Queering the Curriculum: LGBTQIA-Inclusivity in Campus Sexual Assault Prevention

First Year Campus Acquaintance Rape Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Molly McLay, MSW, LCSW
Assistant Director, Women’s Resources Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Alex C. Nelson, MSW
Violence Prevention Specialist, University Health Services, UW-Madison; Former FYCARE GA
History of FYCARE

● Mandatory two-hour, peer-facilitated workshop on sexual assault prevention
● Developed over the late 80s/early 90s as voluntary peer education workshops
● Became mandatory for first-year students in 1996
● Transfer students added later
● Facilitators trained through CHLH 199B: CARE course (3-credit hour class)
Ingredients of FYCARE

1. Intro, Definitions, Consent & Coercion
2. Effects of Sexual Assault
3. Responding to and Supporting Survivors
4. Rape Culture 101
5. Drugs & Alcohol
6. Breakout Groups
7. Wrap Up & Resources
Main Content
Intro: Definitions, Consent, & Coercion
Effects of Sexual Assault
Supporting Survivors
Rape Culture 101
Drugs & Alcohol

Men’s Break-Out Group
Bystander Intervention
Confronting Rape-Supportive Attitudes
Supporting Survivors

Women’s Break-Out Group
Risk Reduction
Bystander Intervention
Resources for Survivors
Survivor Options (i.e., reporting, evidence collection, etc)

Conclusion: Resources
What worked:

- Dialogue!
- Peer Facilitators
- Survivor-Centered
- Resources
- Safe Space
- Breakout Groups
What had some issues:

- Highly Gendered Material
- Men’s & Women’s Groups
- Limited LGBTQ Representation
Student Reactions to FYCARE

“Dividing the class between genders made me feel uncomfortable because I am transgender. I would definitely not want to be placed with the females, but the male discussion was uncomfortable. It was assumed that all men in the room were straight [cis men]. I think a gay person would feel very uncomfortable in that situation, especially if they were not out.”
“Include more LGBT situations.”
“Make FYCARE more LGBT friendly.”
“Did not seem to discuss rape in the transgender community”
“FYCARE should NOT separate male and female students. This is hurtful to transgender/genderqueer individuals.”
“I would like to see you have men and women in the same room.”
“Nothing about how to deal with men who have been raped. Also it was never, ever, not even once mentioned that women can rape men. It was men on women or men on men.”
We have a problem:

- Gendered Script
- BINARY-Based Gendered Script
Generally, individuals who are LGBTQ face the same sexual assault situations as non-LGBTQ people, with comparable rates of acquaintance, date, and partner rape.

- One study found rates of sexual assault in college students to be 42.2% for LGB-identified students compared to 21.4% for heterosexual students.
- Approximately 43–46% of trans individuals report they had been victims of sexual assault.
- 1 in 8 lesbian women and nearly 50% of bisexual women and men experience sexual violence in their lifetime.
- Nearly 4 in 10 gay men experience sexual violence in their lifetime.
- 64% of transgender people having experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.

The LGBTQ community is particularly impacted by sexual assault committed as a hate crime – 10% of hate crimes committed against LGBTQ individuals are crimes of sexual violence.
Implications for FYCARE

- New script established Fall 2013
- Gender-inclusive pronouns (they/them/their[s])
- Mention of LGBQ as well as trans/non-binary/gender non-conforming identities within script
- A choice between workshops with Gender-Neutral Groups or workshops with Men’s/Women’s Groups
  - The goal is safety in the breakout groups
- Emphasis that sexual assault can happen to anyone, regardless of gender and sexual orientation
**Main Content**

- Intro: Definitions, Consent, & Coercion
- Effects of Sexual Assault
- Supporting Survivors
- Rape Culture 101
- Drugs & Alcohol

---

**Men’s Break-Out Group**

- Risk Reduction
- Bystander Intervention
- Resources for Survivors
- Survivor Options
  (i.e., reporting, evidence collection, etc)

**Women’s Break-Out Group**

- Risk Reduction
- Bystander Intervention
- Resources for Survivors
- Survivor Options
  (i.e., reporting, evidence collection, etc)

---

**Conclusion: Resources**
Main Content
Intro: Definitions, Consent, & Coercion
Effects of Sexual Assault
Supporting Survivors
Rape Culture 101
Drugs & Alcohol

