

**Symbolic Compliance is Dangerous:  
Perceptions of Sexual Assault and  
the Effectiveness of Sexual Assault Prevention  
Programs**

By

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**\*TRIGGER WARNING\***

**The following content includes topics of Sexual Assault,  
Rape, and Sexism**

## **Dedication Page:**

*I am dedicating my thesis to sexual assault survivors and people who know sexual assault survivors. While writing, I kept in mind the survivors who were blamed for the assault, survivors who were made to feel guilty and ashamed, survivors who have not come forward yet, survivors who were confronted with internal and external challenges, and survivors who did not receive support to seek justice.*

## **Introduction**

College campuses are considered safe havens for students, yet, sexual assault is a prevalent public safety issue for all students. Sexual assault is unwanted or non-consensual sexual activity that is inflicted upon the victim. Sexual assault victims are put through a life-changing experience that causes negative holistic behaviors, which requires understanding, support, and legal action for them to achieve justice. It is important to realize while all genders are victims of sexual assault, female students are disproportionately affected and are the primary focus of my research. In fact, college women are three times more likely to be a victim of sexual assault (Griffin et al. 2017). In college, female survivors of sexual assault have internal and external barriers that delay or eliminate their ability to receive adequate help on campus. Internal barriers are thoughts and actions that prevent a survivor from seeking assistance, such as survivors blaming themselves for the incident, denying the assault to avoid being labeled a victim, and using substances as a way to cope with the assault (Gameon, Lahiere, and Skewes 2021). Besides internal barriers, female survivors are confronted with external barriers, such as the Title IX office or campus police, that prevent them from having an investigation or accessing resources like therapy (Bushra 2019). It is vital for colleges to prioritize the well-being of sexual assault survivors. One of the goals of this paper is to highlight institutional problems that exacerbate the emotional, physical, and psychological state of female survivors of sexual assault.

In my research paper, I am exploring the perceptions of female college survivors of sexual assault and the effectiveness of sexual assault prevention programs. Sexual assault prevention programs are effective when colleges address the root causes of assault by bringing awareness to the public issue, mitigating the risks of assaults, and responding to the issues. In order to reduce the rates of sexual assaults, the prevention programs are compelled to minimize rape myths and

victim-blaming views. Those phenomenons stem from sexism and gender oppression that female students endure in a patriarchal institution. Sexism is “individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as, organizational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative evaluations of individuals based on their gender, or support the unequal status of women” (Swim and Hyers 2019:407). “Gender oppression is an effect of the social process of gender relations that institutionalize and reproduce certain norms of gender to privilege the dominant group and marginalize, exclude, or cause other harm to the oppressed group” (Ingrey 2016:1). Along with sexism and gender oppression, my research is exploring the patriarchal culture of college by using the ideas of a feminist theorist, Bell Hooks, and the Routine Activities Theory as the theoretical frameworks to challenge the efficacy of college’s sexual assault prevention programs and the impact of their prevention program on the perception of female survivors of sexual assault.

### **Background**

The most known type of sexual assault is rape or attempted rape which is defined as non-consensual penetration. Sexual assault also consists of unwanted fondling, sexual coercion, and any sexual activity to that which one party did not give consent (Wright, Zounlome, and Whiston 2020). Some victims are assaulted in nonphysical ways like the perpetrator using sexual coercion. Sexual coercion is the perpetrator threatening or pressuring their victim into having sexual intercourse. With this in mind, verbal and conscious consent from both parties before sexual intercourse is vital to avoid an assault charge. Consent is a verbal yes between both parties to assure understanding and agreement on what is going to happen (Bushra 2019). Intercourse is non-consensual and considered assault when invalid consent is given like when someone is

intoxicated, mentally impaired, or unconscious. During any sexual activity, consent is freely given and reversible which means one can change their mind at any minute instead of being subjected to pressure or threats, which is assault.

