

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS

Power-conscious Approaches  
to Awareness, Prevention,  
and Response

*Great Debates in Higher Education* is a series of short, accessible books addressing key challenges to and issues in Higher Education, on a national and international level. These books are research informed but debate driven. They are intended to be relevant to a broad spectrum of researchers, students, and administrators in higher education, and are designed to help us unpick and assess the state of higher education systems, policies, and social and economic impacts.

*Published titles:*

Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: Challenges, Changes and the Teaching Excellence Framework

*Amanda French and Matt O'Leary*

British Universities in the Brexit Moment: Political, Economic and Cultural Implications

*Mike Finn*

*Forthcoming titles:*

The Marketisation of English Higher Education: A Policy Analysis of a Risk-Based System

*Colin McCaig*

Cultural Journeys in Higher Education: Student Voices and Narratives

*Jan Bamford and Lucy Pollard*

Sexual Violence on Campus: Power-conscious Approaches to Awareness, Prevention, and Response

*Chris Linder*

Refugees in Higher Education: Debate, Discourse and Practice

*Jacqueline Stevenson and Sally Baker*

Access to Success and Social Mobility through Higher Education: A Curate's Egg?

*Stuart Billingham*

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS

Power-conscious Approaches  
to Awareness, Prevention,  
and Response

BY

**CHRIS LINDER**

*College of Education, University of Georgia, USA*



United Kingdom – North America – Japan  
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2018

Copyright © 2018 Chris Linder. Published under exclusive licence.

**Reprints and permissions service**

Contact: [permissions@emeraldinsight.com](mailto:permissions@emeraldinsight.com)

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of information contained in the text, illustrations or advertisements. The opinions expressed in these chapters are not necessarily those of the Author or the publisher.

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78743-229-1 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-78743-228-4 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-78743-947-4 (EPub)



ISOQAR certified  
Management System,  
awarded to Emerald  
for adherence to  
Environmental  
standard  
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985  
ISO 14001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although I have spent a lot of time and energy in my professional career and personal life thinking about ways to more effectively address sexual violence, the ideas I share in this book are in no way exclusively mine. My thoughts about sexual violence and more effectively addressing it have developed over time through trial and error in my own practice, conversations with critically minded friends and colleagues who share my passion for eradicating violence, and by reading and attending conferences with many brilliant minds. I do my best to appropriately cite information as I know it, and I am sure that I have missed some important work here. Information about campus sexual violence is coming in a record number of ways (e.g., blogs, videos, reports, published journal articles, books) and exponentially faster than at any other point in our history. For these reasons, and because of my own limited perspective, I am confident that I have missed some very important resources and contributions to the work of eradicating sexual violence on college campuses. Even still, I share my thoughts with you as a contribution to the ongoing important work and hope that it reaches some people at the right time and the right place in their lives to make a difference.

As I engage in the work of coming to better understand power, privilege, and oppression, I acknowledge the labor (often unpaid) that women of color, trans folks, and people with additional minoritized identities do to educate me — a queer white cis woman — about oppression. A considerable

amount of my learning about oppression related to racism, genderism, and ableism, among other systems of domination, comes from “nonacademic” (i.e., not published in journal articles and featured at academic conferences) spaces, including blogs and online media. I cite many of these works throughout this book because I want other people who work in traditionally academic spaces to examine these perspectives, rooted in people’s lived experiences, as legitimate forms of knowledge. As illustrated throughout this text, we (those of us who work on college campuses) would make a lot more progress eradicating the world of sexual violence if we listened to more than just each other. Specifically, I want to name that the blogs *Black Girl Dangerous* and the *Crunk Feminist Collective*, and the organization INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence Collective, have had a profound impact on my understanding of power, privilege, and oppression as they intersect with sexual violence.

I am also grateful for the time, energy, and expertise of several individual people who have contributed to my thinking about eradicating violence. One of my all-time favorite collaborators and co-conspirators, Dr Jessica C. Harris, thank you for re-inviting me to this work and pushing me to see that I had something unique to offer from my location and positionality. Thank you for your critical, thoughtful work, and for shaping the discourse on about the experiences of women of color and sexual violence on college campuses. To the amazing sexual violence research team, Niah Grimes, Brittany Williams, Marvette Lacy, and Brean’a Parker, who spent the summer of 2017 reading and coding 540 articles about campus sexual violence, thank you. This is hard, exhausting, and emotional work, and I am grateful for your perseverance, critical perspectives, and compassion in getting it done. Thank you also to Brittany Williams, Sophia Flemming, Bernard Green, Marvette Lacy, and Chris Kopacz

for reading drafts of these chapters and providing feedback throughout the process. Finally, thank you to Stephen Quaye for your unconditional love and support, for pushing me to be bold, for reminding me that I am enough, and reading and listening to me process many, many of my ideas, including most of the ones presented in this book.

This page intentionally left blank

# CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	1
1. Developing a Power-conscious Framework for Understanding and Addressing Sexual Violence	7
2. Awareness of Campus Sexual Violence	37
3. Responding to Campus Sexual Violence	57
4. Prevention of Campus Sexual Violence	81
5. Strategies for Effectively Addressing Sexual Violence through a Power-conscious Lens	107
<i>References</i>	135
<i>Index</i>	157

This page intentionally left blank

## FOREWORD

I sat in my college dorm room a month before my 21st birthday, editing a document that totaled dozens of pages. I had spent weeks combing through assigned reading, and it seemed that all the weeks of studying were culminating to this moment, when I would finally apply everything I had learned. But, the document I was editing wasn't a late term paper that I was desperate to turn in before midnight. It was a thesis-length collection of survivors' lives, their betrayals, and their hopes at seeking justice after being silenced by our university. Just five years ago, I became one of the first college sexual survivors to publicly file a Title IX complaint against their university. Back then, college officials rarely discussed sexual assault, administrators dismissed my concerns about noncompliant policies, and reporters laughed at my determination to inform them that campus sexual assault was one of the most pressing issues facing our country. I was a 20-year-old, first-generation queer Latina student taking on a 200-year-old university, and my identities weren't fit to be in the rooms where policies were decided.

For far too long, institutions have perpetuated the myth of sexual violence happening in rare, avoidable situations, predominantly catering awareness campaigns to upper-class white women. Sexual violence is a crime of power, and to defeat it, we must revolutionize the way society talks about sexual violence, and the way it's handled institutionally, socially, and politically. Powerlessness among women and queer people is not simply caused by their gender but how

their gender performance is perceived in the context of their race and sexuality. To assume that Black and Brown women and queer survivors have the same assumptive victimhood attributed to cisgender white women demonstrates an incomplete understanding of societal perceptions of race on not just an accused perpetrator but the validity of a victim's account. Rather than be attributed powerlessness because of their gender, women of color are hyper-sexualized or seen as "violent" or "provoking," performing their gender beyond the acceptable constraints of femininity as codified by white supremacy.

