intentional collaboration and leveraging the “social capital” she feels she holds.

While Zoe and John both experienced positive alignment with their organizational connection and it was least salient for both in their interviews, they also both spoke in some ways to moments of tension and response. For John, this was expressed as “a few moments of healthy tension” and in response to these moments in his environment notes that these moments are, “not anything destructive really, anytime there's been that tension I think there's been some debate. I know it's not like this everywhere for sure. I'm very lucky that we're in a place where we can
have those discussions and they're considered and they're bounced back and forth.” It is through the healthy dialogue John engages in his organization that he is able to depend on a continuous return to his experience of environmental stabilization. For Zoe, experiences of tension were between stakeholders responsible for different aspects of sexual and gender-based violence, specifically advocacy and investigation. Zoe’s experience of environmental stabilization seems to rest in how she views the situation. Zoe notes that:

I wish these things didn't have to be in tension, and I am not positive that they do have to be, but I think there's this real emphasis on equity through a process and fairness to everyone going through a process that is very much in tension with a student culture and staff culture, to some extent, that really deeply values believing survivors. There's this middle ground where it's like… I think that is a values tension, and I wish we could do more about that and have more open and honest dialog about the challenges of conducting an investigation that is fair and quick and respectful of both or all of the people involved...”

While the other participants seemed to discuss their experience of environmental stabilization related to ways in which it is challenged, Adrienne speaks to the ways in which their environmental stabilization make them feel like a better trainer. Their experience with their organization has helped them feel empowered as a trainer and in their program conceptualization, noting that:

I would say [X organization’s] priority is to help me feel supported so that I am able to pick and choose, to make my decisions of what I want to bring in. I think that's really, really helpful and has been really good in making me feel like I can decide to not be a survivor in this space, or be queer in this space, or sometimes I can choose when I talk
about being non-binary or whatever, and I often get support after that. I think that one of the strengths is that we really talk about how are you going to feel as a trainer that you let this piece of information out…sometimes it can be really powerful to share things about your identity and interweave it in the content or it can really backfire, like not feel good at least.

For Adrienne, their experience of alignment and environmental stabilization, creates space in which all members of the organization are challenged to keep examining the inclusivity of their program conceptualization. Within this space, Adrienne is also able to consider relevant pieces of their identities and experience that they may want or not want to include in their programs.

**Superordinate Theme Two: Understanding Their Audience.** The second superordinate theme in this study speaks to trainers’ experience of coming to understand their audience. Three subordinate themes were identified: assuredness through establishing the goals and needs of the audience (2.1); validation through grounding audience need in research (2.2); and, balancing experiences with and knowledge about specific student populations (2.3). While the first superordinate theme revealed the impact of trainers’ organizational socialization on their program conceptualization, when trainers’ discussed their student audiences, they expressed many aspects of their own professional socialization as sexual assault prevention program trainers. Given the participants wealth of professional training and experiences, it was not always distinguishable where a participant gained a specific skill (i.e. through trainings, degree programs, or relevant research). However, it was clear that each participant had developed a preferred approach to understanding their audience that was grounded in their professional training and experience and that impacted their program conceptualization.
All participants engaged their professional training and experience in conceptualizing their program content for specific student audiences. At the crux of this experience is the belief of trainers that in order for their programs to have positive impact on student audiences, they need to understand their audience and its needs and goals. While the approach participants took varied, it was clear to the researcher that rooting their understanding of their student audiences in their particular professional socialization was what gave them confidence in their relationships and program conceptualization.

**Subordinate theme 2.1: Assuredness through Establishing the Goals and Needs of the Audience.** Within this study, trainers overwhelmingly expressed that their program conceptualization begins with getting to know the specific audience that a training is for and establishing the goals and needs for their program. In this effort, participants seek to understand—ideally from their student audience directly—the context of why they are doing a particular training and for whom they are doing it. Through this process of asking questions of themselves and/or their audience, all participants were able to establish the goals and needs of the audience and experience a sense of assuredness in their program conceptualization.

For Katie, “the starting point is usually what are the goals and objectives of whatever program it is. When people leave whatever it is that we are doing, what do we want them to be able to do differently? That is always the starting point for me.” Similarly, John mentions that, “The biggest factor I consider is who it's for and what I want to achieve with that group.” The same is true for Julie who states that, “there's the broader question of who's the audience and what's the goal of the training?” Adrienne speaks directly to the importance of context, noting that “I feel like so much of it is the context of why we're coming in and how I fit into that context—not more than the training, the content itself—but it really shifts the way we talk about
the content. We might be using the same curricula for every single one of those different situations, but the conversation, depending on how we approach it, will be really different.”

Sawyer too raises the importance of asking questions in order to build relationships with student audiences. Sawyer talks about her professional background and how it is grounded in a social justice framework and approach that impacts how she presents a pre-scripted program differently for different audiences. While Sawyer reflects on her audience prior to a program, she is also asking questions about her audience during the program in order to best understand their needs and to adapt as necessary in the moment. Sawyer articulates that her professional training “emphasizes responsiveness and being willing to abandon the lesson plan in order to deal with what surfaces in the space” and she states, “I'm comfortable with that…I keep a large framework of ‘what, so what, now what’ and I try to introduce terminology and to see where students are with that and if they … if their like, ‘yeah, that’s familiar,’ okay let’s get to the part that’s less familiar and explore…”

Underlying participants establishing the goals and needs of their audience is a shared belief that it is important to understand who their student audience is and where they are coming from in order to conceptualize an appropriate and successful program for them. While each participant may have a different professional background, the data reveals that collectively they have all come to see this process as a central starting point in their program conceptualization.

**Subordinate theme 2.2: Validation through Grounding Audience Need in Research.**

All participants spoke of their inclination to ground audience need and program conceptualization in their professional research and literature and/or to their campuses internal data on sexual and gender-based violence. The use of research helped validate trainers by providing understanding of what data says about audience needs and appropriate content, while
also providing validation of the need for these trainings when student audiences might have feelings of exceptionalism or skepticism about sexual and gender-based violence being a problem on their campuses. This practice of using research contributed positively to trainers’ program conceptualization.

Julie and Sara both raise their professional grounding in and the importance of engaging the literature and research in their conceptualization of program content. Sara notes that, “because my background is in research, my inclination is to always go to the literature. I spend a lot of time researching different things and then incorporating them into my presentations, no matter what they're on… I like to incorporate a lot of theory and models and things like that…” Similarly, Julie says that one of her goals over the summer is to, “just try to clarify which underlying constructs need to go with which training. For example, rape myth acceptance. That's one of the things in the bystander training that the training is supposed to address… to what extent is this an underlying construct our training needs to tap? Do all of our trainings need to tap it to be effective?” For Julie and Sara, turning to their professional socialization and grounding it in relevant research and literature provides clarity around and validation in their conceptualization of program content. As Sara notes, “I find it helpful and it increases my confidence to base it in the literature and base it in research.”

The data not only showed participants turning to external research, but many found validation through internal research about their campuses that was generated through climate surveys around sexual and gender-based violence. This data has proven to be particularly useful when trainers are bumping up against notions of exceptionalism coming from their audience. This notion of exceptionalism that trainers’ experience came through in different ways in trainers’ interviews. Sara notes that, “I think [at my university—this is common at a lot of
universities—but it sees itself as a special snowflake...” John noted that in his experience, students have been dismissive of sexual and gender-based violence existing at their school and students have expressed sentiments such as “we're too smart to rape, this doesn't happen here.” Zoe and John both note that the climate survey internal data has helped them to get student buy in by validating that these issues do in fact happen on their campuses among their peers and not just outside in the world or at the hands of a stranger. John summarizes this saying that his organization’s climate survey, “makes a big difference and that really helps us with the research focus because before we'd pull from research and students would just say, ‘well we're different than the norm.’ Having that internal research has been huge.” Katie has also found the climate survey data to be useful and noted having a great response rate, but added the important point that, “for the moment, I feel really good about using that data. I can probably use it one more year before people start to be like, ‘why are talking about this,’ at which point we'll just re-survey.”

Climate survey research helps validate the issues of sexual and gender-based violence specific to a trainer’s campus. This data helps trainers with their program conceptualization and it gives trainers data to leverage in addressing audience skepticism and notions of exceptionalism that they know they are likely to face.

Subordinate theme 2.3: Balancing Experiences with and Knowledge about Specific Student Populations. The final subordinate theme that came up for participants was balancing experiences with and knowledge about specific student populations that trainers have gained through their professional socialization and/or work. In general, participants have all gained professional knowledge and experience with specific college demographics whether generalized broadly about college populations or around a shared identity such as fraternity member or
LGBTQ student. While this is related to identity, it was talked about specifically in terms of how they use this knowledge to help them in their program conceptualization and to better understand their audience, particularly when they are working with a student audience that has organized itself around a shared identity and/or interest in a particular identity.

For Sawyer and John, this specifically related to their professional knowledge and experience related to working with all male audiences, particularly in fraternities. John speaks to this saying:

I think for a fraternity audience, often I might try and go in with ... I'd definitely try to use humor as much as possible with all male groups. It's a way to get them to connect to the issue. I'm a lot more prepared for the sort of “why should we care” kind of stuff. I go in prepared for a little more defensiveness. Again, depending on the topic, I do consider that as I'm designing the program. What program can I do that's going to feel a little less like I'm saying “men are rapists, women are afraid of you” kind of thing. That's not an approach I generally take anyway but I'm even more aware of that with an all-male group.

Similarly, Sawyer notes that, “I have done more probably with fraternities…and its usually around toxic masculinity or masculinity that contributes towards a violent culture.” Sawyer goes on to talk about her experience working with all-male audiences as an out queer woman and that part of her experience with these groups is an experience of “a little bit of a hurdle of credibility.” She prepares for a perception that she is:

going to come in their making them feel bad about being men and making them feel like they’re bad people, they’re all perpetrators, they are all potential perpetrators and I have tactics to deescalate that a little bit. Whether it’s giving statistics of most men don’t
assault but most people are assaulted by men, what does that mean for your brotherhood like within a fraternity situation. There’s some establishing of … well I don’t even know what the word is, like not just credibility, but also rapport that I’m not here to make you feel bad about yourself, but I am going to pose some questions that cause you to reflect on what are some messages that you may have uncritically absorbed and what implications does that have for the relationships that you want and the kind of world you want to live in. The world you all want to live in, I want to live in a safe world.