### *Effects of Victims*

Sexual assault is a traumatic experience that impacts the victims in multiple ways. Victims have specific needs on their path to recovery to ease their trauma. Trauma does not have an expiration for assault victims which highlights long-term support from adequate and accessible resources. College survivors of sexual assault may experience Post-Traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts (Gameon et al. 2021). Besides a decrease in mental health, some victims are physically injured or have academically suffered due to the assault. College victims are less likely to seek help and deal with all these problems themselves because of social stigmas. Social stigmas are negative attitudes society has toward victims that encourage victims to have low self-esteem and blame themselves for what happened to them (Worthen and Wallace 2021). Even though females are the primary focus of my study, this paper aims to discuss social stigmas and gender stereotypes that discloses grow into detrimental cultural attitudes affecting everyone in patriarchal institutions like college campuses.

### *Title IX/Obama Administration*

The federal government enacted the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) which states “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance” (Melnick 2020:1). There was

controversy and confusion over Title IX because it does not explicitly mention sexual assault. With that being said, this amendment requires educational institutions to provide women equitable opportunities and resources that they were not getting compared to their male counterparts. In the 1980s, the federal government viewed sexual harassment as sex discrimination because a person's sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation is the reason they were attacked (Gualtieri 2020). Sex discrimination is the differential treatment based on a person's sex. For instance, male students make derogatory gestures or jokes about a female student related to their sex. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that involves any unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual behaviors. For example, a female student is sexually harassed when a teacher makes unwanted sexual gestures. Sexual harassment is a broad term and includes sexual assault, but sexual assault is a criminal matter compared to sexual harassment. Ultimately, Title IX made educational institutions responsible to address and respond to victims of sex discrimination which includes sexual assault.

Even though the Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 established colleges are liable for students who experienced sexual assault, colleges were not monitored to ensure their compliance with the amendment (Gualtieri 2020). To put it another way, colleges had the Title IX Amendment of 1972 available for the public, however, did not have to address the issue of sexual assault on campus or respond to the survivors of sexual assault in a helpful way. The college's lack of responsibility played a role in making sexual assault one of the most common crimes, but one that is the most underreported on college campuses. In 2011, the Obama Administration and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issued a "Dear Colleague" letter to combat the high rates of sexual violence on college campuses (Melnick 2020). The letter explained that colleges and universities receiving federal money were encouraged to implement more practices

and policies that aim to prevent and respond to sexual violence occurrences. They were required to have a Title IX coordinator that ensures the school's compliance with Title IX requirements and educates their community members on sexual violence with effective prevention programs.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Sexual assault of female students is linked to violence against women on a college campus. Violence against women is “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of acts such as coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (World Health Organization 2022:1). Sexual assault is gender-based violence that deprives women of their freedom to bodily autonomy. As a global phenomenon, violence against women points to gender stereotypes and a patriarchal culture that is ingrained on college campuses as well. To further analyze the violation of women's rights, my theoretical framework in this research uses bell hooks's ideas of patriarchy in relation to feminism. bell hooks is a radical feminist known for her social activism and academic contribution to topics on capitalism, white supremacy, and the patriarchy. To show respect to bell hooks, I am writing her name in lowercase letters as she likes to write it. bell hooks keeps her name in lower case to bring more attention and importance to what she is writing about instead of the readers focusing on aspects of her life. Throughout this paper, bell hooks' ideas of patriarchy support my arguments about sexism and gender oppression on college campuses based on the experiences of college survivors and the efficacy of the sexual assault prevention programs.

Within feminism, hooks's concepts highlight issues that arise from one of the root causes of sexual assault - a patriarchal institution of higher education. bell hooks defines feminism as “a



movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (hooks 2015:12). She clearly conveyed that being a feminist is not about hating men or wanting women to dominate men. Feminism aims to create equality for women which can benefit everybody. hooks claims feminism is for everybody because it challenges issues of domestic violence, unequal pay, and capitalism mainly for women, but not exclusively for women. Patriarchy is a system where men are given more power, opportunities, and advantages than any other sex. A patriarchal culture perpetuates gender stereotypes that restrict the freedom of women and exposes them to exploitation or discrimination when they do not conform to the gender stereotypes. For example, females are taught femininity is expressed through passivity and a polished appearance in order to attract men for marriage. Males are taught masculinity is about power and asserting dominance over others, including women, in every aspect of their life, including marriage and occupation. With that in mind, hooks’ ideas of the patriarchy support the sexists and gender oppressive experiences of female survivors of sexual assault.

