

Interpersonal Violence and Mental Health Among College-Age Women: Cumulating & Analyzing Current Knowledge

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Institute for Women's Leadership

The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to *practice* leadership *through* action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women's Leadership's website at <http://iwl.rutgers.edu>.



1 in 4 college-age women

2.7 times more likely to experience **depression**

4 times more likely to experience **anxiety**

6.7 times more likely to experience **substance abuse**

7 times more likely to experience **PTSD**

There is a significant lack of knowledge of and accessible resources for interpersonal violence (IPV) and its effects on mental health.



How can we improve education and awareness about IPV + mental health?

Social Action Project Overview

Aims

- Assess current impact of IPV on mental health → long-term outcomes
- Identify barriers to mental health care access
- Identify use & importance of education and awareness
- Research and utilize methods of public health education and knowledge dissemination

Methods

- ~~Student education workshop~~
↓
- Conduct interviews with individuals working in IPV and mental health space
- Review current literature on IPV & mental health
- Utilize interviews for best practices in creating public health educational resource

Interviewees



Victoria Banyard, PhD, MA

- Professor, Associate Dean for Faculty Development, and Associate Director, Center on Violence Against Women and Children
- Conducts research on effectiveness of community violence prevention programs



Sasha Taner

- Rutgers IWL Program Director and Research Coordinator
- Has 8+ years of experience working in shelters for women and children exposed to IPV



Rupa Khetarpal, MA, MSW, LCSW

- Assistant Professor of Teaching, Rutgers University School of Social Work, Coordinator for the VAWC Certificate Program
- 15 years of experience of clinical practice with survivors of trauma

Interviewees (continued)



Rachel Voth Schrag, PhD, MSW

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Assistant Professor, University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work
- Conducts research on academic impacts of violence and campus-based solutions



Elaine Hewins

- Domestic Violence Education & Awareness Program Coordinator at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
- coordinate trainings on Domestic Violence & the Role of the Healthcare Provider
- Coordinate New Brunswick Domestic Violence Awareness Coalition

Interview Perspectives

Victoria Banyard

Sasha Taner

Rupa Khetarpal

Rachel Voth Schrag

Elaine Hewins



resilience

community- based
resources

psychotherapy +
social work

academic
demographics +
effects

physician
education



fostering
strengths-based
model of resilience

long-term
solutions
(mental
healthcare,
housing, etc.)

holistic treatment
of trauma

Nontraditional students,
academic sabotage,
support in academia

role of
physicians,
framing +
frequency of
screenings

**FIELD/
FOCUS
INTEREST**

**KEY
FINDINGS**

RESOURCES

OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND VICTIM ASSISTANCE

*Confidential counseling, crisis intervention, and
advocacy services for all members of Rutgers
community*

3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
24-Hour Hotline 848-932-1181

COUNSELING, ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM & PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

*Rutgers University mental health support
service, including therapy and
community-based counseling*

11 Bishop Pl, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Counseling Services 848-932-7884

WOMEN AWARE

*Domestic violence services including hotline,
emergency shelter, legal advocacy, case
management, counseling and creative arts
therapy for children.*

250 Livingston Ave, New Brunswick, NJ 08901
24-Hr Hotline 732-249-4504

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

*Medical services for victims of domestic
violence, including medical evaluations,
comprehensive health evaluations for children,
family life education, and mental health services*

1 Robert Wood Johnson Place, New Brunswick,
NJ 08901
(732)828-3000

NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE
800-656-4873

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
HOTLINE
800-799-7233



INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE & MENTAL HEALTH: LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

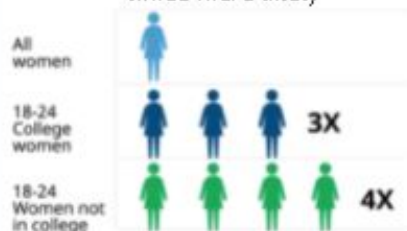
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RUTGERS

Institute for Women's Leadership

COLLEGE-AGE WOMEN ARE AT THE HIGHEST RISK OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

- Interpersonal violence (IPV) is a form of domestic violence by a current or former partner in an intimate relationship against the other partner - can include physical, verbal, emotional, economic and sexual violence and assault.
- Women ages 18-24 experience the highest rates of sexual assault
 - College women are 3 times more likely to experience sexual assault
 - Women not in college are 4 times more likely



- Black and Latina women are at a higher risk for IPV
- Low-income women are also at a higher risk for experiencing IPV

IPV CAN IMPACT MENTAL HEALTH

Experiencing interpersonal violence can have long-term impacts on mental health

- Women who have experienced interpersonal violence are:
 - **2.7** times more likely to develop depression
 - **4** times more likely to experience anxiety
 - **6** times more likely to experience substance abuse
 - **7** times more likely to experience PTSD
- IPV is a traumatic experience - symptoms of trauma can include:
 - unwanted intrusion of thoughts about the trauma
 - social withdrawal
 - debilitating fearfulness
 - emotional detachment
 - Belief that their situation is hopeless
 - avoidant behaviors

BREAK DOWN STIGMA


- Stigma around survivors and IPV can increase negative mental health outcomes
- Supportive friends and family, and advocates can be very important - responding in positive or destigmatizing ways to a survivor's attempt to seek help, survivors are shown to be less likely to experience adverse mental health

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Continue to learn about and discuss IPV and mental health
- If you are experiencing mental illness(es) after IPV*
- Know that you are not alone - reach out to support systems in friends, family, school, social organizations, clubs, religious spaces
 - Seek help from professional services if and/or when needed
- If you know someone experiencing mental illness(es) after IPV*
- Listen openly & nonjudgmentally
 - Maintain open conversations with friends and family about mental health
 - Seek help from professional services if and/or when needed and possible

Moving Forward

SPRING 2022

- Project dissemination
 - Campus resources
 - Student organizations
 - Interviewees & their organizations/partnerships
 - Digital resource
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FUTURE

- Expansion
 - Larger group of interviewees
 - More disciplines & perspectives
- Reevaluation
 - Updating to new conditions
 - post-COVID-19

Feminist Leadership

- Stigma around IPV and mental health rooted in patriarchy
- Re-examine relationships of power
- Rethinking knowledge and resource access
- Women's' mental health outcomes

Lessons Learned

- Confidence in my skills and abilities
- Adapting to new circumstances

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