**Socio-Ecologically Constituted Types of Sexual Assault**

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**Abstract**

Despite the burden of sexual assault on college campuses, few effective prevention programs exist. Understanding the socio-ecological context in which sexual assaults occur may illuminate novel pathways to augment prevention. We examined data from 349 students at two inter-connected urban universities who completed a population-based survey (N = 1,671) and described at least one incident of sexual assault victimization. Using latent class analysis of 13 incident, relationship, and social context characteristics, we identified three types of sexual assaults: Incapacitation, Known Assailant, both Drinking; Verbal Coercion, Partner/Friend, Private; and Unwanted Touching, Stranger, Public. Incapacitation, Known Assailant, both Drinking incidents often involved survivor incapacitation with someone known to the victim following a party. Verbal Coercion, Partner/Friend, Private incidents often involved verbal coercion and intimate partners, with others rarely present prior to the assault. Unwanted Touching, Stranger, Public incidents often involved unwanted touching and strangers in a public place. Findings suggest three distinct sexual assault types, defined by different incident, relational, and socio-contextual factors, and reinforce the importance of disaggregating sexual assault to tailor prevention programs more effectively. Campus policy-makers and providers should be aware that each type of assault may require different prevention approaches.

**Practice Implications**

There are important implications of this work for campus providers. This study amplifies the call for multi-level prevention programs. Consistent with CDC recommendations (Basile et al., 2016; CDC, 2004), understanding individual, relational, and socio-contextual factors that define different forms of assault can aid in the development of tailored prevention programs to reduce overall rates of sexual assault. Perhaps the clearest example of this is reflected in the differences between the IKAD and the VCPP classes. Fraternity houses and bars are frequently assumed to be spaces of danger for sexual assault in a way that friendships and other kinds of relationships are not. Although there are promising avenues for the prevention of substance-related sexual assault on college campuses (e.g., Clinton-Sherrod et al., 2011; Gilmore et al., 2015), other forms of sexual assault have been less studied. In the case of UTSP, for example, it is unclear whether prevention programs designed for women that focus on self-defense training (e.g., Hollander, 2014; Orchowski et al., 2008) would be effective at combating this particular type of assault and whether it would work equally well for students of all backgrounds. Our findings emphasize the need for multiple different environmental-level approaches to respond to and prevent the variation of experiences all too frequently collapsed under the label of campus sexual assault.

**Testing a Model of How a Sexual Assault Resistance Education Program for Women Reduces Sexual Assaults**

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**Abstract**

The Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAA) program has been shown to reduce sexual assaults experienced by
university students who identify as women. Prevention researchers emphasize testing theory-based mechanisms once positive outcomes related to effectiveness are established. We assessed the process by which EAAA’s positive outcomes are achieved in a sample of 857 first year university students. EAAA’s goals are to increase risk detection in social interactions, decrease obstacles to risk detection or resistance with known men, and increase women’s use of effective self-defense. We used chained multiple mediator modeling to assess the combined effects of the primary mediators (risk detection, direct resistance, and self-defense self-efficacy) while simultaneously assessing the interrelationships among the secondary mediators (perception of personal risk, belief in the myth of female precipitation, and general rape myth acceptance). The hypothesized multiple mediation model with three primary mediators met the criterion for full mediation of the intervention effects. Together, the mediators accounted for 95% and 76% of the reductions in completed and attempted rape, respectively, demonstrating full mediation. The hypothesized secondary mediators were important in achieving improvements in personal and situational risk detection. The findings strongly support the benefit of cognitive ecological theory and the Assess, Acknowledge, Act conceptualization underlying EAAA. This evidence can be used by administrators and staff responsible for prevention policy and practice on campuses to defend the implementation of theoretically grounded, evidence-based prevention programs. Online slides for instructors who want to use this article for teaching are available on PWQ’s website at http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/0361684320975663

Practice Implications

The current study builds on our previously published research in offering important insights for practitioners of empowerment self-defense. Previous analysis showed that a relatively small number of hours (3 of 12) of instruction focused on verbal and physical self-defense in acquaintance situations is sufficient to increase confidence and willingness to use the strategies that research has shown are most likely to be effective. Current findings show that these two benefits also contribute to reductions in attempted and completed rape. Detecting risk in social situations and men’s behavior is neither obvious nor easy because of the emotional obstacles to seeing danger when it is present in acquaintance situations. Our findings show, however, that significant attention must be paid to this kind of risk detection to achieve these dramatic benefits. Finally, our findings demonstrate the importance of creating a self-defense learning environment that directly contradicts woman-blaming and rape myths.