Another theoretical framework used throughout the paper is the routine activities theory. The routine activities theory was created by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson, criminology theorists, to explain that crime is more likely to occur where there are three elements available in any social interaction (Tewksbury and Mustaine 2010). The theorists state crime occurs when there is a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. A motivated offender is someone who is looking to commit a crime or one who is not afraid of getting in trouble with law enforcement. The theory acknowledges the presence of the offender, but it could be for various reasons. Since anybody can easily commit a crime, the theorists did not want to focus on the set of circumstances that motivated the offender to commit a crime. As a result, the theory focuses on the victimizations of people instead of the reasons behind the

offender's motivation. A suitable target is described as an object or a person that an offender sees value in or has easier access to obtain in which it becomes a target. With attention to target suitability, people's vulnerability plays a role in becoming a victim when examining crimes against people (Tewksbury and Mustaine 2010). The third element, the absence of a capable guardian, is anything that deters a motivated offender to commit a crime. A guardian is a police officer, people in public, or security cameras. A crime is more likely to occur when there is an absence of a guardian because motivated offenders are less likely to be stopped or caught. With the routine activities theory, institutions of higher education are examined to reveal their compliance with Title IX and the "Dear Colleague" letter. The theory emphasizes the institution's response to sexual assault by focusing on its sexual assault prevention programs.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Awareness (Institutions' Lack of Awareness: Motivated Offender)*

Colleges limit students' awareness of sexual assault which increases the likelihood of one becoming a motivated offender. The 2011 "Dear Colleague Letter" from the Obama Administration required educational institutions to inform their students about sex discrimination, including sexual assault. Every student, faculty, and administrative staff are expected to have read the policies and regulations surrounding Title IX. Higher educational institutions must have the policies distributed to everyone throughout the campus in electronic and printed publications for easy access. It is important for colleges to bring further discussion and awareness to the issue of sexual assault. Without educational exercises or programs about sexual assault, colleges are producing motivated offenders. For instance, vulnerable populations,

like women, are associated with higher sexual assault victimization due to the unwelcoming campus climate and lack of diversity within the college (Coulter and Rankin 2020). A college affects the culture of its campus by concealing the role sexism has in sexual assault occurrences. It is difficult for prevention programs to succeed when college programs do not include topics like sexist attitudes and gender stereotypes. Sexist attitudes prompt male students to view female students as emotional, submissive, nurturers, and domestic workers. On the contrary, male students are taught to think, serve, and provide for themselves and their families. Sexist attitudes combined with gender stereotypes lead to male students refusing to be submissive and emotional; their value is determined by their will to do violence (hooks 2004). Furthermore, the attitude of the college administration paves the way for their effort in following Title IX and the “Dear Colleague” letter. When the administration believes sexual assault is not a serious issue on their campus, they are less likely to comply with Title IX. The policies of colleges are not always enforced as they are written which is supported by students not fully understanding Title IX or simply knowing how to get in contact with the Title IX coordinator (Richards et al. 2017).

While institutions administer incompetent sexual assault prevention programs, students are positioned as motivated offenders when they are inhibited to learn the root causes of sexual assault, such as sexism and gender oppression. Sexism and gender oppression cause students to downplay the experience of female survivors of sexual assault. When students condemn the behaviors of female survivors more than the perpetrators, they adopt a victim-blaming viewpoint that deprives female survivors of their sexual autonomy. Victim-blaming occurs when victims are held fully or partially responsible for the crime that happened to them. In regards to sexual assault, victim-blaming conceptually excludes female survivors from their human right to sexual autonomy. Sexual autonomy gives everyone, including female students, control over what

happens to their body, who they want to pursue sexual acts with, and when these sexual acts happen. Since sexual assault prevention programs fail to question the impact of sexism and gender oppression, college students normalize violence against female students. According to Follingstad et al. (2021), college students minimize the perpetrator's actions when female survivors were flirtatious or voluntarily drinking before the sexual assault incident. Similarly, survivors were held more responsible for their sexual assault incident if they became pregnant. With this in mind, the college students' perception of female survivors demonstrates the importance of understanding sexism and gender oppression. When institutions omit the root causes of sexual assault in their prevention program, female survivors endure victim blaming based on the established sexist attitude and oppressive state of women on campus. With that being said, victim-blaming focuses more on the female survivors' appearance and actions rather than the male assailant's behaviors. In fact, the patriarchal culture within colleges falsely places men in a position where they are believed to have an innate ability for sex because they are sexual beings; which leads to more acceptance of sexual assault, marital rape, and date rape (hooks 2004). Institutions are not exposing their students to learn more about sexual assault because they would know that the assault is never the victim's fault.