Katie also discusses student audiences that are part of self-selecting groups based around a shared identity or interest in that particular identity. Even when Katie has this focused type of group, she is cautious with assumptions about group experience and says:

I try really hard to let them do most of the talking. I will ask questions about cultural norms or things like, if we're doing a consent workshop, I'll do some exercises to kind of draw out some conversations but I let people tell me what their experience of the topic is. From talking to a lot of people, can I say, when I hear male-identified folks talk about consent, this is what I hear a lot. When I hear gay men talk about consent, this is kind of how I have heard them talk in the past. I'm not going to sit up there and say ‘this is what other gay men said about this.’ It's more a process of saying, ‘How did you learn? When you were trying to figure out how you talk to a partner about what was going to happen in between you sexually, how did you learn what that was supposed to look like,’ you know consciousness raising and things like that. It's participant education. It's not just like me lecturing people.
Finally, Zoe offers an overarching philosophy grounded in her professional training that illuminates her approach to negotiating generalized knowledge about a student audience and about making assumptions:

I think [my formal education and training] certainly helps me to understand that I don't understand. I think that's really the key. It makes me very aware of the language that I'm using when I'm meeting with someone. It helps me to know that I may not know why someone is reluctant to come forward or that someone is reluctant to come forward. I really think it is about knowing that I don't know. I think that's what my education has done for me. It's like don't assume anything. Those sorts of microagressions of my assumptions that could turn this person off from ever coming back again…

While the approach participants take based on generalized knowledge or experiences with different student audiences varies, what comes through is that there is an underlying shared effort by participants to use their professional experiences to navigate this as they try to understand their student audiences and conceptualize their program.

Superordinate Theme Three: Grappling with Group Identities and Identity-Based Content. Across trainers’ experiences conceptualizing this program content, they are all grappling with group identities and identity-based content. Within this grappling, participants are continuously making choices that center either privileged or marginalized identities. Through both what is said and what is not said, trainers made implicit and/or explicit decisions about how they are centering identity and what identities they are centering in their audiences and their program content. On the surface, these experiences might present as definitive and clear choices that are based in their professional and organizational socialization, but what the data reveals is a deep grappling with group identities and identity-based content experienced by each participant.
As Sawyer so poignantly articulates, “How do we even begin to articulate different narratives and different ways of viewing the world and then invite people to reexamine what they’ve been taught?”

Within trainers’ experiences of grappling, two subordinate themes emerged: calculating risk and reward in addressing group identities and identity-based content (3.1), and awareness of the impact of trainer’s own positionality. Along with perceptions of risk and reward, data indicated that trainers’ own personal identities impacted what they consider and/or include in their program content related to identity. All of the trainers talked about the ways in which their own personal identities impacted, to varying degrees, the identities that they centered, felt comfortable addressing, and/or struggled with how to address within their programs.

**Subordinate Theme 3.1: Calculating Risk and Reward in Addressing Group Identities and Identity-Based Content.** All participants experienced perceptions of risk and reward related to group identities and identity-based content in their program conceptualization. Part of each participant’s grappling involved calculating these risks and rewards. Trainers in this study understand that identity differences—both privileged and marginalized—matter and impact experiences of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, but they also know that they have a lot of tough choices to make regarding education on an already difficult topic that will likely never speak to or reach everyone. As John notes, “I view any education this way. You go into a room, it's the rule of thirds. About a third of the group is totally onboard with whatever I say from jump street or close to jump street. There's going to be a third of the group that almost nothing I say is going to get to them. They're going to be like, this is all bullshit. It's that third in the middle that you're really teaching to.”
Given this context, it is striking, but perhaps not surprising that the data revealed trainers’ experiences of their perceptions of risk and reward as disparate and nuanced. Even in times when trainers were found to use the exact language in speaking to a perception of risk and reward, their experience of this resulted in different calculations and conclusions about their program conceptualization related to identity. For example, several participants used the expression, “meeting students where they are” in grappling with identity and their calculating of risk and reward, but it was not experienced in a universal way. Julie talked about how she might conceptualize a bystander program to get students to be more aware of and challenge group norms around “misogynist jokes or racist jokes…or homophobic remarks.” Within this context, Julie spoke to it saying, “I don’t want to do harm with our trainings but also, in terms of thinking about being effective and meaningful to the students, thinking about, ‘Okay, so what needs to be shared in order for this training to meet students where they’re at and also to help them move further along together as a community.’”

Sawyer also mentions meeting students where they are, particularly related to understanding what type of language will work with various populations regarding identity-based content. Sawyer reflected on her experiences at her previous and current organization, noting that with her old university, “I could assume that students know what privilege is and I can think about undergraduates talking about the Hegemony and like that’s not even a word I would go into or define at [my current institution]… I think it impacts starting points, meeting folks where they are and nudging them a little bit further.” Both Julie and Sawyer recognize a particular starting point for avoiding harm or losing the audience, but also experience “meeting students where they are” as not an end point. For both, solely “meeting students where they are”
is not enough and they have the expectation for themselves of “moving” or “nudging” students along to somewhere new in order to achieve reward.

Adrienne also used the phrase, but they spoke to their experience with it in multiple contexts and in much different terms. Adrienne notes that, “one of my mentors, in terms of training, would tell me, ‘We need to meet people where they are at.’” Adrienne reflected back on their first encounter with this phrase when they were working with survivors of domestic violence. Adrienne explained that in this context, this phrase meant meeting a survivor where they are in the moment and in terms of what they need and letting survivors lead the way to avoid risk of harm. Adrienne went on to say that in the context of what their mentor was talking about, it was more about an awareness of and approach to the risks that exist during a training of participants saying things that are intentionally or unintentionally hurtful or triggering to other participants or to the trainer. In this situation, Adrienne notes that they have, “seen it a lot more with pronoun usage because I use ‘they’ and ‘them’ as my pronouns, sometimes it can be really hard for people to start using that.” Adrienne goes on to say that even up to six months ago, when participants would use incorrect pronouns for them, that they would get “really upset and pissed and thinking all these people are transphobic or whatever and I want nothing to do with them.” But, through the guidance of their mentor, they have come to experience “meeting people where they are at” as being open to seeing different intentions within a given situation. Adrienne notes that sometimes this means understanding that, “sometimes people don't want to hear what I have to say in terms of sexual violence, and not victim blaming, and around LGBTQ stuff, or they are racist, so for me to recognize, ‘Okay that's where they're at.’” At other times, and more importantly, this phrase has helped Adrienne make space for people who unintentionally can cause harm, but do so while they are trying to learn and understand. In these moments, Adrienne
speak that, “Now, I'm like, ‘oh actually for some people, this is really the first time they have
maybe either heard of this or they've met somebody who actually does use those pronouns.’ For
me, more now that I'm in my role, I can be an educator and say—so they don't harm the next
person—it’s like, ‘Here, this is the context of it.’” In Adrienne’s use of the expression “meeting
people where they are at” there is an identifying and calculating of risk for both them as the
trainer and their participants: risk that they might get personally triggered and risk that
participants might say hurtful things in the process of learning. Adrienne realized that to navigate
this risk, “I have to be part of what frames the conversation as supportive and accountable.”

Beyond specific phrases such as “meeting people where they are,” trainers’ perception of
risk and reward regarding whether or not they are including or not including marginalized
identities in program content was robust within the interviews. For John, this was a particularly
salient theme. John takes a “very pragmatic approach” to the conceptualization of program
content for his programs stating, “I think a lot of times educators in this work really want to
Teach everybody everything that they know. To me, that's detrimental, but I'm sure somebody has
a very different perspective on it.” As an example, John describes his work with fraternities:

I have to decide okay look, what can I realistically get through in 60 minutes that's going
to have the most impact for them. I go in with that group and typically my approach is
going to be how do I convince them that this sort of behavior is wrong? How do I
convince them to identify the aspects of rape culture that are feeding into this behavior
and why they have all of these accusations? Also, how do I get them to talk about the fact
that they probably have people in that room who are themselves survivors and are not
talking about it?...That means that I'm not spending time talking about intersectionality,
I'm not spending as much time talking about experience of LGBT students at [my
university]. That's kind of how that decision ends up getting made. It's one of those things that you go back and forth on. That's always the challenge and that's always the debate that I have with educators around this work…

It is clear throughout John’s interview that he understands and cares deeply about intersectional identity-based differences. While he limits what he includes of it in his program conceptualization, his words reveal that he grapples with wanting to include it in his programs. It is perhaps in the following quote where the researcher most felt John’s experience of struggle between understanding and feeling the urgency of marginalized issues while also holding back on their inclusion. John says, “Once people feel more comfortable with me and they feel that I'm not going in there like, ‘Black Lives Matter!’ which I want to do and I would love to do, but I can't do that until they feel that I'm not judging them. They want to feel like they're not being judged by me and then I can say that and then they can feel like, all right if I don't agree with that I can ask the question.” In John’s calculation of risk and reward, he believes that inclusion of marginalized identities is really only possible once he has gotten through to the audience on what he identifies as the most pressing material and, as previously discussed, once he has a relationship with the audience, which takes time. Until this happens, the inclusion of marginalized identities poses a risk for John. While trainer positionality will be addressed further in the next subordinate theme, it is impossible within the context of this quote to not also be acutely aware of John’s positionality as a Black man at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) and in front of predominantly white audiences as he makes this assessment of risk and reward.

Adrienne and Zoe also speak in depth about their experience of risk, but for them their calculation of risk focuses on the risk to marginalized students in their audiences if their trainings do not include information about marginalized identities. For Adrienne, this is particularly rooted
in their own experiences of usually not having their identities reflected in trainings and the resulting feelings of invisibility. Because of this, Adrienne says, “I might not be able to get to know every single student here, but if I can make someone's day by putting the same gender, or gender nonconforming, trans person, person of color, or person of low income in this without even... it doesn't take much energy on my part to make a huge impact on somebody else.”

Zoe also calculates her inclusion of marginalized identities as low risk with high reward for students in the audience who hold those identities. Zoe—in speaking to LGBTQ experiences—notes that “it strikes [her] as odd” that experiences of marginalized identities get seen as “affinity issues” when they are “community issues.” Zoe talks about the inclusion of LGBTQ identities within programs as speaking:

Volumes to all of the students, but I think for the cis straight students in the room, it's sort of like at worst, they're hearing information that may not apply to them, but at best, they're recognizing that there are members of their community who have those experiences. I think just putting that on people's radar. I think it means a lot to the queer students who see themselves in a presentation…

Speaking directly to calculations of risk, Zoe goes on to say, “…when I'm thinking about what are the risks? At worst, there's five minutes that may have made a world of difference to someone, or maybe no one paid attention, but the impact could be huge.”