In recent years, sexual violence prevention researchers have come together in calling for universities to develop comprehensive sexual violence prevention plans, including both targeted and universal (bystander) prevention programming to achieve meaningful change (e.g., Bonar et al., 2020; Orchowski et al., 2018). By contrast, in the current political climate with burgeoning roles and responsibilities and limited resources, university administrators who are responsible for developing prevention policies and staff in prevention roles may feel pressured to offer a single, one-size fits all, online or in person prevention program for students. The current study provides compelling evidence to defend the implementation of theoretically grounded, evidence-based prevention practices. The findings show the specific mechanisms by which resistance education on campus works to empower women and reduce the likelihood that they will experience sexual violence. Specifically, offering sexual assault knowledge and challenges to rape myths and perceptions that sexual violence can only occur to others and not oneself lays the foundation for effective education. However, this is not enough. Achieving large reductions in attempted and completed rape requires that program content and practices build on this foundation by improving risk detection in social interactions with acquaintances, providing a context within which women can safely identify and reduce emotional obstacles to risk detection and resistance, and increasing women’s repertoire of effective strategies and confidence to interrupt and resist sexual coercion and sexual assault attempts. Providing even more benefit than we demonstrated may be possible through enhanced programming; providing less is not defensible.

Social Reactions Received by Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: A Qualitative Validation of Key Constructs From the Social Reactions Questionnaire

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Abstract

The majority of intimate partner violence survivors tell at least one person about the abuse, and the reactions of these support providers can have a profound impact on survivors’ recovery. In recent years, the Social Reactions Questionnaire (SRQ) has become the predominant measure of social reactions toward intimate partner violence survivors, but the SRQ was developed based on the experiences of sexual assault survivors only. To determine how well intimate partner violence survivors’ descriptions of social reactions from informal support providers align with constructs in the SRQ, we examined qualitative interview data about survivors’ interactions with informal support providers obtained from a larger study with 113 female survivors of intimate partner violence. Excerpts were coded inductively, and a total of 12 types of social reactions emerged. Seven of these social
reactions aligned with existing social reactions in the SRQ: (a) emotional support, (b) tangible aid, (c) blame, (d) took control, (e) treated differently, (f) egocentric reactions, and (g) distraction. An additional six reactions emerged as separate constructs, including (h) minimization, (i) told to leave, (j) advice, (k) interventions, and (l) indifference. These findings highlight the need for direct interventions with friends and family members to improve social reactions toward intimate partner violence survivors. Online slides for instructors who want to use this article for teaching are available on PWQ’s website at http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/0361684320975663

Practice Implications

These findings also have important implications for practice. First, rates of victim blame and indifference were fairly high in the current study, suggesting that stigmatizing social reactions are fairly commonplace. Given that previous research has found that these types of social reactions both deter disclosure (Edwards et al., 2012; Evans & Feder, 2016; Murray et al., 2018) and lead to poor mental health outcomes for survivors (Dworkin et al., 2019; Edwards, Dardis, et al., 2015; Hassija & Gray, 2012), our findings add to a growing body of literature that calls for more direct interventions with friends and family members to improve social reactions toward survivors of interpersonal violence (Edwards & Ullman, 2018). Interventions targeting social media (Bogen et al., 2019), traditional media (Hoefnagels & Baartman, 1997), peer social groups (Stanley et al., 2015), and bystander interventions (Banyard et al., 2018) may help reduce victim blaming attitudes and lead to a more positive healing environment for survivors of all forms of interpersonal violence.