When I was a student, I walked the quad at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill every day as a Latina, as a queer woman, as a disabled person, as a first-generation student, and as a survivor of sexual assault. Each of my identities impacted how I sought support along my educational journey but rarely were administrators and faculty able to holistically address my challenges. According to Smith & Freyd's 2013 study, 40% of those reporting sexual assault also indicate experiencing Institutional Betrayal, a secondary trauma often in the form of victim blaming, silencing, or retaliation from their universities. For many students, this betrayal is often called a "second rape" and may dissuade a student from ever seeking support again, often leading to increased likelihood of developing psychiatric disabilities and affecting their educational trajectory. Despite graduating valedictorian from my high school, I dropped out of my university with only three courses left to complete my degree. I chose to file a federal complaint against the university I loved, not because I sought to punish the administration for harming me, but because I felt that I had exhausted every institutional avenue of support available. As of 2018, there are over 300 active investigations into Title IX violations at universities across the country, an over 600% increase in investigations since the Obama Administration released the

first public list of investigations in 2014. We know that every university in the country still struggles with supporting survivors, but as Chris Linder presents for readers, institutions can do more.

Since I began speaking at universities in the United States and abroad, I have heard administrators claim time and time again that their policies are compliant with Title IX, but very rarely have I met campus leaders that have pushed for their policies to be *beyond compliance*. I am often asked “what can we do better?” and I am now thrilled that I can give them a direct answer: read this book.

Chris Linder has done survivors and educators an invaluable service in putting together a blueprint to tackle campus sexual violence head on. With vulnerability and unparalleled personal experience, she guides readers through the work and theories of survivors and experts, encouraging institutions and advocates to push beyond the dynamics of victims and perpetrators and address sexual violence through a “power-conscious lens.” In publishing this book, Linder challenges us all to think beyond the headlines, and to center survivors in every area of our campuses. She challenges readers to see sexual violence as an equity issue, “rooted in issues of power, oppression, and privilege,” that takes more than prevention campaigns and well-meaning response programs to eradicate.

To eradicate sexual violence, we must address the structural racism that prevents survivors of color from being believed as often as white women.

To eradicate sexual violence, we must address the structural homophobia that isolates queer, transgender, and non-binary students from feeling supported by support campaigns that center cis-gender, heterosexual women.

To eradicate sexual violence, we must challenge the ableism in our prevention and bystander campaigns that erase

disabled survivors and at times, physically bar them from support.

To eradicate sexual violence, we must understand our collective role in maintaining these power structures and work to dismantle them.

As Linder says in the closing of this book, we must all have the courage to combat sexual violence, even if it will not be easy.

We each have the opportunity to reframe and restructure the power systems on our campuses and in our communities, and it begins with believing all survivors.

I invite you to take this journey with me as we fight for a future with no more “metoo”s.

**Andrea L. Pino**

Author, *We Believe You: Survivors of Campus  
Sexual Assault Speak Out*  
Washington, D.C.

# INTRODUCTION

I am a secondary survivor of interpersonal violence. I grew up in a home where men in my life were emotionally, mentally, and physically abusive to my mother and to my younger brother. However, I didn't realize this until well into my twenties. I was in my first job after my master's degree and began volunteering at the local domestic violence shelter. I went to my first training with a van full of other volunteers and remember crying most of the way back from the training because I realized how prevalent interpersonal violence was – so prevalent that I had not even identified it as part of my experience. It was just normalized. If it was normalized for me, how many others were impacted in this way?

Although I was already working in higher education, I was not knowingly or intentionally working with survivors of violence. This quickly changed. I began working with our organization to address sexual violence in fraternities and sororities and started spending more time at the women's center on campus. The director of the women's center saw something in me and mentored me, teaching me about dynamics of power and privilege. She taught me how to work

against systems of domination while working in the system. She illustrated how to create a space where people can be their full, authentic selves. The women's center was a place for students on campus who did not feel at home in most other spaces on this traditional, Midwestern campus. The campus was dominated by fraternity, sorority, and sports cultures; cultures rooted in white supremacy and patriarchy. The women's center was a place where queer, feminist students of color could build community and live fully.

Eventually, I left this institution to work in a women's center in another state, where I spent the bulk of my student affairs career. I directed a center that managed a 24-hour crisis hotline for survivors of sexual assault; provided educational programs for faculty, staff, and students; and developed a variety of programs to address inequity in higher education. Throughout my time in this center, I grew in my understanding of power and privilege, specifically related to the intersections of race and gender. I pursued a PhD and wrote my dissertation about the developmental processes of undergraduate white feminist women striving to engage in racial justice. I further developed my own, more nuanced racial consciousness and feminist, queer identity. Building on what I learned from my experience in the Midwest, I listened to and learned from students and colleagues of color and worked to create a space where people could come and be their full, authentic selves. Our center also became a space for many students who did not feel comfortable in other spaces on campus and provided an opportunity for them to build community with each other.

In addition to serving as a space for queer, feminist students of color to gather and build community, our center was also the primary support program for survivors of sexual violence on campus. We provided advocacy and support for survivors as they navigated the aftermath of sexual violence,

including reporting to campus or criminal justice systems if they so chose. We also educated faculty and staff on campus about how to appropriately support survivors of sexual violence. Our center was the hub on campus for interpersonal violence and we were frequently pulled in numerous directions to support and advocate for survivors of interpersonal violence throughout campus.

As a staff member and director in a campus-based victim advocacy center, I felt the urgency of the problem of addressing sexual violence on college campuses. I heard stories on a daily basis of people experiencing violence, and I often felt overwhelmed and hopeless. I felt as though I was just spinning my wheels, constantly responding to crises, rather than figuring out ways to stop violence before it started. As with most centers, we were understaffed and overworked, and because we were ultimately a crisis center situated in the identity-based cluster (e.g., multicultural centers, LGBT center, and disability services) of a division of student affairs, we had little support in terms of supervision related to crisis and violence. I struggled to figure out the balance of confidentially supporting survivors while also engaging in strategies to address interpersonal violence and to support other centers in their work toward equity.

Eventually, I saw that I was dealing with my own secondary and vicarious trauma and realized it was time for me to move on from crisis work. I left my position at the women's center and became a full-time faculty member in a higher education program. For the first few years of my faculty career, I did not engage in work related to sexual violence. I needed time to heal from my crisis-related work. Of course, I kept an eye on what was happening related to campus sexual violence, and in the fall of 2013, I noticed that the momentum related to addressing campus sexual violence was shifting dramatically. I was pulled back into sexual violence

work, this time as a researcher. After taking some time to heal, I was ready to re-engage. In the spring of 2014, I assembled a research team to examine the strategies of sexual violence activists. We wanted to know what was causing the shift in momentum around the issue of campus sexual violence. Engaging in this research also led me to examine the role of power and privilege in sexual violence work, specifically as they relate to race and racism. We sent a call for participants to our national networks in the US, including several national grassroots organizations that had been organizing college students over the previous several months. No Black or Indigenous activists chose to participate in our study, despite our efforts to intentionally contact some activists we knew identified as Black or Indigenous. Upon further reflection and additional research about campus activism, I learned that many people of color do not consider themselves “activists,” rather they see their work as a responsibility or obligation to their communities. Further, some people in racially minoritized groups see their work as essential to their survival, not a choice or an activity in which they engage.