In trainers’ calculations of risk and reward there was the question of whether or not to include marginalized identities, but for some trainers there was also perceptions of risk and reward related to how and why marginalized experiences are included within trainings. In these experiences, trainers had come to the conclusion that it is important to include marginalized experiences of identity, but there was a layer of assessment of the risk and reward related to how
it is included and why. Katie provided what the researcher saw as an excellent framework for considering this risk and reward when she talked about her educational experiences. Katie talks about her educational and professional background in sociology and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies and being exposed to authors such as Adrienne Rich and Audre Lorde. Rooted in this background, her program conceptualization is informed by theory, “about identity and identity politics and what does queer critique, what does queer of color critique look like.” From this, Katie asks, “how do we apply that to the work that we are doing and not replicate and sort of reify power dynamics in our work?” For Katie, her professional socialization has given her an awareness of and fear about unintentional harm when addressing marginalized identities.

Julie and Adrienne also speak directly to their experience of calculating risk and reward related to how and why marginalized identities are included in their programs. At one point, Julie was discussing research that indicates that Black women are less likely to report incidents of sexual and gender-based violence. Julie notes that this, “in and of itself, is an important piece ... really important piece of information to pay attention to, but the danger I think from the standpoint of doing education work is I don't want to be saying to students, the rule ... sort of implicit ... the rule is black women don't report, right?” Julie goes on to ask “how do we both speak to people in all of their complex identities in the room and also respectfully represent that so it's not like identity politics?” Julie experiences a tension of risk and reward between addressing and breaking down societal barriers that contribute to Black women’s underreporting and not unintentionally conflating all Black women’s experiences into one essentialized experience that also risks reinforcing underreporting.

Adrienne also discussed the risk of reinforcing stereotypes or tokenizing people. This was of central concern to Adrienne in the inclusion of marginalized identities and, particularly, as it
related to people in power making decisions about how to mark these differences in trainings. As one example, Adrienne talks about not adding, “Muslim just because I want diversity, because it's also tokenizing.” Adrienne talked specifically about changing names in scenarios to reflect diversity noting that for “some people it's like, ‘We should change names to be less Anglo-Saxon or whatever,’ which I think is good, but then it's like ... who is deciding this, who is deciding what's white and what's not white? Are we just feeding into these stereotypes? I often get into my own spiral of thought. I think that is one of the challenges in representing other identities.” Adrienne also speaks to risk of inclusion as it relates to the facilitator. Adrienne notes that even if marginalized experiences are represented within a program in a way that feels productive, risk of successful execution is dependent on the trainer and their skills. Adrienne notes that “the facilitator needs to be able to be prepared to talk about this in a way that's not messed up and with the intention of what they wanted. Without the knowledge, or understanding, or skill… probably it's going to perpetuate all of the different isms that you're trying to actually negate.”

The final piece that came up within the data related to calculations of risk and reward with including or not including marginalized identities was specific to what organizations and their stakeholders are willing to risk. Sara spoke to this in regards to whether or not her office felt they could address privilege in their trainings. To this, Sara noted that while there is interest and it is seen as important and her office has made a lot of progress, “it feels very, I don't know, fragile, I guess. We've gotten a lot of students to buy in to what we're selling, I guess, and it feels like we don't want to push them away, in anyway, so there's a little bit of worry around that.” Among stakeholders, conversations about calculations of risk and reward in including or not including marginalized identities do not necessarily happen in fully explicit and transparent ways regarding the impact these decisions have on different populations of students. Sawyer
raises this issue, noting that often these conversations among organizational stakeholders will focus on the risk and reward for one population of students (usually privileged student populations) while not talking about what is implicitly then being said about others students (usually marginalized populations). In these moments and in efforts to encourage inclusion of marginalized identity pieces, Sawyer makes it a practice to name this and to make the holistic implications of these decisions explicit among stakeholders. In speaking to this, Sawyer says:

I think in terms of worrying about trainings that might discomfort particular identities who are in the majority—which is the conversation that happens over and over in lots of coded ways—it’s not always that direct. I have said to professional staff that I work with, to colleagues, to my supervisors, to the vice-president in different spaces, I’ll just rename it. “I hear a concern about how we might make uncomfortable a student who has these majority identities. We’re okay that the students with the marginalized identities are already uncomfortable. That discomfort is acceptable to us.” And, when you frame it that way, people are like, “Well...” and you get a little room for leverage, then we start saying well maybe you can have a little more latitude…

Sawyer goes on to talk about higher education as space for creating dissonance for students as a practice of learning and development. Sawyer questions the difference in where this occurs, noting that, “the classroom becomes the space where that’s more allowable, then maybe student affairs. That’s still seen as co-curricular, where we’re supposed to take care of their precious children, not over simulate them and introduce them to the ugly realities of a system of oppression.” Sawyer’s approach is bold, but it also forces an acknowledgement of an unsettling calculation of risk that is often prioritized and accepted in not including marginalized identities. Sawyer’s approach forces an acknowledgement that in centering privileged identities over
marginalized that, “We are okay as a community in upsetting some people. We’re already upsetting, trans-students, black students, students who are not Christians. It feels more heightened around these identities and where do we stand as a division, as a department.”

Lastly, as was stated at the beginning of the discussion and became evident throughout discussion of trainers’ calculations of risk and reward, this process is not easy nor does it always result in simple yes or no answers for trainers. Even when trainers such as John express that including marginalized identities too soon is a risk, he and all trainers—whether they prioritized inclusion of marginalized identities broadly or not—offered many tangible steps that they take in their training to address marginalized identities, particularly around experiences of LGBT folk and People of Color. In ending the discussion of perceptions of risk and reward, it is important to demonstrate this nuance and illuminate the fact that even in what might appear to be binary decisions of inclusion or not, there is complexity.

For many trainers, consciously including names that might reflect different racial or gender identities and open space to for marginalized populations to see themselves or for all participants to think about diversity of experience is perceived as a low risk way of including marginalized identities. While Adrienne doesn’t always agree with how this is done, particularly when it is used to signal nonwhite experiences, they note that using names in scenarios that are often considered to be gendered in particular ways can easily serve as a signal that sexual and gender-based violence can happen within mixed gender as well as same-sex situations.

Katie spoke about the importance of her bystander programs offering general intervention skills, but also moving beyond this to think about the cultural aspects of a student’s specific groups. For example, in talking about how she might work with a group of predominantly male and white students leaders involved in outdoor programs, she wants participants to gain
bystander skills while also think about, “how do you create inclusive community norms?” In getting to this, Katie has participants think about the particulars of their organization’s activities, but also, “how do you think about the heritage of people who are not male doing outdoor work? How do you think about the heritage of people who are not white engaged in outdoor and conservation work? Where do you find your place in this activity that is important to you?”

John talks about the influence of his education and training on how he’s conceptualizing identity-based information noting, “It influences in the sense that I’m aware that the experiences are not universal. The experiences of assault are not necessarily universal across all groups. Each group has its own concerns.” While time factors and group makeup have impacted what John prioritizes in a program, even under these constraints, he talks about moments where he is able to bring “intersectionality” into that context through statistics or:

I'll say something along the lines of, “groups that are generally underprivileged or underrepresented in society tend to experience higher rates of assault because it's not about sex, it's about power and control” and that kind of stuff. People are targeting groups that they see as vulnerable….That might be race, that might be gender, that might be orientation. Somebody who is less likely to be believed if they report it, which might be because of all those things too.

Sawyer similarly speaks to inclusions of power in her bringing in experiences of LGBT people and people of color. Sawyer notes that in her program materials –while she doesn’t always use them– there “is at least one scenario that looks at suspicion of law enforcement by people of color communities and there is one of the trans scenarios that talks about suspicion of health centers staff and medical staff.” Through these scenarios, Sawyer is able to start conversations about “societal factors” that connect to different identities and further impact
survivor’s experiences of resource and justice seeking (such as doctors and clinicians or police
and legal avenues, respectively.)

Finally, some of the participants did speak to the importance of acknowledging privileged
identities along with marginalized identities. For example, not just talking about race as only
about people of color, but also about white people; making explicit that white people also have a
race and racialized experience connected to sexual and gender-based violence. Zoe spoke to this
directly regarding gender and sexuality privilege noting that in her trainings when she is talking
about identity, “I don't want there to be the invisible majority.” In trainings for Zoe, she
acknowledges that she might do it better with some trainings than others, but it is about, “getting
people to really see, instead of just talking about queer students, talking also about straight
students, talking about cis[gender] students, getting people to see the privileges that they hold...”

Overall, on the surface, it might appear that trainers are making simplistic, binary
decisions about inclusion or exclusion of identity-based content, but what the data repeatedly
shows is that beyond what trainers do is a deep grappling with this content and a seeking of
nuanced—and even if for some, subtle—ways to speak to marginalized and privileged students
experiences.

**Subordinate Theme 3.2: Awareness of the Impact of Trainer’s Own Positionality.** The
other important consideration regarding the participants’ grappling with identity was their
awareness of the impact of their own positionality. As has already been shown, holding a
marginalized identity can definitely influence a trainers’ commitment or insistence on including
the shared marginalized identity within their program content. What the data also revealed is that
a trainers’ privileged identity or identities can also influence a trainers’ commitment or insistence
on including privileged and/or marginalized identities within their program content. For
example, Julie identities as white and because of this feels committed to including program content on experiences of people of color as well as talking about white privilege. Julie notes that, “Because I look so plain they're often surprised when they hear me talking about ... particularly issues around white supremacy in the U.S. and just trying to help people have a consciousness about why would that be a barrier. Why would race and racism be a barrier to someone coming forward to report?”

The data also showed that while both privileged and marginalized identities of the trainers can positively influence commitment, it can also present conflict or questions about their own place in speaking to marginalized identities. Connected, it can also create worry for trainers about how their privileged positionality around a particular identity might lend itself to overlooking or being unaware of certain marginalized experiences. At other times, trainers’ experience awareness of their own positionality through their understanding that how they self-identify does not always match up with how the audience is reading them, which can render their own positionality invisible if they do not explicitly name it. For example, identifying as a person with a nonbinary gender, racial, and sexual identity, but being read in binary or monoracial ways such as man/woman, white/black, or gay/straight.