Sexist Discrimination and Women’s Use of Intimate Partner Aggression: Results From a Nationally Representative Sample of Women

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Abstract

Women’s use of intimate partner aggression remains a controversial research topic. Studies suggest that experiences of racism and heterosexism are associated with the use of intimate partner aggression among people impacted by these forms of oppression. Women also have unique experiences of discrimination that may be associated with their use of intimate partner aggression. The current study examined the direct association between women’s experiences of sexist discrimination and intimate partner aggression as well as the indirect relationship through mental health symptoms. All measures were gathered during Wave 2 of the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC), with data provided by 13,928 women. Structural equation modeling identified a significant direct relationship between women’s experiences of sexist discrimination and their use of intimate partner aggression, β = .04, z = 3.07, p = .002, and a significant indirect path through mental health symptoms (depression and anxiety; ab = .04, 95% CI [0.03, 0.05]). Women who experienced greater sexist discrimination reported greater mental health symptoms and more intimate partner aggression. The findings support the novel hypothesis that women’s intimate partner aggression may, in part, result from experiences of sexist discrimination and the emotional and mental distress associated with these experiences. These results offer important implications for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers by highlighting the need for gender-responsive interventions for women’s intimate partner aggression that consider how sexist experiences and mental health symptoms are associated with women’s relationship behaviors.

Practice Implications

The results have important implications for clinical practice and policy. The present findings demonstrate that women’s experiences of sexism and mental health symptoms should be considered in criminal justice and psychoeducational interventions to address IPA (e.g., Carney et al., 2007; Goldenson et al., 2009; Leisring, 2011). One potential avenue for gender-responsive care would be to help women learn to cope with experiences of sexist discrimination. For example, feminist therapy approaches use a strengths-based and empowerment orientation to help women recognize that they are not alone in experiencing sexism and assist them in identifying alternative responses to sexist discrimination that may have less negative personal consequences than IPA (i.e., obtaining social support, communicating assertively, utilizing organizational and institutional resources, and engaging in social activism and collective action; American Psychological Association, 2018; Enns, 2012; Israeli & Santor, 2000). In light of the indirect effect involving anxiety and depression, another gender-responsive approach would be to develop assessment and treatment methods that address the intersection of sexist experiences, mental health symptoms, and IPA. Anxiety and depression symptoms are established factors associated with women’s IPA (Leisring, 2011; Spencer et al., 2019), so determining how to effectively address these symptoms with an awareness of the context of sexist discrimination may help increase the efficacy of women’s IPA treatment. Given that the vast majority of abuse intervention programs rely on a gender-based analysis of IPV and use cognitive-behavioral change strategies to promote change (Price & Rosenbaum, 2009), it may be helpful to incorporate
explicit discussions of how women’s experiences of sexism contribute to feelings of disempowerment, to support their use of non-violent strategies to reclaim power in various life domains, and to manage symptoms of anxiety and depression that stem from discriminatory experiences using cognitive-behavioral strategies such as cognitive restructuring, thought records, journaling, and activity scheduling.

Gender-responsive treatments for IPA and associated mental health symptoms must also be cautious not to pathologize potentially adaptive responses to discrimination but instead view these behaviors in context. For example, experiencing anxiety symptoms such as worrying about whether discrimination may occur or attempting to avoid situations where discrimination has happened in the past may serve protective functions. As such, treatment of the unhelpful aspects of these strategies (e.g., not attending events that one might want to, worrying in advance of events) should help normalize these concerns while supporting alternative coping strategies that have fewer negative effects. The findings also point to the need to address sexist discrimination more broadly, as the present study suggests that patriarchal culture does not only contribute to women’s IPA victimization (Anderson, 2013; Swan et al., 2018), but also their use of IPA. Individually focused interventions provide inadequate and incomplete solutions to these broader sociocultural problems as women who experience sexist discrimination should not be held solely responsible for addressing sexism interpersonally or systemically.

**“Why So Few?”: Differential Effects of Framing the Gender Gap in STEM Recruitment Interventions**

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**Abstract**

Interventions designed to increase women’s participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines sometimes emphasize the STEM gender gap. Drawing upon optimal distinctiveness theory, we hypothesized that interventions overtly emphasizing women’s minority status in STEM might lead to less interest in STEM relative to interventions with subtler references to women’s minority status. In Study 1, women who viewed a STEM recruitment presentation drawing direct attention to the STEM gender gap showed lower implicit identification with STEM compared to those who viewed a presentation referencing gender through images alone. In Study 2, women’s greater feelings of unwanted distinctiveness in STEM following a presentation emphasizing the enduring gender gap (relative to one emphasizing the closing gender gap) had a significant indirect effect on their interest in STEM. In Study 3, women who viewed information about the gender distribution of a STEM company expressed less interest in the job when the same information was framed in terms of a continuing gender gap (vs. women’s growing representation), due to reduced feelings of belonging and increased feelings of unwanted distinctiveness. The present findings indicate that those designing STEM interventions targeting women should do so in ways that not only make women feel welcomed into the discipline but also do not place undue emphasis on women’s underrepresentation. Additional online materials for this article are available on PWQ’s website at http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/0361684320965123