Gender-Neutral Group
Risk Reduction
Bystander Intervention
Resources for Survivors
Survivor Options
(i.e., reporting, evidence collection, etc)

Gender Neutral Group
Risk Reduction
Bystander Intervention
Resources for Survivors
Survivor Options
(i.e., reporting, evidence collection, etc)

Conclusion: Resources
Reactions to Changes

- Initial resistance from some facilitators
- Differences in acceptance of changes
  - Students who learned about cissexism and violence in training course more accepting of curriculum
- Excitement around new kinds of dialogues in gender-neutral groups
- Immediate increases in reported feelings of safety for LGBTQ students
“For the majority of students, it is their first time being among such a diverse population when coming to the UIUC campus. The gender neutral FYCARE really challenges many of them to think outside of the gender binary for the first time. It shows them that not all students may identify as male or female, and it emphasizes that anyone can be a victim of or perpetrate sexually violent crimes. In the end, I believe it makes for a more accepting and inclusive campus.”
“I feel that the change to make FYCARE gender inclusive really helped me feel more comfortable presenting the content, since when I took the workshop, my experience as a survivor felt like a one in a million and I felt really outside the norm, really excluded. And now I am happy to present content that works to include individuals of all gender identities and sexual orientations. The scenarios are much more applicable to the lives of participants. And that's so important.”
“At first I was entirely skeptical about the gender neutral workshops. I was used to the guys section being very "guy-like" and I felt like that was very conducive to the guys learning and accepting material - I felt like this connection was going to be lost with the GN workshops and script. I could not have been more wrong. [The GN breakouts] have been lively and full of great conversation between both men and women. I was worried that guys would be afraid to participate for fear of saying something shameful in front of a woman, but in my experience the guys were active participants and oftentimes seemed invigorated by the honest responses from many of the women.... Overall I have been really happy with the GN changes not only for their positive effect on the workshops and atmosphere but on their ability to make me a better facilitator.”
Evaluation of FYCARE

  - Comfort, safety, and quality ratings
  - Knowledge and attitudes

How do these outcomes differ according to gender identity and sexual orientation?

Do they differ according to breakout group type?
About the Sample

- **Breakout Group Type**
  - 40.5% in men’s/women’s groups
  - 58.3% in gender neutral groups
  - 28.7% had a preference; 99.4% were able to sign-up for it

- **Gender Identity**
  - 54.6% selected “Female”; 43.0% selected “Male”
  - 2.3% selected “Non-binary”, “Transgender”, “Other”, or “Prefer not to answer”

- **Sexual Orientation**
  - 90.8% selected “Heterosexual/Straight”
Percent Who Felt Uncomfortable or Unwelcome

- Men's/women's
- Neutral

- Straight
- LGBC+ (Purple bars)

- Cisgender
- Trans (Purple bars)
Percent Who Did Not Like Their Breakout Group

- Men's/women's
  - Straight
  - LGBTQ+

- Neutral

- Men's/women's
  - Cisgender
  - Trans

- Neutral
Workshop Quality Ratings

![Graphs showing quality ratings for different groups and genders.](image)
Breakout Groups and Other Outcomes

- Know resources, stranger rape myth, and belief that victims can provoke sexual assault
  - No effect of breakout group type
- Walking alone at night myth
  - Gender neutral group participants *less likely* to know this is false \((p<.03)\)
- Interactions with gender
  - Men in gender neutral groups more likely to update attitudes when compared to men’s only groups
Implications and Next Steps

- Evidence that gender neutral groups improve workshop experiences for LGBTQ persons
- However, some tradeoffs—myth acceptance slightly higher
- Replication: This year’s data collection underway
- Improvements to the script and facilitation process
- 2016-2017 Update: Removed men’s/women’s breakout groups entirely; data collection underway
“I think it's beneficial because it takes action. If we know about a problem and don't take action to change it when it's in our power, then we are contradicting our own message. A larger sense of inclusion seems like it's there since when I was in the workshop.”
Conclusion

- Use gender-inclusive pronouns and scenarios
- Avoid sex-segregated, sex-specific prevention programming
- Queer and trans students matter!
- Resources
  - TSER (transstudent.org)
  - PreventConnect Podcast - take a listen!
- Any questions?
- Thank you for attending!