Zoe and Sawyer speak to many of these layers within the data. They both articulate how they experience their own identities as influencing their conceptualization of program content related to identity as well as the ways in which their own positionality can create limitations around addressing or even thinking about particular identities. Zoe talks about her queer identity influencing her commitment to include content on LGBT experiences in her program, noting that:
I think being a queer person has definitely made me, if there's an opportunity even to interject with a personal something, I think I've found that that can be really useful. I don't want to go in and just talk about myself, but I think that if you're talking about power dynamics and vulnerability and coming out and that kind of thing, it's something that I feel like I can get a little street cred having gone through some of that myself…

Zoe also recognizes the ways in which holding this marginalized identity helps her think about other marginalized identities:

I think it has helped me, because I know how important it is to include for myself and I think that that has also helped me with other identities that I don't hold to recognize that it's probably a similar experience. It's important to include, for the same reason it's important to me to include this, and that I can really understand the importance of the LGBT stuff. Although I'm not a person of color, I can understand that it's really important to have represented different cultural concerns or racial concerns. I think that it's really expanded my view of it…

Sawyer speaks quite impressively throughout her interview about the importance of including marginalized identities and speaks the most out of all participants about the need to support trans and gender nonconforming students in programs and in university policies. Within her interview, she also speaks throughout about how she identifies as a queer woman and how this influences her commitment to LGBT students and her choices about being out to students in general and in her programs. While aspects of Sawyer’s positionality were already salient throughout her interview, when asked specifically about whether her own identities impact what she considers and/or includes regarding program content related to identity, Sawyer said, “I don’t think about my status as a citizen and as a person whose only language is English. I don’t think
about what would be the experience of accessing services for a Chinese National Student…I think they play a part in terms of what do you select or what do you tune to and certainly my identities as a queer person show up within some of the material that I present.” Sawyer goes on to talk about her mixed racial identity, noting that she doesn’t tend to center this because “that’s typically not the audience who is the room” and because of “probably my own fears and concerns about the ways in which that would get taken out of context or well, problematized in ways that aren’t necessarily emblematic of real lived experience.”

Sawyer spoke so naturally about her positionality in terms of both her marginalized and privileged identities and how they connect to her conceptualization of program content. Given this, what was particularly surprising to the researcher was that Sawyer’s last sentence to this self-reflection of her experience was to say, “Haven't given that a lot of thought, truth be told.” Shortly after this, Sawyer also says, “...I have not been forced to reflect on how my identities show up or don’t in course content. Some of the questions you’ve asked are the first time I’ve really seriously considered that, right?”

Finally, John and Katie also both talked about ways in which they include identity-based content in their programs while also speaking to the ways their awareness of their own positionality influences their program conceptualization. With John and Katie, their awareness felt particularly related to how they see their audiences as possibly experiencing their identities. For John, he says:

I think that my identity as a male makes me enter a room of all men with a leg up in terms of connecting to that group. I think my identity as a Black male sometimes has a positive in terms of that connection, sometimes not. I think sometimes it can work with some groups where they're like, “here's this cool Black dude who wants to come talk
about this stuff” and some groups are like, “oh God here's this Black guy.” I think it plays both ways.

John goes on to say that he doesn’t see anyone’s positionality as determining their ability to engage specific groups of students, but he does think that it’s just, “one more step I have to hurdle over to build a connection because there's always going to be hurdles to building connections to that group.”

Katie expressed that her own identities “100%” have influence. While John knows his visible identities as a Black man are being experienced differently by different audiences, Katie knows that the invisibility of some of her identities and experiences means she is likely read incorrectly by audiences unless she discusses her identities. Katie says she identifies as a, “cis[gender] femme-presenting person and I am married to a man but I identify as queer so have had dating experiences and relationship experiences [with] lots of different people.” Because of this Katie notes that she has “to do a lot of disclosure in my conversations about pieces of my identity” and that she makes it “a point to talk about, you know, when I was dating men, here's how I have been socialized to talk about this, but when I'm dating women or when I'm dating nonbinary people, this is how my experience was and here is how I had to learn this because nobody told me that in these other settings.” Katie knows that without this type of disclosure on her part that her audiences “wouldn't necessarily say ‘oh yeah, Katie's a queer person.’”

Katie also brings in another really important factor of identity influence as she is white, but is also now part of an interracial family as an adult and married to a man of color. This presents its own unique experience in that Katie “lived [her] whole life as a white person” but is now navigating race in a different way. While Katie still carries white privilege, it has impacted
how she personally experiences conversations about race and racism and has made her “more acutely aware of things now…that I never would have had access to.”

Similar to participants’ calculation of risk and reward, their awareness of their positionality did not play out in universal ways in terms of their grappling with group identities and identity-based content. While all participants acknowledge and spoke fluently to their own positionality, how this influenced their program conceptualization regarding identity-based content varied from person to person. It is clear that participants recognize the importance of identity-based factors in the experiences of and response to sexual and gender-based violence and they might even consequentially include related program content, but even more significant, the data shows the deep internal processes that trainers utilize in grappling with group identities and identity-based content.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings and analysis of the data of this study as three superordinate and seven subordinate themes. Present within and across all of the themes are a complex and interlocking set of experiences that impact how trainers conceptualize their program content broadly and specifically related to gender, race, and sexuality. The data illuminates layered and nuanced experiences that influence this phenomenon for sexual assault prevention program trainers. It is the collective experience each trainer has of their awareness of their organization, understanding their audience, and grappling with group identities and identity-based content that guide a trainer’s conceptualization of program content related to identity.

The next chapter moves beyond presenting the data and the study findings, to a discussion of how the superordinate and subordinate themes connect to the literature and the
theoretical framework of this study. The discussion also includes implications for practice and speaks to opportunities for future research.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how sexual assault prevention program trainers for college campuses conceptualize their program content, particularly as it relates to gender, race, and sexuality. Through the theoretical framework of socialization theory, this study sought to understand how a trainer’s professional and organizational socialization impacts this program conceptualization. Therefore, the research question for this study was: How do sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses understand their professional and organizational socialization as impacting their conceptualization of program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity? An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used for this study, which allowed the researcher to explore the lived experiences of the study’s participants, yield and analyze the complex data gathered, and develop emergent themes. Through this method, three superordinate themes were identified: Awareness of Organization; Understanding Their Audience; and Grappling with Group Identities and Identity-Based Content. This chapter will ground the superordinate themes within discussion about this study’s connection to the theoretical framework and contributions to research. From this, it will discuss the study’s implications for practice. Finally, it will provide discussion on the limitations of the study and make recommendations for future research.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

This study utilized socialization theory (Hart, 1991) as its theoretical framework. Socialization theory—encompassing both professional socialization and organizational socialization—broadly refers to the process through which an individual learns and responds to the knowledge, values, attitudes, and behaviors that they are expected to possess or acquire as part of a particular profession and connected to a particular organizational role (Hart, 1991;
The role socialization process for sexual assault prevention program trainers occurs through their professional socialization and in their organizational socialization. Professional socialization encompasses one’s process of gaining the relevant knowledge and skills necessary for a particular role and this socialization can include a range of experiences from familiarizing oneself with relevant literature to earning a formal degree or a certification or training within a particular field. Organizational socialization addresses the process by which an individual professional person learns and responds to the knowledge, values, and beliefs of their employer organization in order to be successful within their organizational role, including beliefs specific to sexual assault prevention (Nelson, 1987; Hart, 1991).

Connected to organizational socialization specifically and central to socialization theory, socializations theorists developed and applied a stage framework as a means of understanding more deeply individuals’ experiences of organizational socialization. This four stage framework examines individuals at their point of initial connection with their organization in the ‘anticipation’ and ‘encounter’ stages and in the latter two stages of connection with their organization through their experiences of ‘adjustment, adaption, and/or change’ and ‘resolution, stabilization, and/or withdrawal’ (Nelson, 1987, 1990; Hart, 1991; Armstrong, 2010; Smith, & Stewart, 1999). While this study did not engage participants over time, participants were asked to reflect on their experience of organizational socialization, which occurred over time. Therefore, the stage framework for organizational socialization provided a guiding structure for understanding trainers’ experience of their professional and organizational socialization as being aligned and/or as misaligned and how trainers responded to this experience in terms of adjustment, adaption, or change and resolution, stabilization, or withdrawal. Findings of this
study support socialization theory and reveal that each trainers’ professional socialization and organizational socialization impacts their program conceptualization broadly and specifically related to gender, race, and sexuality. This section will speak to the overall connections of this study to socialization theory as well as draw connections within each superordinate theme.

**Awareness of Organization.** It is within this first superordinate theme and its subordinate themes (1.1 Organizational Connection as Aligned and/or Misaligned and 1.2 Environmental Stabilization) that organizational socialization and the stage framework provided by socialization theorists most strongly and explicitly emerged within this study’s data.

*Anticipation* and *encounter* are outlined by socialization theorists as the first two stages of organizational socialization. During this period, the employee and the organization are assessing how their expectations of one another prior to the start of employment (anticipation) line up with reality after the start of employment (encounter). It is during the encounter stage where the new employee is learning the politics of their organization and assessing where the organization’s knowledge, values, and beliefs are aligned and/or misaligned with their own.

While participants in the current study did not always speak to their organizational expectations prior to starting at their university (anticipation), all of the participants spoke to their encounter with their organization in terms of their understanding of alignment and/or misalignment with their organization (1.1 Organizational Connection as Aligned and/or Misaligned).

Overall, each participant was very clear about whether or not they felt a general sense of alignment or misalignment with their organization. The use of a qualitative study for this project was particularly useful as it also allowed for nuance within this general sense that each participant holds and produced complex data related to the theorized stages of organizational socialization. For example, theorists have noted that the stages of organizational change are not
necessarily linear or static. With Sara, it appeared to the researcher that she had a general sense of alignment with her organization, but further into her time at her organization, significant moments of misalignment have also occurred and colored her sense of alignment. As another example, Julie identifies as feminist and anticipated this to be an alignment with feminist academics at her organization. On the surface, this would seem like an alignment, but in reality, Julie has struggled significantly with feminist disconnects that have contributed to her overall feeling of misalignment with her institution.

The second subordinate theme, Environmental Stabilization, emerged from the data and connects directly to the final two stages of organizational socialization: adjustment, adaption, or change and resolution, stabilization, or withdrawal. Socialization theorists note that it is during these stages, “individuals, when faced with demands, strive toward some resolution of these demands” (Nelson, 1987, p. 315). Organizational socialization is a powerful force that can reinforce one’s professional socialization or work to overpower one’s professional socialization when there is conflict or misalignment. As Hart (1991) notes, if conflict of knowledge, values, or beliefs arise between the two, “the salience, immediacy, and power of the work context hold sway over education and training” (p. 452). Sara’s response to her environment follows the stages of organizational socialization quite closely and offers a perfect example of organizational socialization trumping professional socialization. On the surface, it would appear that Sara has a general sense of alignment with her organization. In all likelihood, this is probably her day-to-day experience, but through her sharing her experience of program conceptualization, it becomes clear that she has previously experienced significant moments of misalignment with her organization. For Sara, the misalignment is directly related to her organization disagreeing with some of her professional socialization and not allowing her to utilize it. In response, Sara has
adjusted to be able to continue with her job, but it also seems to create a level of withdrawal or perhaps demoralization for Sara while engaging in her work.