**Practice Implications**

A major contribution of our studies is that, rather than simply comparing interventions designed to heighten women’s sense of inclusion and belonging to no-intervention control conditions as in most previous research, they compare the effects of multiple differently-framed interventions that seek to encourage women to pursue STEM careers. In so doing, our work demonstrates that targeting recruitment interventions toward women can sometimes heighten, and at other times undermine, women’s interest in STEM. Despite the best of intentions, and even when coupled with images of successful role models as in the women-underrepresented condition from Study 1, over-emphasizing women’s minority status has the potential to deter women from pursuing STEM. Indeed, these findings, situated in an ODT framework, indicate that STEM recruitment messages would benefit from considering that women have motives to both sufficiently belong in STEM contexts and to not feel overly distinct in such contexts.

Relatedly, our results have implications for how best to design STEM interventions directed at underrepresented groups. Whereas much research on women in STEM examines how and why women often feel they do not belong in such disciplines (e.g., Cheryan et al., 2009, 2011; Good et al., 2012; Walton et al., 2015), our studies suggest that even those interventions designed to make women feel welcomed may not optimally frame the discussion of women’s minority status such that this information does not trigger unwanted feelings of distinctiveness, thus dampening women’s interest in STEM. Therefore, it is plausible that fostering a sense of inclusion does not necessarily heighten subjective feelings of belonging among groups targeted by the interventions. Indeed, in Study 3, reduced feelings of belonging drove women to be less interested in seeking a job within a STEM company when that company’s gender gap was emphasized. These effects emerged even though the STEM company was described as actively seeking out women to enhance the company’s overall diversity. In designing interventions to
broaden participation in STEM, it is thus important to consider not only whether such interventions acknowledge gender at all but also how gender is acknowledged and whether it is done in a way that does not lower feelings of belonging nor increase feelings of unwanted distinctiveness.

The present studies make a unique contribution to the literature beyond those that manipulate the presence or absence of belonging cues or that increase awareness of gender bias (Cheryan et al., 2009; Hennes et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2007; Pietri et al., 2018). Through focusing on creating an optimal framing of gender-relevant information about women in STEM, we sought to provide insight into how to design STEM interventions targeted at women in such a way that they perceive them as sufficiently self-relevant as well as non-threatening. Properly designed STEM interventions must communicate to women that they are welcomed in STEM fields, that they belong in STEM fields, and draw some attention to their minority status in STEM (in the interest of not misleading women into expecting an equal distribution of men and women in these fields), but also not make women feel as though they would be overly distinctive in STEM contexts. However, this balance is not necessarily easy to achieve. Our research provides a starting point for how to maneuver these competing aims.

Maybe He Is Relatable Too: Encouraging Women to Identify With Male Scientists by Highlighting Bias Against Fathers

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Abstract

Successful exemplars can act as guides to help women navigate environments where they have traditionally been underrepresented. For an exemplar to be a guide, it is important for women to feel similar to the exemplar. When women identify with an exemplar, that person also can become a role model to promote belonging. Because men are overrepresented in many STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields, we aimed to understand when and why women might identify with a male scientist. Across five experiments, relative to control information, information about constraining masculine stereotypes for men in caretaking roles increased female participants’ beliefs that a father and computer scientist had faced bias. Believing this father scientist had encountered mistreatment in turn encouraged feelings of empathy and identification with the scientist. Moreover, teaching women about masculine stereotypes enhanced interest in working with the scientist (Experiments 1b, 3a, and 3b) and attraction to his science and technology focused school (Experiment 3b). Although we did not find that our manipulation directly influenced belonging in STEM, identifying with the father scientist correlated with higher feelings of belonging. Thus, highlighting identity-based struggles (i.e., fatherhood difficulties) may be one strategy to help make male scientists more relatable and approachable. Additional online materials for this article are available on PWQ’s website at http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/0361684320972118