During this time, I also had a realization about my role as a former campus-based advocate-turned-faculty. After taking some time to heal from my own vicarious trauma, it was time for me to get back to work – this time in a new way. Faculty have unique power on campuses: we can say things that practitioners cannot say for fear of losing their jobs or experiencing significant consequences. We can challenge notions of tradition and usually are not caught up in the day-to-day crisis work in which many prevention and response professionals find themselves. We can name that reactive policy is actually distracting us from the larger work of eradicating sexual violence on college campuses. Writing this book is one strategy in which I am engaging to attempt to contribute to the eradication of sexual violence on college campuses. Using

my unique position as a former campus-based sexual violence advocate and a current researcher dedicated to examining power and oppression in campus environments, I strive to interrupt and name power dynamics in sexual violence prevention and response, and provide strategies for addressing sexual violence from a power-conscious perspective.

The purpose of this text is to advance a power-conscious lens to challenge student activists, administrators, educators, and policymakers to develop more nuanced approaches to sexual violence awareness, response, and prevention on college campuses. In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of the framework of the book, including a power-conscious framework and a description of the awareness-response-prevention tri-fecta of addressing sexual violence on college campuses. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4, I examine the current state of awareness, response, and prevention of sexual violence on college campuses, interrogating current practices from a power-conscious lens. In Chapter 5, I conclude with strategies to more effectively develop synergy between awareness, response, and prevention strategies, identifying some potential power-conscious approaches for addressing campus sexual violence.

This page intentionally left blank

# CHAPTER 1

## DEVELOPING A POWER-CONSCIOUS FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The term *power* is frequently associated with sexual violence prevention and response, yet rarely defined or examined. In fact, power is a ubiquitous term that means different things to different people. Power can be used for good, bad, or some murky combination of the two. Generally, for the purposes of this book, I use the word power to mean access to the ability to control or significantly influence other people's lives (Tatum, 2000). Power frequently comes in two forms: formal and informal.

Formal power includes positional roles that influence other people's lives. For example, in many cases, supervisors and managers have control over employees' work schedules, salaries, and work environments. Similarly, legislators and parliamentarians influence people's lives by developing and implementing educational, health, and economic policies.

Finally, police, judges, and prosecuting and defending attorneys have power in criminal justice systems. These individuals have significant discretion to influence people's lives and well-being related to law and law enforcement.

Closely related to formal power because of the ways in which privilege and oppression operate, informal power also influences people's day-to-day lives. Some people have informal power over others based on social identities and systems of oppression (Johnson, 2006; Tatum, 2000). Social identities include the identities given meaning through social constructions assigned to those identities, including race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability, among others. Systems of oppression include things like racism, sexism, homophobia, genderism and transphobia, classism, and ableism, among others. These systems allow and encourage members of dominant groups (e.g., white people, middle- and upper-class people, nondisabled people, and cisgender people) to have access to resources based on social norms and expectations (Johnson, 2006; Tatum, 2000). For example, because cisgender people are considered the "norm" in relationship to gender identity, they are generally safer in public restrooms, and practices and policies are set up with them in mind. Transgender people, on the other hand, experience higher rates of violence in public spaces, including restrooms, schools, and workplaces because they do not always fit societal definitions of "normal." Similarly, white people frequently have access to greater forms of power than people of color with similarly situated identities. What I mean by this is that white middle-class men typically have greater access to power than middle-class men of color. This power takes the shape of access to institutions and resources, assumptions of "goodness," and ultimately greater access to safety and security.

How does power relate to sexual violence? Examining the history of sexual violence in Western countries points to

a number of ways that power is the root of sexual violence. Specifically, when Europeans colonized Indigenous lands in what is today considered North and South America, they used rape as a tool of power and control. Colonizers raped Indigenous people as a way to reward themselves for conquering villages and to keep Indigenous people living in fear so that white colonizers could control them (Freedman, 2013; Smith, 2005).

Similarly, slavers used rape as a tool of power and control over enslaved people. Because the children of enslaved women became the property of the slave-owner, slavers frequently raped enslaved women as a way to increase their labor supply and therefore economic power (Freedman, 2013). These two examples illuminate some of the roots of the relationship between power and sexual violence – roots that continued to grow deeper over time. In the US post-emancipation, white men, especially those with formal and institutional power like police officers, used rape as a tool to keep formerly enslaved people “in their place” (McGuire, 2010). By raping Black and Indigenous people with impunity, white men demonstrated their power to control other people’s lives and create a sense of fear in minoritized communities (Thompson-Miller & Picca, 2016). A further demonstration of the ways white, owning-class men used rape as a tool was by falsely accusing Black men of raping or attempting to rape white women. In the period post-emancipation, white men mobbed and lynched Black people at alarmingly high rates, often in relation to false accusations of rape, or anytime that Black people started to gain some minimal access to power by opening businesses or attempting to engage in civil processes like voting or holding white people accountable for crimes through the criminal justice system (Giddings, 1984; McGuire, 2010).

Unfortunately, patterns of domination and control continue today. Perpetrators of sexual violence target women of color, gay and bisexual people, transgender people, and people with disabilities at higher rates than their white, straight, cisgender, and nondisabled peers (Porter & McQuiller Williams, 2011). This is likely because minoritized people's very existence threatens the comfort and perceived safety and security of dominant people. Members of dominant groups have an investment in the status quo because they benefit from the ways systems are currently structured, including the ability to cause harm to people without fear of repercussion. Perpetrators of sexual violence, especially white, middle-class men, rarely experience any significant consequences or accountability for their actions, and when perpetrators are found responsible for committing sexual violence, middle-class white men experience considerably lesser sentences than men of color or working-class men (Alexander, 2010; Daly & Tonry, 1997).

#### LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

The language of sexual violence is complicated and nuanced, and varies depending on context. For the purposes of this text, I define *sexual violence* as any act of nonconsensual physical sexual assault, including nonconsensual touching. Although some scholars use the phrase sexual violence to encompass sexual harassment (including verbal harassment and hostile environments) and additional forms of nonphysical violence, I am concerned about conflating physical and nonphysical sexual harm. Although acts of nonphysical sexual violence certainly lead to physical sexual violence, and the consequences of nonphysical sexual violence are significant, my concern about conflating the two relates to

numbers. The reality is that almost every person who identifies as a woman or nonbinary person has experienced verbal sexual harassment at some point in their lives, in some cases, almost daily (Kearl, 2014). By conflating sexual harassment and sexual assault, I worry that scholars and activists dilute the significance of physical sexual assault and contribute to the narrative that women are over-exaggerating their experiences because we are not using accurate language to describe those experiences. Some journalists have begun to refer to this response to #MeToo, a movement in the US, where people, primarily women, are coming forward in large numbers to share their experiences of sexual harassment and violence, as a “sex panic,” resulting in a significant backlash against the movement (Sullivan, 2018). Although most people sharing their stories would not conflate sexist jokes and verbal harassment with physical sexual harassment, our collective inability to distinguish between types of sexual violence may result in a misunderstanding of the significance of the problem (Hamblin, 2018).

Although I use the term sexual violence to refer to physical sexual assault, I realize that not all research does the same; therefore, as I refer to other people’s work and scholarship on sexual violence and assault, I will do my best to clarify what definitions the scholars use. For example, throughout literature, scholars use the terms *unwanted sexual touching*, *sexual coercion*, *incapacitated rape*, *forcible rape*, and *sexual assault* to examine and discuss prevalence of sexual violence. Each of these terms has specific definitions that may or may not be the same across the research. To minimize confusion among people taking surveys about sexual violence, many researchers ask about specific behaviors, rather than specific terminology, then categorize the behaviors into various terms. I explore the definitions and specifics of these terms more throughout the book.

Scholarship about sexual violence frequently centers gender in its analysis; however, most scholars use binary language when examining gender and frequently focus on *men* or *women* in their scholarship. Although scholarship about sexual violence must examine constructs of gender as they relate to sexism, patriarchy, cissexism, and other systems of oppression, scholars must also work to intentionally include expansive notions of gender in their work. For example, throughout this book, when I refer to *women* or *men*, I am referring to all people who identify with the labels *women* or *men*. A gender-expansive definition of *women* or *men* refers to people who align their identity in some way with the constructs of women or men, and includes cisgender and transgender people. If I am specifically referring to cisgender or transgender men or women, I will explicitly name that. Additionally, some people do not identify with the constructs of men or women, and instead, identify as a nonbinary gender. People who identify with a nonbinary gender may use terms like *gender nonbinary*, *genderqueer*, *gender non-conforming*, *transgender*, or *agender* to describe themselves. Throughout this book, I will use the term gender nonbinary to refer to people who do not identify with the constructs of woman or man to describe their gender.

Additionally, I use the term *minoritized* to refer to populations of people who have experienced harm as a result of systems of oppression. While some scholars have historically used the term *minority* to refer to populations of people who experience oppression and marginalization, I find the term inaccurate because it refers to a numerical representation of people when that is not always the same as experiencing systematic oppression. For example, in the US, women make up more than half of undergraduate students on campus (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), so they are not in the numerical minority; however, given the culture on

college campuses, they still experience significant harm as a result of sexism, which is an example of a system of oppression.

The term *system of oppression* refers to the systematic ways people experience harm, minimization, and consequences as a result of power, privilege, and oppression (Collins, 2000; Johnson, 2006; Tatum, 2000). Examples of systems of oppression include racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism. Referring to systems of oppression rather than the minoritized group puts the onus on the problem – oppression – rather than the people experiencing the problem. For example, scholars consistently examine the experiences of people of color in education, calling attention to lower graduation rates, GPAs, and additional educational benefits compared to their white peers, yet fail to name racism as the cause of these lower measures of success. Failing to name the system of oppression contributes to a deficit perspective on people of color in education, highlighting the ways in which they do not “succeed” in the same ways as their white peers (Harper, 2012; Patton, 2016).

Taking the problem of identifying and naming actors responsible for sexual violence one step further, I also use active voice as frequently as possible in this text. Active voice puts responsibility on people and actors for perpetuating oppression and minimization. When discussing sexual violence, scholars and journalists frequently make perpetrators invisible. For example, phrases like “women of color are assaulted at high rates” remove any actor from the discussion. Who is responsible for the action of sexual assault? Using phrases like “perpetrators of sexual violence target women of color at high rates” puts the onus on the perpetrators and subtly calls attention to addressing the problem of sexual violence by emphasizing the role of perpetrators *and* naming the harm caused to victims.

In the remaining part of this chapter, I describe the development of a power-conscious framework to examine issues of sexual violence on college campuses and describe the framework of awareness, response, and prevention that seems to be organizing many campus leaders' strategies to address sexual violence.

### BUILDING A POWER-CONSCIOUS FRAMEWORK

A power-consciousness framework requires scholars, activists, and policymakers to consider the role of power in individual, institutional, and cultural levels of interactions, policies, and practices. Identity and power are inextricably linked, so power-consciousness also requires attention to identity. I developed a power-conscious framework by reading and reflecting on the work of previous critical scholars and activists, including work about critical consciousness (Friere, 2000; hooks, 1994) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Shields, 2008).

Although some tenets of a power-conscious framework are rooted in similar assumptions as intersectionality, a power-conscious framework focuses explicitly on the relationship of people with power to systems of oppression. Scholars created intersectionality to center the experiences of women of color (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991), so using it in other contexts risks misappropriating the scholarship. I do not intend to use a power-conscious framework *in place of* intersectionality or to indicate that intersectionality *only* focuses on race and gender. Centering racism in the examination of sexual violence warrants increased attention from researchers and activists and will certainly be a part of the examination of power in this book. However, far too many white people – and white women specifically – have

misappropriated and misused intersectionality by using it to examine oppression broadly rather than focusing explicitly on racism and sexism and their varied intersections (Harris & Patton, 2017). I use a power-conscious framework to call attention to *dominant* group members' investment in power, rather than attempting to center and speak for women of color. Prior to describing a power-conscious framework, I provide a brief overview of critical consciousness and intersectionality.

### Critical Consciousness

Largely rooted in her work on engaged pedagogy, bell hooks builds on the work of Paulo Freire to advocate for a critical consciousness among feminist scholars and activists. Specifically, Freire (1970/2000) describes the process of conscientization, or the ways in which members of minoritized groups must come to see and understand the ways oppressors have taught members of minoritized groups to accept their status as the oppressed group. Using both consequences for acting out and teaching people to accept their role in systems of oppression, oppressors have successfully built systems that benefit them and harm others (Freire, 1970/2000; Tatum, 2000). Freire calls for an awareness of oppression coupled with action based on this awareness, or praxis, as part of a critical educational process.

hooks (1994) builds on Freire's work, calling attention to the ways teachers and students must develop a deeper understanding of their own experiences with oppression and the ways they also oppress others. hooks calls on people engaged in critical education and scholarship to engage in deep reflection and consciousness-raising related to their own experiences with oppression as they intersect with systems of power

and domination, including the “white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy” (hooks, 1994, p. 26). A critical consciousness, including self-awareness and an awareness of systems of domination, is the foundation of a power-conscious framework.