For Julie and Sawyer, they both had a strong sense of misalignment with their organization and their awareness of their organization was also very salient and easily and quickly articulated. However, findings from this study also contribute important data to this final stage of organizational socialization. Socialization theorists outline resolution, stabilization, or withdrawal as the final stage of organizational socialization. Smith and Stewart (1991) do note that individuals might also resist, but this would likely lead an individual towards a withdrawal phase. Sawyer and possibly Julie offer a different outcome. Sawyer consistently demonstrated resistance and subversion as her final stage or perhaps resolution. For Sawyer the misalignment is quiet salient and she seeks “figuring out in between ways” around misalignments or confronting misalignments directly. Julie’s experience presented the most misalignment with her organization out of all the study participants. Therefore, the presence and impact of organizational socialization was most salient with her experience. In Julie’s conceptualization of program content, there was a consistent struggle for her between what she knows through her professional socialization and what she feels she can do, which is rooted in her organizational socialization. Julie continues to struggle with how or if she can resolve this misalignment and whether or not she can continue to resist.

For participants whose sense of alignment with their organizations’ beliefs, values, and knowledge about sexual and gender-based violence was very strong—Katie, Zoe, and John—the experience of organizational socialization was much less salient in their experience of program conceptualization. As Katie, Zoe, and John did not feel a tension with their organization or within their organizational socialization, they were able to operate more freely within the
parameters they have created for themselves through their professional socialization. Katie’s sense of alignment with her organization was not particularly salient during her program conceptualization, but it was quite salient when she reflected on her awareness of other trainers’ experiences of misalignment with their organization elsewhere. While John and Zoe recognize that their organization impacts their program conceptualization, their sense of alignment with their organization made its impact less salient in their experience. Instead, it caused pauses in their interviews for reflection, and as John notes, the alignment is so great that it makes it hard for him to separate out the impact of his organization on his program conceptualization. While data revealed that this alignment for John, Zoe, and Katie was positive for them and part of their program conceptualization, it is important to be mindful of the risks of “over-conformity” in which individuals could become complacent or so deeply adapt and conform to the values and beliefs of the organization that a resistance or inability to change develops (Nelson, 1990). If the organization and individual do not mutually hold one another accountable to keeping current on research and best practices, there could be risk of becoming stagnant over time.

Finally, Adrienne raises interesting questions about the impact of an individual having lower expectations during the anticipation phase and then encountering alignment with the organization. While salience was low for other participants who experienced alignment with their organization, for Adrienne the salience was high. It seemed to the researcher that it was possible that this positive discrepancy between anticipation and encounter was precisely why Adrienne’s sense of alignment was so positive, salient, and easy to articulate. What is also interesting to the researcher is that not only does Adrienne express alignment around social justice issues between them and their organization, but they also express a mutual organizational and individual commitment to their own growth and learning, actively resisting stagnation.
Understanding Their Audience. The second superordinate theme and subordinate themes (2.1 Assuredness through Establishing the Goals and Needs of the Audience; 2.2 Validation through Grounding Audience Need in Research; 2.3 Balancing Experiences with and Knowledge about Specific Student Populations) also strongly reflect the interplay between organizational and professional socialization among the trainers in their program conceptualization broadly and specifically related to gender, racial, and sexual identity. Perhaps most notably this comes through in trainers’ approach to understanding their audiences and in trainers’ utilization of data or literature. Regardless of a trainer’s path of professionalization, all trainers seemed to be professionally socialized to establish the goals and needs of the audience by asking questions about their audience and the purpose of the training before conceptualizing a program’s content. Across the board, this was the first stated step for all trainers in their program conceptualization and there was no discussion of any organizational resistance to this practice among trainers.

In understanding their audience, trainers also turned to relevant data or literature in conceptualizing their program content, which demonstrated a grounding in their professional socialization in sexual assault prevention. For some, this use of literature and research was very explicit. Sara spoke directly to her professional training and its prioritizing of research. Sara also spoke to her utilization of data as specifically giving her confidence in her programs and gaining credibility with and buy-in from her student audiences. While turning to the research and data helped validate trainers’ program conceptualization and sense of understanding their audience, the risk with literature and research is its inconsistencies. Most notably, its inconsistencies in identifying most effective program content, including whether or not the impact of identities should be addressed in programs and if so, which identities. Julie clearly illustrates the impact of
these inconsistencies on her program conceptualization when she noted that she was eager to spend time looking at the research and data to develop new programming over the summer, but she also questioned if there are certain components she should always use in trainings or not.

**Grappling with Group Identities and Identity-Based Content.** Organizational socialization, professional socialization, and trainers’ own positionality all impact trainers’ grappling with group identities and identity-based content within their program conceptualization. All trainers held strong beliefs about conceptualizing their program content around gender, racial, and sexual identity and each trainer’s organizational socialization impacted their ability to act on their beliefs. Through each trainers’ professional socialization and their own experiences of their identities, they all believed that gender, race, and sexuality mattered in sexual assault prevention efforts. While they all held this belief, it did not result in a universal approach among trainers to addressing gender, race, and sexuality within their program conceptualization. To varying degrees, every trainer but John stressed an importance in addressing identity-based differences from the beginning of program conceptualization. John expressed wishing this were possible, but believed that he first had to build a relationship with his audience and gain their trust before he could pull in this information.

In many ways, this research adds to the theory of socialization by illustrating ways in which one’s own positionality intersects with one’s professional socialization. Across all trainers, aspects of their professional socialization have asked them to personally reflect on their own identities and how they impact their relationship to sexual assault prevention. All trainers were able to speak quite eloquently to their own positionality regarding both their marginalized and privileged identities and how they experience their positionality as impacting their program conceptualization related to gender, race, and sexuality. For example, Sawyer and John spoke to
this particularly as it related to all-male trainings, both noting that their visibility as a queer woman and Black man, respectively, impacts how and when they feel they can address gender, race, and sexuality. While Sawyer sees her positionality in all-male trainings as an additional challenge she has to address, she also uses it as a way to signal her support of and availability to LGBTQ students in her audiences.

Organizational socialization had great impact on trainers in terms of program conceptualization around gender, race, and sexuality. When an organization disagreed with a trainers’ approach, it had the ability to impact program conceptualization and the trainer. While this was universal, its impact and trainer response played out in different ways. For Sara, misalignment with her organization led to a reduction in her attempts to include identity-based information she knew was important and this has, at times, impacted her morale. For Julie, she continuously returns to her professional socialization and to data to try and find ways to effectively argue her point about the importance of and appropriate ways to include identity-based content. Sawyer’s organization’s resistance has created in her a counter-resistant stance in which she works to find subversive ways to include identity-based content. For trainers such as Zoe, Katie, and Adrienne, who do not feel at odds with their respective organizations around identity-based information, it becomes another point of ease where there is not tension between the trainer’s professional and organizational socialization.

**Contributions to Research**

Literature reviewed in this study and considered in relation to this study’s contributions focuses on literature on college campus sexual assault prevention programs and literature on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence. The nature of the theoretical framework and research question for this study places relevant research and the specific
literature reviewed in a unique position in this study. The theoretical framework for this study, socialization theory, speaks to sexual assault prevention program trainers’ experience of professional socialization and organizational socialization. The research question for this study asked, how do sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses understand their professional and organizational socialization as impacting their conceptualization of program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity? As such, in speaking to their experience with program conceptualization, participants were asked in part to speak to their experience as it connects to their professional socialization as a sexual assault prevention trainer. As previously noted, professional socialization speaks to the relevant knowledge and skills a person needs to ascertain for a particular professional role and acquisition of these skills can come from many places, including formal education and training as well as self-education and professional development. All of these areas of professional socialization connect to research and literature. The findings of this study demonstrated that participants’ professional socialization is fundamental to their program conceptualization and the findings illustrate that a significant part of trainers experience conceptualizing their program content includes turning to relevant research in implicit and explicit ways. Therefore, participants may have direct knowledge of research examined in this study’s literature review or may have abstractly interacted with it as a body of knowledge and aspect of professional socialization within their field. Given the complex positioning and dual nature of the literature reviewed in this study, this section serves two purposes. First, it discusses within each superordinate theme the contributions of this study’s findings to research on college campus sexual assault prevention programs and on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence. Second, this section also discusses this study’s
data on trainers’ engagement of research as part of their professional socialization, as this data further contributes to the literature.

**Awareness of Organization.** While the literature—particularly literature on college prevention programs—does speak to an awareness of organizations and their important role in preventing, addressing, and responding to sexual and gender-based violence, literature reviewed within this study does not directly speak to the impact of the organization on the trainer and the trainer’s program conceptualization. Findings from this study within its first superordinate theme and its subordinate themes (1.1 Organizational Connection as Aligned or Misaligned and 1.2 Environmental Stabilization) provide contributions to the literature by raising important questions about organizations that are not addressed within it.

Within the literature on sexual assault prevention programs for college campuses there is an awareness of the organization regarding colleges and universities’ (i.e., organizations) responsibility to address sexual and gender-based violence and that failure to do so would risk their federal funding under Title IX (Cullitan, 2010; Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Lombardie, 2013). While addressing sexual and gender-based violence is federally mandated for universities, federal agencies generally only provide guidance and not formal, comprehensive requirements for how organizations must approach prevention and education on their campuses. Similarly, and perhaps consequentially, the literature also does not mandate or single out a universal way organizations must address sexual assault prevention in terms of types of program and program content (DeGue et al., 2014; Vladutiu et al., 2011; Anderson & Whiston, 2005). Instead, the literature offers data on which types of sexual assault prevention programs and topics are most commonly utilized as well as on how identity differences impact experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, but there is no agreement within the literature and among
theorists about what type of program conceptualization and content is most effective in sexual assault prevention (Vladutiu et al., 2011; Anderson & Whiston, 2005).

This is not offered to discredit the wealth of information produced by literature in the field. Instead, the findings of this study offer an important contribution to the literature related to awareness of organization. As organizations are not federally mandated to provide sexual assault prevention programs with a specific approach or set program content, there is space for the trainer and organization to experience alignment in beliefs and knowledge in which they can thrive or perhaps become stagnant within this autonomy and/or they can experience misalignment that can cause tensions and impede trainers’ program conceptualization and university prevention efforts. The array of possible approaches the literature outlines and the lack of conclusive data on effectiveness of any one program specifically or programs broadly, highlights uncertainty that trainers may experience as they turn to their professional socialization regarding literature for guidance in their program conceptualization. Similarly, if organizations are also looking for guidance from the literature on what programs to focus on or what type of trainer to hire, they will not find a definitive answer. The multiplicity of approaches to program conceptualization can result in the organization and trainer holding differing beliefs and knowledge regarding sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response as well as program conceptualization broadly and specifically as relates to gender, racial, and sexual identity. This study’s findings suggest that these differences can contribute to experiences of misalignment between a trainer and the organization or among different stakeholders in the organization. Therefore, the literature might benefit from explicitly addressing the lack of universal agreement on program conceptualization and how universities and trainers might navigate this in their prevention efforts.
**Understanding Their Audience.** Through the qualitative exploration of trainers’ program conceptualization, this study’s findings explicitly mirror much of the literature’s grappling with and conclusions about program content and format while also offering implicit guidance that trainers’ may glean from the literature. This can be seen within all of the subordinate themes: 2.1 Assuredness through Establishing the Goals and Needs of the Audience; 2.2 Validation through Grounding Audience Need in Research; and, 2.3 Balancing Experiences with and Knowledge about Specific Student Populations.