Practice Implications

Beyond adding theoretically to past work on exemplar identification, the current experiments have practical implications for attracting women to STEM environments. We found that promoting perceptions that a father scientist had faced past adversity enhanced female students’ interest in attending his school of science and technology as well as increased their desire to take classes with the scientist and have the scientist act as their research mentor. Thus, identifying with the male scientist helped turn him into a potential guide for women. This finding is noteworthy because having supportive guides and research experiences are critical for promoting women’s persistence and success in STEM (Downing et al., 2005; Eby et al., 2008; Misra et al., 2017). Moreover, previous work suggests that having female scientist guides and role models is more important for female students’ persistence in STEM-intensive majors than those in non-STEM majors (for discussion, see Dasgupta, 2011; Drury et al., 2011), and thus it is important that our findings replicated with female STEM and medicine majors. The current findings suggest one technique that can help female STEM majors identify with male scientists who also are fathers.

Of note, there are variety of reasons women may believe a successful exemplar has encountered identity-based adversity beyond challenges with fatherhood (e.g., exemplars may have a marginalized racial identity or may be the first in their family to go to college). When women are aware of any identity-based adversity facing a successful exemplar, they may feel empathy for and identify with the exemplar, and this individual has the potential to become a helpful guide. Indeed, Experiment 2 demonstrated that learning about a male scientist’s unique fatherhood struggles enhanced empathy and identification with that scientist. Thus, the current research suggests one strategy that male STEM instructors can employ to be more relatable and approachable for female students—disclosing an identity-based struggle (i.e., discussing fatherhood difficulties, identifying as a first generation college student). We acknowledge that not all male instructors would be comfortable using this technique; nevertheless, this approach may help male STEM instructors function as guides and may remove some of the service burdens from their female colleagues (El-Alayli et al., 2018).
Although teaching women about masculinity bias did not directly influence belonging and trust and positive beliefs about computer science, identifying with the father scientist did relate to these beneficial outcomes. Rather than relying solely on masculinity bias information, it is possible that combining the current manipulations with other established interventions may be more effective for promoting belonging and positive beliefs about STEM. For example, past experiments have found that information about the pervasive sexism in STEM promotes women’s felt similarity with female scientists (Pietri, Johnson, Ozgumus, & Young, 2018) and encourages positive behaviors to address and confront the unfair treatment of women in STEM (Carnes et al., 2015; Moss-Racusin et al., 2018; Pietri et al., 2017). Consequently, having female and male students undergo an intervention where they learn about harmful stereotypes in STEM, as well as successful female and male scientists, may address students’ biases and create welcoming environments for female students, while also helping students identify with multiple female and male scientists (i.e., potential guides and role models). Indeed, Experiment 2 demonstrated that teaching women about harmful stereotypes can encourage identification with two unrelated scientists simultaneously. Thus, we posit that promoting identification with father scientists will be most beneficial when it is one component of a larger intervention.

Changes in Gender Stereotypes Over Time: A Computational Analysis

Nazlı Bhatia and Sudeep Bhatia

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Abstract

We combined established psychological measures with techniques in machine learning to measure changes in gender stereotypes over the course of the 20th century as expressed in large-scale historical natural language data. Although our analysis replicated robust gender biases previously documented in the literature, we found that the strength of these biases has diminished over time. This appears to be driven by changes in gender biases for stereotypically feminine traits (rather than stereotypically masculine traits) and changes in gender biases for personality-related traits (rather than physical traits). Our results illustrate the dynamic nature of stereotypes and show how recent advances in data science can be used to provide a long-term historical analysis of core psychological variables. In terms of practice, these findings may, albeit cautiously, suggest that women and men can be less constrained by prescriptions of feminine traits. Additional online materials for this article are available on PWQ’s website at 10.1177/0361684320977178

Practice Implications

Stereotype-based expectations influence the behavior of targets of stereotyping, leading to considerable impact on life outcomes across a variety of domains. That being said, there is also ample evidence that gender stereotypes are changing, especially for women. The findings of this study also offer a cautiously optimistic view on gender stereotypes, documenting their dynamic nature, especially in terms of associations with feminine traits, over the course of the past century. The cautious implication of our findings, combined with other work showing a similarly dynamic nature to women’s associations with feminine traits (Donnelly & Twenge, 2017), is that women may have more latitude to behave in less feminine ways, though the reverse for associations with masculine traits is not true. Although this may be disappointing to some as higher tolerance for women’s masculinity should make it easier for women to succeed in traditionally masculine domains, we take an optimistic view of our findings. For example, expectations of traditionally feminine, other-oriented behavior, such as being asked to perform non-promotable tasks, has also held back women’s ascent at work (Babcock et al., 2017). A reduction in such expectations can potentially provide women with mental and logistical resources to expand their presence in various domains of life.