### Intersectionality

Rooted in critical legal studies, intersectionality calls on scholars to examine the intersections of oppression – namely racism, sexism, and classism – to more deeply understand and address the ways women of color experience oppression and harm (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) advanced an intersectional framework specifically as it relates to white feminists’ erasure of women of color in movements to address interpersonal violence, including sexual assault.

Crenshaw (1989) uses the court’s response in the case of *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors* to illustrate the significance of the intersections of systems of domination for women of color, specifically Black women. Five Black women filed suit against General Motors in 1977 for discrimination based on sex and race because the company failed to promote Black women into senior leadership positions in the organization. The court granted summary judgment to General Motors, arguing that white women and Black men had been promoted within the organization, which illustrated that sexism and racism did not influence promotion practices at General Motors. The summary judgment based on the experiences of white women and Black men rendered the experiences of Black women invisible. As Crenshaw (1989) argued:

*The court’s refusal in DeGraffenreid to acknowledge that Black women encounter combined race and sex*

*discrimination implies that the boundaries of sex and race discrimination doctrine are defined respectively by white women's and Black men's experiences. Under this view, Black women are protected only to the extent that their experiences coincide with those of either of the two groups. (p. 59)*

In 1991, Crenshaw further drew on her analysis of the *DeGraffenreid* case to illustrate the ways feminist organizations and legal systems ignored women of color in responding to interpersonal violence (Crenshaw, 1991). Crenshaw highlighted structural, political, and representational intersectionality to illustrate this erasure.

Structural intersectionality illustrates the ways social location influences people's experiences with oppression. The "location of women of color at the intersection of race and gender" makes their experiences of sexual violence "qualitatively different than that of white women" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1245). Crimes of interpersonal violence directed at women of color are not only gendered but also raced. Women of color not only navigate sexist oppression but also racialized sexist oppression, including a number of stereotypes and experiences of harm directly related to their racial identities (Harris, 2017). For example, perpetrators of sexual violence may view multiracial women as exotic, Latina women as "hot and spicy," Black women as jezebels, and Asian women as exotic and passive (Harris, 2017), resulting in different experiences of sexual violence than their white women peers.

Political intersectionality highlights the reality that people may experience competing agendas at the intersection of their identities. For example, given the history of racism in policing and sexual violence directed at women of color by police (Richie, 2017), women of color may not trust the criminal justice system or people acting on behalf of the criminal

justice system. However, most interpersonal violence response systems organized on college campuses or through community agencies include a primary relationship and focus on police. Different from their white women peers, women of color must balance the tension between reporting experiences of sexual violence to police with their own safety and the safety of their male counterparts who may experience violence in the hands of police.

Finally, representational intersectionality refers to the “cultural construction of women of color” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1245), or the master narratives created without women of color about their experiences. An example of representational intersectionality exists in the professionalization of interpersonal violence response systems. As with most activism around issues of social justice, Black women originally led movements to address interpersonal violence, including organizing grassroots community organizations to support survivors of interpersonal violence (Bevacqua, 2000). However, as these community organizations became more dependent on funding from foundations, grants, and governmental organizations, they also began to “professionalize” and integrate more with mainstream response systems (e.g., criminal justice systems) as a form of legitimization (Bummiller, 2008). This professionalization of interpersonal violence response took away from the feminist, grassroots, community organizing feel of the work and essentially erased the leadership of women of color (Bevacqua, 2000; Bummiller, 2008; Incite, 2006). Today, many community-based agencies and interpersonal violence response organizations fail to hire women of color into leadership positions, contributing to issues presented here related to representational intersectionality. If no women of color are present in organizing and leading movements to address interpersonal violence, it is unlikely their needs are being considered.

## POWER-CONSCIOUS FRAMEWORK

Building on the work of critical consciousness and intersectionality scholars, a power-conscious framework requires that scholars, activists, and educators maintain an awareness of the role of power in addressing issues of oppression. Centering the experiences of minoritized communities is essential in social justice and equity work, and so is calling attention to the ways in which power contributes to the organization and maintenance of oppression. Systems of oppression operate by maintaining the status quo, by attempting to make people believe that if they work hard enough, that if they change themselves enough, they too can be successful in current systems. A power-conscious framework challenges scholars and activists to re-consider current structures and to consider ways for dismantling and restructuring systems to share power, rather than building structures that contribute to one group having power over another group. Some feminists have borrowed from the business management literature and refer to this idea as a “power with” rather than “power over” perspective (Boje & Rosile, 2001, p. 106).

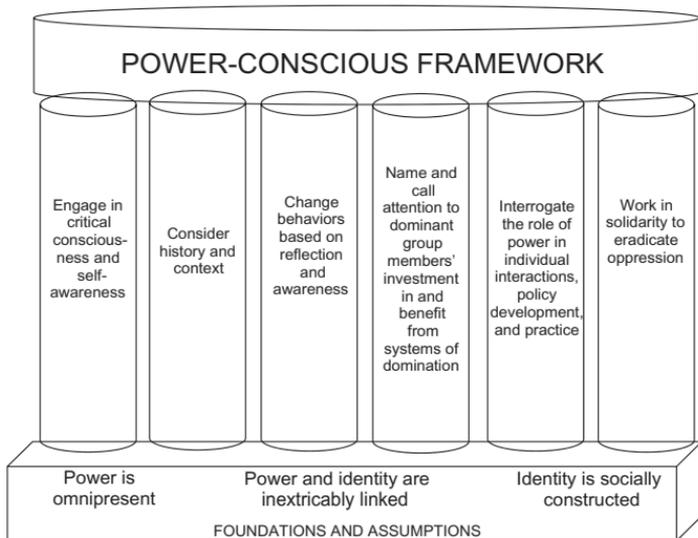
Activists and educators frequently focus on the needs of minoritized communities and people who are harmed by oppression, and rightfully so. Focusing on the needs of and listening to minoritized people is essential for dismantling systems of oppression. However, oppressors maintain systems of oppression by busy-ing people, especially minoritized people, with focusing on addressing the symptoms and outcomes of oppression, rather than addressing oppression at its roots. If oppressors can keep oppressed people busy and preoccupied with taking care of each other and attempting to break into the structures that currently exist, then oppressors do not have to change their behavior or the systems that benefit them.

