

Barriers and Supports for Accessing Help-resources After Sexual Assault for Minority College Women

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BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

- Federal policies have driven a substantial amount of research concerning sexual assault on college campuses.
- Literature has focused on disclosure patterns among white female college students
- Women of color who have experienced a sexual assault while attending a four-year university are not represented in the data.
- Access to help-resources is access to health management and an IADL.

RESEARCH AIM

What shapes the choice to utilize help-resources for minority college women who have experienced sexual assault.

METHODS

- Semi-structured phone interviews were conducted
- Individual, Community, and Societal Perspectives gathered
- Braun and Clarke (2006) six phases of thematic analysis



FINDINGS

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Student: "So even though there are signs on bathrooms, I've never seen any of those and I didn't know that there was this service. I've never even heard of the gender violence center so I didn't know about them."

Help Resource Provider: "So my thing is that the pitfall of communities is that we come from communities that come from communities of broken stuff so if my mom is from a very small racist place in West Virginia, what resources are there for black woman to receive information about sexual assault"

JUSTICE

Student: "100% if he does not get punished severely than I am going to regret it tremendously just because of the toll it has taken on me."

Help Resource Provider: "I hear about all these people getting sexually assaulted and because it is not going to get proven by the jury they won't even touch the case."

Media: "Don't forget, sexual harassment is only real after at least eight women come forward."

HOLDING THE POWER

Student: "I felt like if I (was) subjected to victim blaming again. I just wasn't prepared to hear questions like that in case they did come. It just prevented me from having the courage to come forward."

Help Resource Provider: "You have to understand that racism is rooted within violence and power and oppression and to really dispell the myths of reporting and countering violence it comes with settling systematic oppression and institutionalized racism and sexism and things like that which I don't think is going to happen today but to understand what you are asking of the survivors is big"

Media: "Whenever you hear someone like Steve Bannon say that #metoo and #Timesup has gone too far, just send them a clip of Kobe Bryant getting a goddamn Oscar to roaring applause."

DISCUSSION

- Consider this from a four-level social-ecological model of health (Dahlberg, & Krug, 2002)
- Internal effects of discrimination
- External barriers caused by institutional racism
- Society influences personal choice (Christiansen, 1999)
- Limited access to the occupation of health management (Nillsend, & Townsend, 2010)
- Affect on the role of being a student attending a four-year university

IMPLICATIONS FOR OS & OT

This adds to the Occupational Justice literature as health management is an occupation and it is inaccessible to women of color after sexual assault. This has the potential to inhibit participation in roles and occupations such as being a student attending a university.

As participation is a concern of occupational therapists, this study can further our understanding of the importance of embedding cultural humility into our practice to encourage participation in health management for minority groups.

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