A college's lack of awareness about sexual assault attributes to rape myths that overlook female students as motivated offenders. Rape myths are “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists”(Swim and Hyers 2019:410). The notion of sexism and gender oppression identifies rape myths that impact the perception of female offenders. As previously stated, male students have been categorized as innate sexual beings, yet, this belief is a rape myth. In a patriarchal culture, male students are depicted as stereotypically strong and dominant compared to their female students. Hence, it is a common belief that female students

are incapable of being an offender of sexual assault because they are stereotypically weak and passive. For this reason, it is difficult for male survivors of sexual assault to seek help in college. Another rape myth determines male students are incapable of being victims of sexual assault because they are falsely portrayed as sexual beings compared to females. Follingstad et al. (2021) found that college students believe female offenders are less responsible for the sexual assault incident of male victims. The students' perception of female offenders confirms that they are excused from their heinous actions because male survivors have to measure up to the patriarchal standards of a *man* (hooks 2004). The patriarchal culture of college preserves rape myths that not only negatively impact female students, but also male students as well.

*Risk Mitigation (Institutions Not Effectively Reducing the Risk: Suitable Targets)*

Sexual assault prevention programs are designed to reduce the risk of sexual assault, however, the ineffective programs have proven to increase the risk of sexual victimization for female students. Institutions providing occasional prevention programs or having no risk-reduction programs are not beneficial to students. Institutions are more likely to have educational programs, but it is an insufficient program because it does not include or solely focus on changing the rape-supportive culture like the Rape Aggression Defense program or the Haven Program (Griffin et al 2017). Risk-reduction programs are essential for students to learn how different lifestyles or routine activities contribute to potential victimization. These programs should not only target women, but other marginalized and oppressed populations, like the LGBT+ community. For example, the Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAA) program attests to how effective risk reduction programs are in educational institutions. The EAAA is a gendered program for women to increase their warning signs, skills, and practices when one is

sexually coerced in a situation (Senn et al. 2017). The women utilize their knowledge and training to protect themselves during an assault or get themselves out of a situation that could potentially turn into sexual assault. The program reduced the women's beliefs in rape myths and victim-blaming, as well as, refusing to accept rape-supportive responses from others. As Selime et al. (2022) noted, all undergraduate women disclosing their sexual assault incidents at college received some type of negative reaction from others. It is important to realize the controversy around having women-targeted programs. The programs like EAAA reinforce the idea that female students have to be hypervigilant about their surroundings and behaviors to not get raped instead of programs teaching male students not to rape. This biased thinking passively supports male domination to exploit and oppress females through violence; society is socialized to believe in sexism and male domination to avoid surrendering patriarchal privilege (hooks 2015). Colleges would discover more value in having male-targeted prevention programs, as well as, female-targeted programs. Although the male-targeted sexual assault prevention programs have a small and positive impact on reducing their behavior, colleges will have more effective prevention programs if they focus on high-risk groups and repeated male offenders like fraternity members and athletes (Wright et al. 2020). With little to no risk-reducing programs, institutions of higher education are fostering suitable targets by depriving students of sufficient programs aiming to mitigate the risk of sexual assault.

College students, particularly female students, are suitable targets when institutions do not expand their style of prevention programs to incorporate bystander intervention training. Bystander intervention is recognizing a potentially harmful situation and choosing to intervene (Walsh et al. 2021). Griffin et al. (2017) discovered the majority of institutions published statistics for reported sexual assault cases; yet, only a third (33.3%) of 429 colleges provided

bystander intervention information and less than half (39.2%) of the institutions had prevention programs for freshmen and transfer students. Colleges providing a small variety of sexual assault prevention programs foreshadow their careless compliance with the “Dear Colleague” letter.