A power-conscious framework calls attention to the ways power works and requires that people not only address the symptoms of oppression but also the causes of oppression. For example, on college campuses, some faculty and staff spend a considerable amount of time, energy, and resources supporting students of color and working-class students who do not feel welcome, valued, seen, or heard on their campuses. Faculty and staff may also spend time and energy teaching and supporting minoritized students who are trying to figure out how to assimilate and fit into the structures that exist on campus. Although support for students navigating a hostile campus climate is an essential role for faculty and staff, so is interrupting and changing the systems that currently exist; the systems that make it so that minoritized students have to navigate a hostile environment. A power-conscious framework requires that scholars and activists draw attention to the power and structures that exist, rather than focusing exclusively on addressing the symptoms of oppression. What if educators and activists spent time, energy, and resources engaged and intervening with white students who perpetuate racism, rather than only focusing on how to support students experiencing racism? Similarly, with sexual violence work, what if institutional leaders spent equal resources intervening with potential perpetrators of sexual violence, rather than *only* teaching potential victims how not to be victimized? What if educators and activists spent as many resources on eradicating sexual violence as they did on responding to it after it happens?

Focusing on the response to the problems of oppression is easier than addressing the roots of oppression because focusing on the roots requires addressing and altering power. For example, when addressing sexual violence at the roots, people must interrogate, name, and challenge oppression, including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and others.

Naming oppression and power requires making people with dominant identities (e.g., power) uncomfortable, and they will likely resist this discomfort. For example, acknowledging that sexual violence is about oppression and the interlocking systems of it, rather than about women’s bad decisions related to alcohol, requires that people understand, acknowledge, and *change* their behaviors complicit with oppression. Similarly, acknowledging the role of power in sexual violence requires that people hold their loved ones accountable, to consider that people – especially cisgender men – in their families and friend groups may have caused harm or perpetrated sexual violence toward another person.

A power-conscious framework pushes scholars and activists to address both the symptoms *and* the roots of oppression, not one or the other.



### Assumptions

Several assumptions undergird a power-conscious framework. First, power is present in every interaction between individuals and between individuals and systems. No interaction is power-neutral and no policy or practice is devoid of power. As described above, power is both formal and informal, meaning that people have access to power because of position or authority, or because they are perceived as the norm or default in a society. For example, teachers have power over students based on their position (formal power). Similarly, cisgender people have power in relationship to transgender people because they are considered the “norm” when it comes to gender identity (informal power). Their gender and gender presentation align with their sex, making members of the dominant group – cisgender people in this case – comfortable.

Second, power and social identities are inextricably linked. Social identities include the identities given meaning through social constructions assigned to those identities, including race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability, among others. Although people with common identities share some characteristics, the meaning associated with those characteristics is constructed. For example, white people throughout history have organized people into racial categories based on phenotypical features, such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape, and have assigned meaning to these racial categories (Omi & Winant, 1994). Throughout history, white men determined that people with dark skin were inferior in intelligence to people with light-colored skin. White men constructed intelligence quotient (IQ) tests by writing questions that white men excelled at answering. They validated IQ tests by administering them to white men and when white men did not do well on particular questions, those questions were

thrown out (Gersh, 1987). Using white men as the default group on which to measure IQ leads to people of color and women's experiences and perspectives being considered inferior.

One of the challenges in understanding the significance of the relationship of power and identity is that people in minoritized communities have also assigned meaning to their identities as a form of resistance. Dominant groups – primarily white, cisgender, heterosexual, nondisabled men – have created and codified power in relationship to identity (Tatum, 2000). Additionally, members of subordinated groups have used the organization of socially constructed identities to exercise agency through the power they gain by being in community with each other. For example, although heterosexual or straight people have determined that gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer (LGBQ) people are different and inferior to heterosexual people, LGBQ people have come together to attempt to reclaim power taken away from them by heterosexual people. Being in a community with other people who share a common characteristic deemed negative by dominant groups results in a shared sense of purpose, pride, and solidarity, which results in people being empowered to show up and live full, authentic lives. Because members of subordinated groups have also created meaning around their identities, sometimes members of dominant groups have a difficult time understanding how identities are socially constructed because they are unaware of the history of how people with power originally constructed and gave meaning to particular identities.

The social construction of identities leads to the third assumption undergirding a power-conscious framework: history matters. The meaning assigned to identity has been developed and codified over time. As outlined by critical race theory scholars, ahistoricism contributes to continued racism because people attribute oppression to modern-day policies

and practices, rather than understanding the significance of the ways oppression has been historically interwoven into policies, practices, and systems (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). As illustrated by the examples above, oppression has deep roots in the construction of educational practices (IQ tests), laws (allowing only opposite-sex couples to legally wed), and practices (not allowing people to use bathrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender, rather than biological sex). Oppression is not a modern-day invention and cannot be eradicated overnight. To engage from a power-conscious framework, scholars and activists must examine and understand history from a critical perspective, then work to interrupt oppression.

#### Tenets of a Power-conscious Framework

The underlying assumptions of a power-conscious framework lead to a discussion of the tenets of a power-conscious framework, or the pillars that interconnect to uphold the framework. Tenets of a framework provide an organized way for scholars and activists to interrogate or analyze an idea, phenomenon, policy, or practice to improve them for future use. For this reason, the tenets of the power-conscious framework are action-oriented, requiring active engagement with the tenets of the framework. Further, the tenets of this framework also provide some guidance for continually engaging in action to dismantle systems of oppression as they seek a deeper understanding of issues of oppression. The processes of awareness and action are mutually reinforced and must be done together. Too often, I hear people engaged in social justice work express that they are afraid to do anything because they do not “know” enough. Although it is important for people to be thoughtful and intentional in their social justice

work so as to not cause harm, we (those of us engaged in social justice work) can also never know enough – we must act, learn from our action, and act again.

The tenets of a power-conscious framework require scholars and activists to: (1) engage in critical consciousness and self-awareness; (2) consider history and context when examining issues of oppression; (3) change behaviors based on reflection and awareness; (4) name and call attention to dominant group members' investment in and benefit from systems of domination and divest from privilege; (5) name and interrogate the role of power in individual interactions, policy development, and implementation of practice; and (6) work in solidarity to address oppression.

#### *Engage in Critical Consciousness and Self-awareness*

One of the primary foundations of critical, power-conscious work is developing a critical consciousness and engaging in self-reflective behaviors. Self-awareness requires people to be aware of who they are and how they show up in a space. Self-awareness is especially important for people with multiple dominant identities because those of us with multiple dominant identities (e.g., white, educated, cisgender, nondisabled people) frequently do not notice the ways people with minoritized identities experience the world. For example, as a neurotypical person, I sometimes fail to consider the ways students and colleagues with whom I work navigate anxiety and depression and how current structures for academic work privilege neurotypical people by expecting people to produce quick and focused work in short amounts of time with many distractions. People are frequently more self-aware related to our minoritized identities because we constantly need to think about the ways we navigate the world when it was not set up with us in mind. For example, as a woman, I am highly cognizant of gendered microaggressions and

structural sexism because they negatively impact my life on a daily basis.