Ultimately, capturing changing stereotypes in a manner that is naturalistic and widely-applicable is critical because stereotypes are not just “pictures in our heads” (Lippmann, 1922); they translate into role expectations that can influence behavior and, subsequently, outcomes in many domains of life. For example, stereotype threat has been shown to negatively influence academic achievement of women in domains where women have traditionally underperformed compared to men, such as math (S. J. Spencer et al., 1999). Moreover, gender-based role incongruence has been argued to impede women’s ascension to leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002) as the masculine behaviors required to rise to these positions elicit backlash when exhibited by women. Similar outcomes have been observed for women who negotiate assertively as well (Amanatullah & Morris, 2010; Bowles et al., 2007). If stereotypes inform expectations, which can subsequently have an impact on important life outcomes, it becomes crucial to track stereotype change in the most realistic and accurate manner. We believe methods such as those used in the current research have the power to track stereotype change in a manner suited to its dynamic nature.
Abstract

In this study, we examined the roles of anonymity and social closeness in predicting young women’s perceptions of “sex talk” (i.e., communication about sexual interests, enjoyment, and experiences) and intentions to post such content in cyberspace. We also examined cultural differences among Asian, Latina, and European Americans. A total of 466 undergraduate women from the three cultural groups participated in the online experiment. Participants were randomly assigned to either a low anonymity condition (i.e., Facebook) or a high anonymity condition (i.e., an anonymous online forum) where they were exposed to identical sex talk stimuli. The main findings showed that greater anonymity increased both the level of perceived appropriateness of sex talk posted by other female users and participants’ intentions to post sex talk online themselves. Compared to European American women, Asian and Latina Americans reported greater intentions to post sex talk online and perceived other female users’ sex talk posts as more appropriate. The results of this study prompt educators and practitioners to help young women strategically manage their impressions of sex talk online while being sensitive to women’s cultural backgrounds. They also suggest the need for further support from practitioners, educators, and parents to construct safe spaces for young women to engage open conversations about sexual matters in the digital space.

Practice Implications

The findings of this study can be harnessed in educational settings and awareness campaigns for girls and women. First, although cyberspace could be viewed as a safe place for discussing sex related matters, we found that sex talk posts were judged as inappropriate, especially when they were posted on Facebook or when posted by socially distant others. Because negative perceptions of social media posts are linked to unfavorable outcomes including disruptions in relational development and maintenance and in potential employment (McEwan & Flood, 2018; Orben & Dunbar, 2017), practitioners and educators may make an effort to raise the awareness among young women regarding how sex talk posts are perceived by other women. In doing so, the role of cultural background, the level of anonymity, and relational closeness in affecting viewers’ perceptions should also be communicated. For instance, practitioners may discuss the need for caution when posting sex talk because posts are visible to socially distant viewers who may evaluate them negatively. Such discussion should aim not to discourage young women from expressing sexual interests and desires online but rather to help them acquire skills to strategically manage their impression, which may help enhance their sense of control.

The results of our study call for further support for young women by acknowledging and validating their open talk about sexual interests and enjoyment. As Montemurro et al. (2015) have suggested, women feel more comfortable talking about sex openly if they see other women “lead by example” (p. 148) and if it is communicated in a “feminine way” (p. 149). Therefore, to reduce women’s perceived threats and fears of engaging in sex talk in the digital space, practitioners may point young women to female role models who engage in conversations about sexual matters publicly, particularly those who come from diverse ethnic-cultural backgrounds. These female role models may share their own struggles of openly expressing sexuality and dismantling persistent gendered sexual norms in their own cultures.

Parents must continue to challenge their own roles in perpetuating the moral dilemma that girls and women face when they talk about sexual enjoyment openly, online and offline, and try to dismantle this moral dichotomy. Faculty also need to continue co-educating both male and female students that their sexualities are “socially constructed,” which can lead to both “privilege and oppression” (Tolman, 2002, p.199).