When colleges do not implement bystander intervention programs, students are not prepared to intervene on their own or someone else's behalf. Furthermore, the study of Kettrey and Marx (2021) indicated that intervention skills were only providing short-term effects, which emphasizes the institutions' obligation to require students to participate in prevention programs, as frequently as every semester or year. Students participating in intervention programs will develop long-term skills by learning to notice the warning signs of a potential sexual assault incident, intervene in the situation, and report the incident to hold the individual accountable for their actions. Bystander intervention programs involve knowledge, strategies, and tools to encourage one to intervene for strangers and close friends. For example, a by-standing student witnessed an intoxicated, female student going to an excluded location with another student at a party. The bystander intervenes to stop the intoxicated student from going into that excluded place. The bystander knew the intoxicated person was a suitable target because that person was unable to make authentic decisions or give consent. With this in mind, bystander intervention programs reduce rape-supportive attitudes on college campuses. Intervention programs are vital at colleges because male students oppress females to feel satisfied in exercising the easiest form of domination: sex (hooks 1984). The program helps to eliminate rape myths that personally attack what the female survivor should have done differently. From the previous example, instead of the bystander accepting the common myth that the female student asked to be raped because she was intoxicated, the bystander utilized the tools they learned from the intervention program to stop an ensuing sexual assault incident.

*Response (Institutions' Incompetent Response to Sexual Assault: Absence of Capable Guardian)*

Institutions of higher education neglect their duties when responding to sexual assault incidents by existing as an external barrier female survivors encounter that prevents them from receiving justice. Institutions are responsible for following procedures in the “Dear Colleague” letter and Title IX amendment when a student discloses a sexual assault incident with them. A college is categorized as an absent capable guardian when they promote their services to help survivors of sexual assault in the prevention program, but do not follow through. Depending on the size and visibility of the college, baccalaureate colleges are more likely to symbolically comply with the law to lessen the pressure related to institutional liability compared to research universities (Gualtieri 2020). When colleges prioritize protecting themselves over helping sexual assault victims, female survivors are misled to believe their college is going to respond to their issue with victim-centered approaches and resources. Meanwhile, motivated offenders are in the position to continue committing the crime with the same survivor or someone else because institutions of higher education are not enforcing the law to stop and penalize their criminal behavior. Under those circumstances, it is pointless for female survivors to report their sexual assault incidents when their college has a reputation for not believing the survivors, including their peers and the Title IX office. Hence, students are hesitant in seeking out more help after their incidents are minimized. “Survivors' sense of futility was often linked to how seriously they felt their claims would be taken, or if they would even be believed by the university or campus police” (Bushra 2019:14). With that in mind, the Title IX coordinator or the campus police discourage victims to embark on or continue investigations as a result of rape myths and gender oppression. According to Seo et al. (2021), prevention programs are effective in preventing



sexual assault by altering sexist behaviors and confronting biased thoughts. It is essential for colleges to supply staff, faculty, and Title IX workers with more response training in order to cease female survivors from encountering negative reactions. Campus counselors, campus police, and Title IX coordinators are in the position to have their actions affect the fragile state of sexual assault survivors. Even though their reactions are outside the control of the survivor, their poor reactions become an external barrier that affects their thoughts and feelings about their assault that impedes their healing process (Gameon et al. 2021). Ultimately, poor reactions from staff stem from the patriarchal culture that challenges the protection and advocacy of female students.

Even though colleges are compelled to follow Title IX and the dear college letter, female survivors experience negative and unhelpful reactions from students and campus professionals. College counselors, campus police, and the Title IX coordinator are insufficiently trained to accurately approach and aid assault allegations when dealing with multiple individualistic factors. According to Walsh et al. (2021), prevention training is not a one-size-fits-all because they discovered the following three distinct types of assault labels: Incapacitation, Known Assailant, Both Drinking; Unwanted Touching, Stranger, Public; Verbal Coercion, Partner/Friends, Private. When college officials are lacking proper training to handle different assault situations, female survivors suffer more negative reactions from campus officials. This is demonstrated when Campus officials engage in victim-blaming, egocentric responses that prioritize the needs of the recipient over the victims, believing in rape myths, and encouraging avoidance strategies (e.g., telling the survivor not to think or talk about the event) (Selime et al. 2022). It is difficult for students to reach out again for help when their campus officials dismiss their feelings or assault them. At this sensitive time, female survivors have the potential to be