Self-awareness is critical for developing a critical consciousness, or an awareness of the role of power in everyday actions and in systems. A critical consciousness does not necessarily mean that a person constantly criticizes or looks for the negatives in every situation; rather, a critical consciousness means that a person considers how something may be harmful to another person or exclude people from having access to essential needs to live a safe and fulfilling life. Developing a critical consciousness requires people to consider structural as well as individual-level practices and their roles in those practices. Building on my example above, after realizing how my neurotypically focused advising practices and expectations for writing impacted some advisees with whom I work, I adjusted my approach to advising, providing more structured support for students who needed or wanted it. Similarly, I have adjusted my teaching pedagogy on more than one occasion as I have become aware of ways that traditional classroom practices privilege neurotypical people and harm neuroatypical people.

People engaged in social justice work have long-advocated the significance of self-awareness (Goodman, 2012) and critical consciousness (hooks, 1994) as a significant part of the process of working toward equity and social justice. Unfortunately, many people translate the significance of self-awareness and critical consciousness as the end point, rather than the starting point of social justice work. Further, some people begin the process of developing a critical consciousness, then get so overwhelmed by their understanding of oppression and the significance of it that they feel immobilized or that they do not know enough or have the power to do anything. People engaged in social justice work must work through these barriers to action to continually engage

in reflection that informs action, or what Paulo Freire refers to as *praxis* (Freire, 1970/2000).

*Consider History and Context When Examining Issues of Oppression*

Oppression does not happen in a vacuum and did not emerge overnight. Ahistoricism, or the failure of people to consider how systems of oppression have been engrained and interwoven into the very fabric of systems, policies, and practices, leads to ineffective strategies for addressing oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). For example, sexual violence laws in the US first emerged as property crime laws. White, owning-class men were the only people who could file sexual violence charges in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Donat & D’Emilio, 1992; Freedman, 2013; Lindemann, 1984). If their wives or daughters were raped or sexually violated, men could claim that their property had been violated. Courts and legal systems did not allow women to own property or have any legal standing, so only men could make a claim related to the sexual violation of women (Freedman, 2013). Although this law has changed, understanding the significance of it in history helps to better explain and address issues of sexism in the legal system today.

Similarly, people’s experiences with oppression vary depending on the context in which they exist, so people engaged in a power-conscious framework must consider the context in which they work. For example, engaging in sexual violence crisis response at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) requires different insights and awareness than at a Historically White Institution (HWI). Given the insidious nature of the message that Black women need to protect Black men from harm in the criminal justice system or to avoid making the community “look bad” (Badejo, 2016), community accountability processes may be an effective strategy

for addressing sexual violence at HBCUs in ways that are less effective at HWIs. This is not to imply that Black women students at HWIs do not receive these same messages, but to point out that the process for engaging in community accountability may look different in a context where there is a greater sense of community.

*Change Behaviors Based on Reflection and Awareness*

After one develops a practice of self-awareness, critical consciousness, and an awareness of history and context, they must engage in behaviors that reflect this awareness. Simply being aware of oppression and privilege is not enough. Awareness is an essential starting place because one cannot act if they do not understand the significance of the problem. Further, developing a critical consciousness and self-awareness, and a deeper understanding of history and context requires an ongoing commitment at the same time people are engaging in action. Commonly referred to as praxis, the idea of reflecting, then engaging in action, then reflecting on the action, then acting again, is of utmost importance in social justice work (Freire, 1970/2000; hooks, 1994). As described above, people often fail to act because they feel like they do not know enough or because they are overwhelmed, and this behavior (or lack thereof) contributes to continued oppression of people with minoritized identities. People must change their own behaviors when they know and understand differently. As Maya Angelou said, “Do the best you can until you know better, then do better.” If people know that they are contributing to oppression or that they are complicit in oppression, yet do nothing to interrupt it, they are a part of the problem.

Similar to how self-awareness is an important first step of critical-consciousness, individual-level change is an important first step in systemic change. For example, once a person

knows that perpetrators target people with minoritized identities (e.g., women of color, people with disabilities, and queer and trans\* people) at higher rates than their dominant group member peers (Porter & McQuiller Williams, 2011), they should change their language from saying “she” when referring to victims or potential victims to simply saying “victim” or “potential victim” to illustrate that women are not the only survivors of sexual violence. Similarly, in educational and resource materials, educators should be mindful of the photos they use and the messages they send about who victims of sexual violence are. Rather than only using photos of typically attractive white women in their brochures, educators should strive to represent a wide variety of people in their materials.

*Name and Call Attention to Dominant Group Members’ Investment in, and Benefit from, Systems of Domination*

In addition to changing individual-level behaviors, people engaging in a power-conscious framework should also work to address systemic-level change. One important strategy for addressing systemic-level change is to call attention to the ways in which systems disproportionately favor people with dominant identities and to name power as it relates to systems of oppression. For example, instead of focusing *only* on the number of victims who experience sexual violence, what if scholars and activists also focused on the number of perpetrators who caused harm and the frequency of their behavior? How might violence prevention work if educators and activists focused on changing the behavior of perpetrators, rather than the behavior of potential victims? Speaking truth to power requires courage and a divestment in privilege for some people.

Because systems in their current form privilege people with dominant identities, people with dominant identities are

frequently invested in the maintenance of those systems. Although most dominant group members would not explicitly say that we (I say “we” so as to not distance myself as someone who possesses a lot of dominant identities) are invested in the maintenance of these systems, our behaviors indicate otherwise, and as mentioned before, the intersections of dominant and subordinated identities make this investment even more complicated. For example, because the criminal justice system generally works well for middle-class white people, including women, many white middle-class women invest in upholding the authority of the criminal justice system, despite the fact that it actually harms many of us (middle-class white women) when it comes to issues of interpersonal violence. Investment may include continuing to work with and trying to incrementally change the criminal justice system rather than attempting to work completely outside the system to address issues of violence. Similarly, because white women frequently benefit from white male privilege because of our close relationships to white men through marriage or as our fathers, we also invest in upholding systems of white male supremacy because it benefits us in the short run by making our personal lives easier and richer (Hurtado, 1996). Calling attention to this investment and divesting ourselves of our investment in privilege requires significant shifts in our ways of thinking and behaving, including letting go of some of the privileges we are used to, like comfort and familiarity. Naming and calling attention to privilege investments, then working to divest from them is a crucial part of adopting a power-conscious framework.

*Interrogate the Role of Power in Individual Interactions, Policy Development, and Implementation of Practice*

After paying attention to the ways individual people benefit from and invest in systems of oppression because they/we

benefit from them, people engaged in a power-conscious framework must also pay attention to the ways power manifests in individual interactions, policy, and practice. Consistently asking questions like “Who is centered in this program/policy?”; “Who is erased or ignored through this program/policy?”; “Who does this policy exclude, intentionally or unintentionally?”; “How are power structures developed and sustained in this work?”; and “What is the impact of power (or lack thereof) on people’s real and lived experiences?” may lead to a deeper awareness of the role of power in well-intended programs and practices.