Within the findings of this study, all trainers spoke explicitly of their need to establish the goals and needs of their audience as their first step of program conceptualization, and through this process, they gain a sense of assuredness. While trainers in this study did not explicitly identify how they came to this as their first step, nearly all spoke to their use of relevant external and internal research within their program conceptualization, and literature and research consistently centers the audience. The literature reviewed in this study strongly demonstrates focused attention by researchers to questions of who the audience in a program is—specifically related to binary heterosexual cisgender white identity, though identified in research almost universally as simply ‘men’ and ‘women’ without acknowledgment of the exclusion of marginalized intersecting experiences of race, gender, or sexuality—and what type of program is best equipped to meet these audiences’ needs. Regarding questions of whom the audience is, the literature reviewed does not explicitly state, but instead shows to the reader, that it is important to ask questions about your audience and their needs prior to a particular training. Universally across the literature, researchers focus on the makeup of their audience in terms of program content, format, and evaluation as well as in their own thoughts on limitations and future study.
Trainers in this study described their use of literature and research in their program conceptualization and in understanding the needs of their audience. Research has much to say about program content, and even as there is no universally promoted approach, there is an ongoing theme of the importance of challenging gender essentialism. This is most noted as it relates to rape supportive attitudes, particularly rape myth acceptance (RMA) and sociocultural beliefs related to traditional gender roles, beliefs about sexual behavior, and masculinity and aggression (Coker et al., 2011; Foubert & Newberry, 2006; Heppner et al., 1999). The other major topic or approach outlined within the literature regarding program content is bystander intervention (Banyard, 2014; Coker et al., 2011; Banyard et al., 2009; Ahrens, Rich, & Ullman, 2011). Bystander intervention programs focus on educating students about the importance of bystanders and how bystanders can help prevent, interrupt, and/or respond before or after an incident of sexual or gender-based violence. This study found that, collectively, trainers’ spoke of these different approaches while also illuminating the diversity in opinions about best practices that arise in the literature. Julie perhaps best demonstrates this when she speaks of her goal to try to “clarify which underlying constructs need to go with which training.” Julie goes on to list many of the approaches the literature recommends, wondering which approaches need to go in which trainings, if they are to be utilized at all. Finally, in this particular reflection, Julie raises questions about the timing of introducing particular program content.

Julie’s questions about timing and preparedness of the audience echo questions raised by other trainers that were not addressed in the literature. This finding highlights that a missing component in the literature is attention to the trainer’s relationship to the audience. While trainers consider and try to understand whether or not certain program content works better as an introduction and if other content works better when more of a relationship is established with an
audience or if you have a more advanced audience, this is not an area addressed within the literature. For example, Sawyer and John both speak to this in different ways. Sawyer talks about the importance of delivering consistent program content, but that she might have to adjust the language to best meet a particular audience. She notes that while she might not use the word “hegemony” with every audience, the essence of its meaning is in all of her trainings. John on the other hand does discuss reserving certain content until relationships are established. For example, while John notes a desire to address “Black Lives Matter,” he doesn’t feel he can include this until he builds trust with an audience. This study adds to the literature by demonstrating that along with consideration of what type of program content is most effective, the literature should also grapple with the timing of including particular content.

Finally, within the literature reviewed, great attention is paid to both addressing gender within the program content, but also as it relates to generalized knowledge about specific student populations. Consistent within the literature, researchers outline how important it is to challenge gender essentialism in terms of traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes, citing its existence as central to sexual assault and making it essential to address in the prevention and eradication of sexual assault. Despite this, the literature also consistently reverts right back to essentialized and stereotyped ideas about gender in how it treats and addresses its audience in its conceptualizing of program content. It is understandable that valuable statistics about sexual and gender-based violence victimization and perpetration based on gender have guided this contested question in the literature regarding whether or not sexual assault prevention programs should be conceptualized to serve separate female and male audiences, mixed gender audiences, a combination of both, or more generally treat male and female participants differently (Anderson and Whiston, 2005). This question of gender persisted so much within the literature, that in
speaking to possible limitations of a study, many researchers cited that perhaps a different gender configuration might have been more effective, whether it would have meant changing their audience to mixed or single gender (Black et al., 2000; Earle, 2009; Bradley et al., 2009).

Given this question’s persistence across and weight within the literature, a significant surprise in the data gathered from this study was that participants did not seem overall to reflect this major contradiction within the literature or grapple with this question of audience gender when conceptualizing their program content. When this did come up in the data, it was only noted by John and Sawyer specifically in regard to working with all-male participants, particularly fraternities. Even in these moments though, the focus seemed to be on believing there might need to be some additional steps they have to take to get buy-in from these audience members and there was still overall nuance in how both trainers talked about their approach to generalized knowledge about student audiences. Unlike the literature, this study found a hyper awareness of trainers in balancing experiences with and knowledge about specific student populations without making assumptions about their audience or treating their audience in a prescriptive way when conceptualizing their program content. Instead of primarily focusing on the gender of audience members, trainers wanted to know in advance of a training who their audience was, what they perceived as their particular culture, and what issues they were trying to address for themselves.

**Grappling with Group Identities and Identity-Based Content.** Central to the literature reviewed for this study was consideration of the literature’s treatment of gender, race, and sexuality within its research. While college campus sexual assault prevention program literature provides consistent attention to gender, gender essentialism, and misogyny in terms of binary, cisgender identity, there is a complete dearth of content specific to racial and ethnic identity and
white privilege and racism. Because of this, a second body of literature on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence was also reviewed. This literature was reviewed to assess what the research does have to say about gender, race, and sexuality related to the experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence in order to understand how trainers in this study might conceptualize program content specific to gender, racial, and sexual identity. This study found that unlike the college campus sexual assault prevention program literature, trainers had a wealth of information related to considerations of gender, race, and sexuality in their program conceptualization. Because of this, it is important to provide brief overviews of both bodies of literature reviewed before speaking to the participant data about particular contributions to the research.

The data within college sexual assault prevention program literature overwhelmingly suggests that race is only necessary to consider in terms of demographics; that talking about race during programs only matters when you have an audience who is predominantly people of color; and that while there is need for future study about race, it is not central to work of sexual assault prevention programs for college campuses. Only a few articles reviewed within college sexual assault prevention program literature contradicted this in anyway. There was a twenty-five-year-old study by Fonow et al. (1992) that addresses race and racism, but only related to black and white racial identity. Heppner et al. (1999) also discuss black and white racial identities, but they are primarily interested in understanding if Black men will be more positively impacted by a program with “culturally relevant” content than with a “colorblind” program (p. 17). Heppner et al. (1999) add to a troubling theme in the literature in its implicit and explicit assertion that if race is not talked about that a program is “colorblind” or “race neutral,” instead of being grounded in white racial identity and white privilege.
While this absence of discussing whiteness and white privilege continues within the literature reviewed in this study on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence, the impact of race and ethnicity, racial bias, and racism is explicit in this literature and particularly strong with regards to women of color. Within the literature on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence, it was found that race and racism directly impact women of color’s help seeking and their experience with resource and response by agencies such as hospitals, police, shelters, and court rooms (Bryant-Davis et al., 2009; Robinson and Chandek, 2000; Gillum, 2008; Maier, 2013). For example, Robinson and Chandek (2000) found that when police are called to a home by a Black woman experiencing domestic violence, police were found to be significantly less likely to arrest the assailant than when responding to a home of a White woman.

Regarding gender and sexuality, the literature reviewed demonstrates contrasts between college sexual assault prevention program literature and literature on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence, but also notes similarities. Most notably, college sexual assault prevention program literature only speaks of gender in binary ways and is not inclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming gender identities. While much of the approaches to prevention within this literature are implicitly rooted in heterosexuality, this is seldom named. For example, the literature strongly outlines challenging rape myths within program content and many rape myths are dependent on hetero and gender normative dynamics between men and women such as a woman “owing” a man sex for buying her dinner. In contrast, the literature on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence does talk about various ways marginalized gender and sexual identities can impact the experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. For example, LGBTQ survivors seeking support have experienced
being ‘outed’ as well as experienced having their gender or sexuality become the focus of interrogation or justification for their victimization (Todahl et al., 2009). Lastly, the one area in which both bodies of literature are similar is that much of the literature conflates gender and sexuality within the umbrella of LGBTQ, even while a particular study might not focus on the T or gender at all.

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the research and often contradict it. Most notably, trainers in this study contradict the literature’s implicit and explicit assertion that race is only relevant to audiences of color, that there is nothing to be said about race to predominantly white audiences, and that a program absent explicit discussion of race is race-neutral or colorblind. Trainers in this study were all aware that race, racism, and white privilege matter in the experiences of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. Similarly, participants all had a sense of LGBTQ student needs and an understanding of the difference between marginalized sexual identities and gender identities.

While trainers all shared this knowledge base, it did not mean that they arrived at a unified approach regarding how to address gender, racial, and sexual identity within their program conceptualization. Instead, what they did hold in common in their experience of program conceptualization regarding group identities and identity-based content was consideration of risk and reward for its inclusion. Sara notes that talking about privilege could be really beneficial, particularly with specific groups, but also expresses that there is risk there and fragility that she thinks hold her organization back from its inclusion. John too talks about the risk of including identity-based content before he has built a rapport with an audience, noting that he sees himself as being pragmatic in this evaluation. Zoe and Adrienne both note that to them, the risk is low to privileged participants in including information about marginalized
gender, racial, and sexual identities, but the reward is really high for its inclusion for audience members with marginalized identities. Therefore, both intentionally always include it in their program conceptualization. Julie, Katie, and Zoe all speak to the importance of addressing privileged identities in their program conceptualization and Zoe explicitly states that she doesn’t, “want there to be the invisible majority.” Sawyer expresses not always being able to include privileged and marginalized identity-based content in her program conceptualization due to her organization being deeply uncomfortable with offending students with privileged background. In response, the risk Sawyer often takes is to make explicit to her organization that the choice they are making then is to also be comfortable with and accept the discomfort and oppression of their students with marginalized identities.