revictimized by the same perpetrator or someone else because college creates a barrier to prevent female survivors from receiving help. With high rates of sexual assaults on college campuses, sexual assault in young adulthood is associated with numerous adverse outcomes including the risk of repeated victimization (Kettrey and Marx 2021). To end violence against women, society has to stop the sexist thinking that teaches females from birth that the domain of sexual desire and sexual pleasure was always and only male; that only females of little or no virtue would lay claim to sexual need or sexual hunger (hooks 2015). Female survivors endure the biased and sexist thinking exhibited by campus officials from inadequate training. Campus officials endorse the patriarchal ideas that overlook male domination of a woman's body and are hyperfocused on what the female did that made her get sexually assaulted. "Blame from others reinforces the self-blame that many survivors were already expecting, which further delays their healing process" (Gameon et al. 2021:6). All undergraduate women had some type of negative reactions that highlight the importance of sexual assault prevention programs to lower negative reactions from students, faculty, Title IX coordinator, and other campus officials (Selime et al. 2022).

## **Conclusion**

Sexual assault on college campuses is an issue that requires immediate attention. I argued throughout my paper that female college survivors of sexual assault are confronted with rape myths, victim-blaming, and stereotypes due to the patriarchal culture on college campuses. bell hooks' ideas about the patriarchy corroborate my claims about colleges exhibiting a sexist and gender oppressive culture. The Routine Activities Theory was used to analyze the institution's actions regarding their prevention programs. Overall, I found institutions lack spreading awareness of sexual assault, have ineffective risk mitigation strategies, and poorly respond to

survivors. As the theory looks at a motivated offender, institutions create an environment where offenders are present to commit an assault by not adequately making every member of their campus community aware of sexual assault on multiple occasions (Richards et al. 2017). Additionally, the prevention programs lack information and practices to alleviate sexist thoughts and actions. As a result, female survivors of sexual assault have to endure victim-blaming from peers and campus professionals like Title IX coordinators.

An institution's sexual assault prevention program must aim to reduce the risk of the issue, however, institutions are establishing suitable targets for motivated offenders. The colleges that do provide prevention programs are highly lacking programs to reduce the risk of sexual victimization for female students. For instance, the Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act program (EAAA) teaches female students warning signs of an assault like unwanted touching and identifies what constitutes harassment or assault (Senn et al 2021). Female students are capable of acting in ways to defend themselves and stand more assertive in the attempt to get away from a perpetrator. Since institutions lack programs aiming to teach other people bystander warning signs and defense strategies, female survivors encounter more rape-supportive attitudes on campus (Griffin et al. 2017). Furthermore, female survivors become suitable targets when colleges do not have risk-reducing prevention programs because the institutions made them more vulnerable to motivated offenders regardless of intoxication or individualities factors. Sexism highlights the rape-supportive attitudes in college that make female survivors more at risk of victimization when they are drinking alcohol or wearing revealing clothing.

When Institutions have procedures and services published as a part of their prevention program for their campus, that does not mean the institutions follow through with it. Institutions act as the absence of a capable guardian because it is an external barrier that hinders victims to

receive healing and justice for their assault (Gameon et al. 2021). For example, campus police or Title IX coordinators are dissuading students to further their investigation or have judgmental, sexist attitudes when interviewing female survivors. Female survivors are going to start blaming the incident on themselves after they reach out to campus officials for help who explicitly place blame on them for their assault. Female survivors are negatively impacted by the institution's inadequate response to their assault allegations increasing their chances of revictimization (Kettrey and Marx 2021).

Overall, I argue the institutions have a lot of improvement to do in terms of helping female survivors of sexual assault and providing effective sexual assault prevention programs. The larger implication of this research look at the societal attitudes and the role gender plays toward sexual assault survivors. Female survivors are prone to victim-blaming because females are placed in categories of submissiveness and solely alive to serve the sexual needs of men. That type of thinking is what perpetuates female oppression on campus when educational institutions reinforce the idea that female survivors of sexual assault did it to themselves by dressing a certain way or going to an excluded area with the perpetrator. Sexist thinking endorses patriarchal behavior to exist where male students are capable of getting away with dominating a female student body without repercussions (hooks 2015). Institutions need to remember that the value and worth of female students and female survivors of sexual assault are as important as the value and worth of their male students.

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