Given that higher education is in a state of crisis when it comes to sexual violence, institutional leaders frequently search for and are bound by one-size-fits-all policy mandates. Unfortunately, most of these mandates, like most policies, privilege dominant group members. Addressing sexual violence at its roots – entitlement and power – requires a nuanced approach not available through one-size-fits-all policy and practice. For example, many institutions have adopted a one-time bystander intervention online education program that all students must complete prior to enrolling in college. Bystander intervention programs rest on a foundation of community and the idea that people in community want to take care of each other (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). Research has begun to emerge that supports some people’s intuition that not all people are considered equal members of a campus community. Students’ perceptions of who is worthy of protecting from sexual violence vary based on race; white women are less likely to intervene in cases where the potential victim is a Black woman (Katz, Merrillees, Hoxmeier, & Motisi, 2017), largely because many white women do not see Black women as part of their community, the very foundation on which bystander intervention rests. Interrogating the role of power

in bystander intervention programs may lead some educators and activists to make different decisions about effective sexual violence prevention programs.

*Work in Solidarity to Address Oppression*

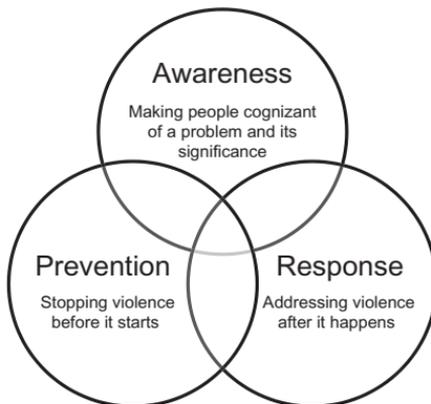
Finally, acknowledging the role of power and privilege in individual experiences sometimes results in people deciding who gets to do what work. For example, sometimes it feels as though only white people should be talking to other white people about racism to “protect” people of color from further harm or that only cisgender men should be talking to other cisgender men to address sexism and cissexism so that women and non-binary people do not have to do the additional labor of educating all of the time. However, working in solidarity with one another, taking turns, tagging out when exhausted, and holding each other accountable in social justice work are vital. When some gatekeepers determine whose role it is to do what work, it is likely that they are passing over people with exceptional talents and skills. Additionally, for some people, working with and educating oppressors is part of their healing process, and gatekeepers should not be responsible for determining who gets to do what. For example, if a survivor has worked to heal from their experience with sexual violence, they may want to begin to work with perpetrators as part of their on-going healing and activism. Professional gatekeepers should not tell them they cannot do this – rather, people can step in and out of engaging in different roles to address oppression over time. Telling people what they should and should not do based on their identities further contributes to paternalism and on-going oppression, especially as it relates to minoritized identities.

Three underlying assumptions and six tenets provide a framework for approaching sexual violence through a power-conscious framework. In the next section, I describe a

framework for understanding the current practices related to addressing sexual violence on college campuses.

### AWARENESS—RESPONSE—PREVENTION TRIFECTA

Although campus activists have been challenging university administrators to effectively address sexual violence on college campuses for decades, in recent years, the attention to sexual violence has grown exponentially. Student activists demand more effective responses to sexual violence on campus, hoping that more effective response will lead to the eradication of sexual violence on campuses. As I reflect on what I have observed over the past few years related to campus sexual violence, I see scholars, activists, educators, and administrators striving to address sexual violence from three overlapping perspectives: awareness, response, and prevention. Scholars, activists, educators, and administrators can use the synergy of these three perspectives to effectively eradicate campus sexual violence.



The *awareness* ring refers to the ways in which scholars, educators, and activists attempt to bring the problem of sexual violence into the consciousness of administrators and students. Awareness frequently consists of activists letting others know of the significance of sexual violence through sharing statistics about the rates of sexual violence and facts about the consequence of sexual violence, including the ways survivors of sexual violence experience trauma and the significant financial costs of sexual violence to institutions and individuals. Similarly, educators and advocates also attempt to raise awareness about the significance of sexual violence on college campuses and resources to support survivors in the aftermath of sexual violence.

The *response* ring of the trifecta refers to the ways that institutional agents (faculty, staff, and administrators) address sexual violence after it happens. For example, response includes services for victims of sexual violence, like counseling and support for navigating criminal justice systems. Response also includes the adjudication processes that attempt to hold perpetrators accountable for sexual violence, with the intention of reducing rates of sexual violence. Similarly, some campuses provide support and assistance for the families and friends of survivors of sexual violence.

Finally, the *prevention* ring refers to the strategies institutions employ to address sexual violence before it happens. True prevention would mean intervention with perpetrators and potential perpetrators to address their oppressive behaviors before they act on them, yet most campuses do not spend resources in this manner. Currently, most prevention efforts focus on bystanders and potential victims, rather than potential perpetrators. Bystander intervention training is an example of a current prevention strategy. Educators attempt to help students understand the signs of a potential sexual assault situation and give them strategies to intervene.

Similarly, many campuses provide education in the form of self-defense workshops for potential victims and “safety tips” for students to consider to reduce their risk of being sexually assaulted.

Additionally, some strategies represent overlap between two or three rings of the trifecta. For example, educational workshops frequently fall into the prevention and awareness categories – educational workshops attempt to both raise awareness about the problem and provide some strategies for reducing the risk of sexual violence. Similarly, campus adjudication systems attempt to address both response and prevention. Holding perpetrators accountable is both a response to sexual violence after it happens and a strategy for preventing future perpetrators from committing sexual violence. An example of a strategy that falls into the middle is an education program that lets students know about the significance of the problem of sexual violence (awareness), teaches students how to respond if a friend discloses to them that they have been sexually assaulted (response), and discusses the nuances of giving and getting consent for sexual activity (prevention).

Unfortunately, the current state of affairs on most college campuses leads administrators to focus heavily on the response aspect of addressing sexual violence, sometimes to the detriment of the other two perspectives. Policy mandates from legislators and legal counsel frequently push administrators to focus on responding appropriately to sexual violence after it happens, rather than having time and energy to focus on prevention. Similarly, because of the state of crisis in which most campus administrators find themselves, the strategies they employ to address campus sexual violence also tend to ignore the dynamics of power and privilege, focusing almost exclusively on addressing sexual violence from a power- and identity-neutral lens.

In the following chapters, I examine current practices on college campuses in each of the three rings through a power-conscious lens, then conclude the book with a chapter highlighting strategies through a power-conscious lens that may more effectively address campus sexual violence.