Many of the participants also spoke to an area of concern expressed within the literature on marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence. Within this literature, particularly in the work of Crenshaw (1989, 1991), there is focused attention on the risk of reifying stereotypes and/or presupposing a universal, essentialized experiences with and response to sexual and gender-based violence among marginalized groups. As Crenshaw (1991) notes, “the problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite-that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences” (p. 1242). This study’s finding demonstrates that for many of the participants, in their conceptualization of program content related to gender, race, and sexuality, it was as important to consider what they know about these identities as it was to consider the impact of how it is presented. For Adrienne and Katie, they both speak to the power, responsibility, and risk they hold in making these decisions. Katie asks, “How do we apply that to the work that we are doing and not replicate and sort of reify power dynamics in our work?”
Finally, while the literature does not focus on how or if a trainer’s own positionality impacts their sexual assault prevention program conceptualization related to gender, race, and sexuality, this study finds that trainers’ positionality does matter in their program conceptualization in important ways. Most notably, the data demonstrates that not only are trainers considering race, gender, and sexuality in their program conceptualization, but they are also considering how their own marginalized and privileged identities impact what and how they conceptualize it in their program content. In many ways, this connects back to Katie and Adrienne’s consideration of power, responsibility, and risk. It is also in these findings that the importance of making identity visible most vividly comes to life in the data. For Adrienne and Zoe, both note their own experience with having marginalized identities. They both express the power of visibility they have personally felt in having their identities recognized in trainings in which they have been participants. It is the power of this experience of personal visibility that is at the heart of their commitment to consistently including content about marginalized identities. For Adrienne, this is about their experience with many marginalized identities including race and gender. For Zoe while she identifies as White, she uses her experience as a queer person as a tool of empathy to also understand how naming people of color’s experience in a training is likely similar in terms of its impact of visibility for her audience members of color.

Participants’ awareness of the visibility and/or invisibility of their privileged and marginalized identities to their audiences also impacted their program conceptualization. John is cognizant of the fact that his positionality as a Black man elicits different responses from his audiences when he walks into the room, noting that sometimes it serves as a barrier and other times it serves as a plus. Regardless of how John’s identity as a Black man is received, it is present in the room and he is aware of it as he conceptualizes his program content. Sawyer
speaks similarly about her identity as a queer woman and how she uses this in her program conceptualization. In order to help reach LGBTQ students, Sawyer mentions “ outing” herself in her trainings in hopes of making herself visible as a resource on these issues to students who don’t have a lot of institutional support. Katie speaks about the invisibility of many of her own identities, noting that people don’t often read her as queer. Katie is also White, but in an interracial marriage and a parent of a child of color. Similarly to Sawyer, Katie makes sure to draw from her own experiences in her trainings to signal and make visible her queerness and her relationship to race and racism. Lastly, Julie also leverages her own identities, but particularly to make visible privileged identities in the room. Julie notes the surprise she often experiences from participants when she raises white privilege and white supremacy because she is white and looks so, “plain.” Julie recognizes the power she has to bring up and make visible whiteness and white supremacy as a white person.

**Implications for Practice**

The implications of this study for theory and research also present opportunity to consider implications for practice. One of the goals that the researcher had for this study was to provide new insight into how trainers might improve their sexual assault prevention program efforts on their college campuses, particularly as they relate to issues of gender, race, and sexuality. As the literature reviewed has shown, there is a relatively expansive and growing body of literature related to college campus sexual assault prevention programs and literature related to marginalized identities and sexual and gender-based violence. The qualitative approach of this study and the use of socialization theory as its theoretical framework allowed the researcher and participants to explore the interactive socialization process that trainers’ experience with their organization as they work to conceptualize their sexual assault prevention program content,
broadly and specifically related to gender, race, and sexuality. Consequentially, this study was also able to identify areas of the trainers’ experiences conceptualizing program content that spoke to their professional socialization, reflecting best practices and gaps in the literature. Based on the data gathered in this study, this section outlines four implications for practice. These serve as recommendations to help trainers deepen and strengthen their program conceptualization broadly and specifically related to gender, race, and sexuality, but also to offer insight and recommendation for organizations to consider in understanding and supporting trainers’ work.

**Implication 1: Navigating organizations.** The data in this study revealed that trainers’ organizations have direct and permeating impact on their program conceptualization. It is recommended through this research that trainers recognize and make conscious this interactive process and its impact (positive to negative) on their program conceptualization and sexual assault prevention efforts.

**Implication 2: Acquiring information about student audiences.** The literature spends extensive time identifying its audience in the demographics and collecting data on the effectiveness of particular sexual assault prevention program content. Across participants in this study, trainers’ explicitly discussed their first step in their program conceptualization as building relationships with their student audiences. Trainers asked questions directly to their target audience to understand their particular culture and needs. From here, trainers also turned to the literature and research for guidance on their program conceptualization. This study found that while all trainers asked questions about their audience, this is not outlined in the literature and it is not clear how trainers all came to hold this as a common aspect of their professional socialization. It is recommended that this practice be codified by trainers within their professionalization for the benefit of all trainers because it presents a much more nuanced and
holistic framing of their audience than in the literature. In contrast, the literature is primarily fixated on the gender of the audience, often applying broad generalizations about men and women that contradict its program content addressing such gender essentialization.

Implication 3: Make visible privileged and marginalized identities. This implication is meant in two ways. First, through qualitative data, this study found that even if trainers do not include explicit identity-based content initially in their program, it was grappled with across all trainers’ program conceptualization. This data provides a rich narrative on the importance of including identity-based information within programs and the risks and rewards in choosing to include it or not. It is recommended that trainers take time to grapple with identity-based information, ideally with their colleagues, as it would allow for more conscious decision making about identity-based information and help identify the impact of these decisions on all members of student audiences.

Second, when the literature explicitly talks about identity, it primarily focuses on marginalized identity and does not name the privileged identities also at play in their study. The data in this study contradicts the literature as all trainers spoke to the importance and impact of marginalized and privileged identities on the experiences of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. Given this, it is recommended that in trainers grappling with group identities and identity-based content that explicit consideration is given to both marginalized and privileged identities when conceptualizing program content.

Implication 4: Provide space for trainers to explore their process. Trainers in this study had a wealth of information to share about their process conceptualizing program content and the impact of their professional socialization, organizational socialization, and their own positionality. However, the salience of their processes and various impacts differed across
trainers. For some, they had not really consciously thought about the impact of their organization on program conceptualization. For others, thinking about the impact of their own positionality was not something they had been asked to articulate before. Despite this, all trainers had important and clear experiences with and feelings about their process of program conceptualization and the impact of these various processes. Within the day-to-day work, it is difficult to make time for reflection on the work itself, but it is recommended that trainers and organizations make space for this type of exploration of experience. These efforts could help optimize prevention efforts and make visible processes of program conceptualization.

Limitations of Study

While this study offers important contributions to the topic of sexual assault prevention on college campuses, particularly as it relates to considerations of gender, race, and sexuality, it also has its limitations that need to be acknowledged. One limitation is that while the participants had an abundance of experiences with and thoughts on identity, it is impossible to know who might have talked about gender, race, and sexuality in explicit ways related to program conceptualization if not directly prompted to do so by the researcher. As all interviews were conducted via Skype, where participants could see the researcher, it is also impossible to know how participants’ possible assumptions about the positionality of researcher may have impacted discussions by participants, particularly about LGBTQ and racial identities.

Recommendations for Future Research

The data gathered in this study presents numerous recommendations for future research related to both methodology and topic. In regard to methodology, the biggest recommendation is to rethink gender as the primary point of analysis in the data. While the literature does demonstrates troubling statistical trends related to men’s perpetration and women’s
victimization, it seems researchers leap from this data to test fairly exclusively along binary gender lines and to study the gender of the audience. Doing so, intentionally or not, essentializes and assumes all men and all women have the same beliefs about and relations to sexual and gender-based violence, regardless of experience and the impact of intersecting identities. The only study to defy this in the literature reviewed was Ahrens et al. (2011) who pretested to identify which participants in their study had higher and lower initial beliefs in the helpfulness of bystander intervention and divided the group in two based on this. Through this method, one group did present as more male and one more female, but not exclusively.

Regarding program content and gendering of the audience, it would be beneficial for future research to explore the ways in which the use of a single gender or gender segregated audience format might impact or even contradict a prevention program’s effort to dismantle gender essentialism within its content. As it relates to organizational socialization, while the literature offers rich data on program conceptualization for sexual assault prevention on college campuses, there is a dearth of data within it on the impact of the organization on program conceptualization. It is recommended that future research consider the role of the organization in its guidance on prevention programs. Future research would also benefit from studies focused on the impact of including privileged and marginalized identities for all participants and not just those with a marginalized identity. Finally, it is recommended to have more research on trainers’ process and their relationship with their audience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of sexual assault prevention trainers for college campuses as they conceptualize their program content related to gender, racial, and sexual identity. This study was particularly interested in understanding how a
trainer’s educational and work experiences (or their role socialization process) impacts this phenomenon. The findings of this study offer verification of much of what is outlined in the literature regarding program considerations and content, demonstrating that despite inconsistencies in the literature about best practices that trainers do seem to hold important similarities in the experience of program conceptualization. Most notably, all trainers work to understand their audience and use research to best meet the needs of a particular audience through their program conceptualization.

The findings also address gaps in and offer some significant contributions to the literature on sexual assault prevention for college campuses. As hoped when discussing the significance of this research, this study’s aim was to make visible the complexity of identity issues related to the experience of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. On one level, the aim of this was to fill gaps in the literature related to sexual assault prevention on college campuses. This study centers the person actually leading prevention programs, the trainer. This study helps make visible trainers’ experiences of program conceptualization broadly and specifically related to gender, race, and sexuality while also considering the impact of their professional and organizational socialization on this phenomenon. The other aspect of visibility this study aimed to address was specific to illuminating the impact of identity on experiences of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. In conclusion, this study found that trainers’ positionality, professional socialization, and organizational socialization are constantly at play in the experience of program conceptualization broadly and specifically related to gender, race, and sexuality. Making visible this process through this study demonstrates trainers’ nuanced understanding of and grappling with considerations of marginalized and privileged identity-based content in their program conceptualization.
References


Appendix A: Interview Protocol

I. Intake Call (criteria check and informed consent)
Thank you for speaking with me today and for your interest in this study. As a reminder, I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University and this research is the basis of my doctoral thesis. I am also the person who will be conducting the interview should you meet the criteria for participation and remain interested in participating beyond this intake call.

My goal with this research study is to explore trainers’ experiences of conceptualizing content for their sexual assault prevention programs for college students. I want to understand how trainers think about what they do and do not include in their programs, especially as it relates to gender, race, and sexuality. I also want to explore how a trainer’s education and training and their employer’s knowledge and beliefs about sexual violence impact their thinking about their program content.

Now, I’d like to ask you some intake questions to determine if you meet the criteria to serve as a participant in this study. If you do qualify, we can discuss the interview process in more depth and answer any questions you may have to determine if you remain interested. If, after that, you are still interested, we can then set up a time for our formal interview. Does this sound ok?

1. Do you facilitate sexual assault prevention programs for college students?
2. How long have you been doing this work?
3. Approximately how many sexual assault prevention programs have you facilitated?
4. How are you employed in this work?
   a. a university employee serving as an internal trainer
   b. a nonprofit or other external agency employee serving colleges
   c. a self-employed consultant serving colleges
5. What role do you play in the program content development?
   a. Do you create the program content?
   b. Do you follow a previously created program script?
      i. Do you have flexibility around program content?
   c. Combination?

Thank you. Based on this conversation, you meet the criteria needed to participate in this study.

If you choose to continue on as a participant in this study, we will schedule our formal interview and I will send you a copy of the study’s Informed Consent Form for you to read, sign, and return to the me via fax, mailed hard copy, or scanned and emailed by the day prior to the start of our scheduled interview. At the beginning of our interview, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the informed consent form. If you have any questions or concerns before signing, you are of course free to contact me.
The interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes and consist of semi-structured, open ended questions that deeply explore your experiences related to the research question. The interview can be in person or over the internet via a provider such as Skype. After our interview and the data is transcribed, I will send you the transcription from your interview for you to review. You will have one week to provide me with any clarification or additional data. While unlikely, I would also ask that you be available for any follow up questions after the conclusion of our interview and your review of the transcript.

Do you have any questions about the interview process? About the research study more broadly? Or about me as the researcher?

At this time are you interested in moving forward as a participant in this study?

Great! I would now like to schedule our interview. What times work for you?

Wonderful! I look forward to our interview. Please let me know if you have any questions before then.

II. Interview (60-90 minutes)

Begin recording Thank you for speaking with me today. As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to explore trainers’ experiences of conceptualizing content for their sexual assault prevention programs for college students, particularly as it relates to gender, race, and sexuality.

As background, I am Director of the Tufts University Women’s Center and much of my work has focused on issues of sexual and gender-based violence. I have developed my own sexual assault prevention programs and I have also taken part in programs created by organizations that focus on this work. Through this, I became interested in understanding not just what content gets included in sexual assault prevention programs, but how trainers’ think about what is included in their program and what factors impact this, particularly as it relates to identity.

Our interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes and consists of semi-structured, open ended questions that explore your experiences related to the research question. In order to keep us to time, I may need to move us along if certain questions run long.

Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio record our conversation today. I will also be taking written notes during the interview. Only I, the Principal Investigator (PI) of this Study who is my advisor, and, possibly, a professional transcriptionist will be privy to the audio files. If a transcriptionist is used, they will have signed a confidentiality statement. Any transcriptionist as well as the PI will only be provided with the recording labeled by pseudonym, meaning they will never even know your name, to maintain confidentiality. The audio files will be destroyed at the completion of this study. I can assure you that all responses will be confidential and only pseudonyms will be used when quoting from the transcripts within this study. Only your pseudonym will be attached to the transcript. I would like to begin recording this session now, is that alright with you?
Thank you for signing and returning the informed consent form. Before we move into the interview questions, do you have any questions or concerns about the interview process or the informed consent form?

Now, on to our interview questions. Please let me know if you need clarification around any of the following questions as we go through them.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Could you tell me about a defining moment in your experience either coming to sexual assault prevention work or that you have had during it?

2. Please tell me about your role related to sexual assault prevention programs for college students?
   a. How did you get into this work?
   b. What formal education and training do you have related to this work?

3. Can you describe the culture, beliefs, and/or values you experience your organization as having related to sexual assault prevention and education for college students?

4. When you are conceptualizing content for your sexual assault prevention programs, what factors do you consider?
   a. How does your formal education and training impact this experience?
   b. How does your organization’s values and beliefs impact this experience?

5. What is the typical make-up of your student audience? (prompts: gender, race, sexuality)
   a. In what ways does the make-up of your audience impact your conceptualization of program content?
   b. How does your formal education and training impact your conceptualization of program content for this or different populations?
   c. How does your organization’s values and beliefs impact your conceptualization of program content for this or different populations?

6. When you are conceptualizing your program content, do you consider and/or include content specific to identity-based differences connected to sexual and gender-based violence? (Prompts: Differences based on gender? Race? Sexuality?)
   a. How does your formal education and training impact your conceptualization of program content related to identity?
   b. How does your organization’s values and beliefs impact your conceptualization of program content related to identity?
   c. Do your own identities impact what you consider and/or include regarding program content related to identity? Why or why not?
7. Can you talk to me about how or whether you consider and/or include identity-based content related to both marginalized and privileged identities? For example, cisgender and transgender, white and people of color. Why or why not?

8. What personal or professional barriers, if any, do you face in your experience of conceptualizing your program content related to gender, race, and sexuality?

That concludes my formal questions for you. Is there any relevant information that you feel was not covered, but would like to share at this time?

Before we conclude, I would like to now gather some basic demographic data:
1. As comfortable, could you please tell me how do you identify in terms of:
   a. Gender?
   b. Race and/or ethnicity?
   c. Sexuality?
   d. Are there any other identities that you want captured within this study?
   e. Would you like to provide your own pseudonym for the study?

III. Member Check and follow up
Thank you, this concludes our interview. If I have any follow-up questions, which would most likely only be the case if I felt clarification was needed in regards to one of your responses, would it be alright for me to contact you?

Sometime over the next month, I will email you a word-for-word transcript from this interview. If you chose, you can review the information, and you will have one week to provide me with any feedback, alterations, or corrections. Can you please confirm the email address you would like for me to email the transcript to? Do you have any questions for me? Thank you so much for your participation in this study!
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Northeastern University, Department of Education
Name of Investigator(s): Tova Sanders, Ed.D. (Principal Investigator), Steph Gauchel, M.A. (Student Researcher)
Title of Project: Making Visible: An Exploration of Trainer Conceptualization of Program Content Related to Gender, Racial, and Sexual Identity within College Sexual Assault Prevention Programs

Request to Participate in Research: We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. The purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of trainers as they conceptualize their program content for college sexual assault prevention programs for students. This study is interested in program conceptualization broadly and specifically as it relates to gender, racial, and sexual identity. It is particularly interested in understanding how a trainer’s professional and organizational experiences impact program conceptualization.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

The study will take place at any location you choose or via internet video conferencing and will take about 60-90 minutes. If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in one interview (conducted by Steph Gauchel) that will ask you to discuss your experience as it relates to the research topic. You will be given the opportunity to review your transcribed interview and provide any clarifying info or additional data. You are also being asked to be available, though not likely needed, for any follow up questions after the interview and optional transcription review are completed.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, your answers may help us to learn more about best practices for effective programming aimed at reducing the number of sexual assaults and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence experienced on college campuses across all identities.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researcher will know that you participated in this study. Any reports or publications based on this research will only use pseudonyms, and will not identify you or any other participant as being part of this project.

The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time. You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Steph Gauchel (Tel: 617-967-4236, Email: gauchel.s@husky.neu.edu), the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Tova Sanders (Email: t.sanders@neu.edu), the Principal Investigator. If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Please print, sign and date below, and fax, scan/email, or send the researcher (Steph Gauchel) your signed form by 24 hours prior to our scheduled interview time. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Participant’s signature: ____________________________ Date: __________________
Appendix C: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

**Student Researcher:** Steph Gauchel

**Project Title:** Making Visible: An Exploration of Trainer Conceptualization of Program Content Related to Gender, Racial, and Sexual Identity within College Sexual Assault Prevention Programs

**Organization:** Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies

You, ________________________, have been hired as a professional transcriber for this research study. You will be given access to hearing tapes of confidential interviews. The information on these tapes has come from research participants who participated in this project on good faith that their interviews would remain strictly confidential.

By signing below, you agree to the following:

- You are responsible to transcribe the provided audio files to ensure accurate reporting of the information provided.
- Provided pseudonyms are to be used in the transcribing and saving of all audio files attached to each participant and their interviews.
- You will not discuss any item on the recorded files with anyone other than the researcher.
- While in your possession, the audio files will be stored in locked files before and after being transcribed.
- Audio files will be destroyed within 2 weeks of completing the transcription work for the researcher.

If you have any questions or problems you may contact:

Steph Gauchel (Student Researcher), phone: 617-967-4236, gauchel.s@husky.neu.edu

Dr. Tova Sanders (Principal Investigator), Northeastern University, Boston, Ma 02115, t.sanders@neu.edu

____________________________________________  ________________________
Signature of professional transcriber      Date

____________________________________________
Printed name of person above
Appendix D: Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear ______________,

My name is Steph Gauchel and I am a doctoral student in the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University. I am in the process of conducting a research study and write to you as someone who may meet its participant criteria and be interested in participating in this study and/or might know of other potential participants.

The goal of this qualitative study is to explore the experiences of trainers as they conceptualize their program content for college sexual assault prevention programs for students. This study is interested in program conceptualization broadly and specifically as it relates to gender, racial, and sexual identity. It is particularly interested in understanding how a trainer’s professional and organizational experiences impact program conceptualization.

It is important to note that for this study, “trainer” encompasses any professional who is in the role of facilitating sexual assault prevention programs for college students. Sexual assault prevention programs are defined broadly within this study and can include programs that specifically address sexual assault as well as those that more broadly address a continuum of sexual and gender-based violence education and prevention topics. A trainer within this study may have a different title, such as an “educator,” “advocate,” or “director.” And, a trainer within this study may be employed by a college, an outside agency, and/or as an independent consultant. The role of “trainer” can also be a primary job or a component of a larger workload. What matters is not one’s title or employer, but that they facilitate sexual assault prevention programs for college students.

If you volunteer, the next step would be to schedule a 15-20 minute intake call in which we would go through a Criteria Evaluation for Participation Form. If you meet the criteria for participation and are still interested in participating in the study, we would then schedule one interview (approximately 60-90 minutes) and at that time I would send you a copy of the study’s Informed Consent Form for you to review, sign if consenting, and return to me by 24 hours prior to our interview. The interview can be in person at a place of your choosing or over the internet via a provider such as Skype, whichever is most convenient for you.

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do not contact me to volunteer, I will not contact you again. Your participation in this research will be kept confidential. You will have the optional opportunity to review the transcription of our interview and will have one week to provide the researcher with any feedback, clarification, or corrections. I will also make the completed study available to you at its completion. If at any time during this process you have questions, you can bring them to me or to my advisor and Principle Investigator for this research, Dr. Tova Sanders (email: t.sanders@neu.edu).
Please let me know via email (gauchel.s@husky.neu.edu) or phone (617-967-4236) at your earliest convenience and within the next two weeks if you would like to schedule an intake call to learn more about this study and to see if you meet the criteria for participation.

Best,
Steph Gauchel