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Research-to-Practice, PIRC's Winter Newsletter

Prevention Innovations Research Center

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A Note from Our Directors

Dear Friends,

We hope you and your loved ones are well.

In this issue, we highlight our recent work on sexual violence prevalence, prevention, and response at community colleges. As many of you know, community college students have not been a primary focus of national campus prevention and response research. In the past two years our research center has published six new peer-reviewed articles detailing the challenges community colleges face and the prevalence of sexual violence victimization. Despite these challenges, we are inspired by what is possible when community college leaders, faculty, and students collaborate with their local crisis centers, health centers, and law enforcement agencies. When key stakeholders work together, community college students can better access services and get the support they need.

Our research projects continue, over Zoom or in masked, socially-distanced meetings, as we gather data in online interviews, focus groups, and surveys. We plan to launch a practitioner survey to determine COVID 19's impact on campus-based prevention efforts, and we continue to develop and test our safety apps uSafeHS™ and uSafeUS® for high school and college populations.

PIRC Fellows continue to present at conferences, create new training, and publish; you'll see a few examples below.

And finally, in the spirit of **mentoring the next generation of researchers and practitioners**, we've welcomed our largest ever group of PIRC interns. You'll hear more about their work in our next edition.

We hope this finds you surrounded by a community of care and support as you continue your important work.

Jane and Sharyn



PIRC's Continuing Work With Community Colleges

The serious public health problem of sexual violence (i.e., sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual harassment) at four-year US colleges and universities is well documented. However, until recently, little has been known about the prevalence of these problems among community college students. For that reason, PIRC researchers and practitioners used a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services to collaborate and provide technical assistance to build the capacities of New Hampshire non-residential and community colleges to prevent and respond to sexual violence on their campuses. In addition to working towards building partnerships and strengthening community college prevention and response efforts, the project resulted in six peer-reviewed papers to examine the understudied area of sexual violence perpetrated against community college students.

Key Takeaways

Unlike students attending traditional four-year colleges, community college students spend less time on their campus and are more likely to balance their studies with family and work responsibilities. The findings reported in the six papers below reveal high rates of sexual violence victimization among the community college student population and demonstrate the importance of providing support for students who are

experiencing violence in their homes and communities. Furthermore, community college students who identified as LGBTQ reported higher rates of sexual violence perpetrated against them than their peers who identified as heterosexual. Approximately 64% of LGBTQ students reported some form of sexual violence since they enrolled at their community college, compared with 43% of heterosexual student participants.

Recommendations

These studies highlight the need for community college leaders to support sexual violence survivors and increase their sexual violence prevention efforts to help stop violence before it happens. To ease budgetary issues, community college administrators within geographic proximity can work together and share the cost of prevention efforts, including programming and trainings. Additionally, administrators should build relationships with community-based health resources and local crisis centers who can facilitate prevention trainings on campus and respond to students when they are victimized.

Community College Research

- Moschella EM, Potter SJ, MM Moynihan. (2020). [Disclosure of Sexual Violence Victimization and Anticipated Social Reactions among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community College Students](#). *Journal of Bisexuality*, 20(1), 66-85
- Potter SJ, Moschella EM, Moynihan MM and D. Smith (2020). [A Collaborative Community College Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Effort: Climate Study Results to Assess Impact](#). *Violence Against Women*. (DOI: 10.1177/1077801220969894).
- Potter SJ, Moschella EM, Moynihan, MM and D. Smith. (2020). [Sexual Violence Among LGBTQ Community College Students: A Comparison with their Heterosexual Peers](#). *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. 44: 787-803.
- Potter SJ, Fox N, Smith D, Draper N, Moschella E and MM Moynihan (2020). [Sexual Assault Prevalence and Community College Students: Challenges and promising practices](#). *Health Education & Behavior*, 47:7S-16S.
- Potter SJ, Moschella E, and D Smith (2020). [Exploring the Usage of a Violence Prevention and Response App among Community College Students](#). *Health Education and Behavior*. 47:44S-53S
- Howard R, Potter SJ, Guedj C and MM Moynihan (2018). [Sexual Violence Victimization among Community and Non-Residential College Students](#). *American Journal of College Health*. 67:674-687.

Help Mentor the Next Generation

The UNH (603) Challenge



[The \(603\) Challenge](#) is just around the corner! This annual university giving initiative is a fantastic opportunity to show your support for the UNH program of your choice.

At Prevention Innovations Research Center, we use proceeds from this fundraising effort for our intern program, which allows us to mentor the next generation of researchers and practitioners.

We hope that you will consider a contribution to PIRC during this year's (603) Challenge to support our wonderful interns.

Publications, Grants, and Talks



PIRC Fellow Joan Tabachnick was a keynote speaker at the Center for Restorative Justice webinar *Effective Interventions for Students Who Engage in Problematic Sexual Behavior: Context, Considerations, and Options for RJ Practitioners*. The USD Center for Restorative Justice promotes research, teaching, training, and technical assistance for restorative justice projects in higher education as well as K-12 schools, communities, and the criminal justice system. Get more information [here](#).

PIRC Fellow Amy Vorenberg, her colleague, Jessica Durkis-Stokes and student, Morgan Eastman, were asked by NH's Campus Consortium Against Sexual and Interpersonal Violence to provide training on the new Title IX rules for hearings. Focusing mainly on how the new rules will affect what advisors and hearings officers are required to do, Amy's team walked training participants through such issues as how to understand what evidence is "relevant," how to cross-examine parties, and how hearings officers should structure the hearing and pre-hearing procedure. The team will also be providing a template for hearing officers who, under the new rules, must meet criteria in their written findings of fact and conclusions once a hearing is done. With a new administration, some of these rules will likely be reversed, but the timeline on that is uncertain. Amy and Jessica are also hoping to finish their textbook, *Sexual Violence and the Law*, this summer.

PIRC Executive Director of Research Sharyn Potter was quoted in the May/June 2020 issue of Harvard Business Review titled "[Why Sexual Harassment Programs Backfire and What to do About It](#)". The article highlights the importance of culture change and a whole community approach to addressing harassment in the workplace.

Sharyn will also be speaking at the Spring 2021 Conflict Resolution Colloquium Series hosted by the University of Massachusetts, Boston on Thursday, February 25. The title of the discussion is *Facilitating a Person's Decisions to Safely Intervene as an Active Bystander*. Register for this Zoom event [here](#).

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (TDVAM)



One in three teens in the United States will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from someone with whom they are in a relationship. This national initiative promotes awareness and education around dating violence, supports survivors of teen dating violence, and aims to stop dating abuse before it starts.

The theme for TDVAM 2021 is **Know Your Worth**, which promotes education about healthy relationships and self-empowerment. We at PIRC believe that every young person is deserving of a supportive, loving relationship and we are committed to teaching teens how to cultivate healthy relationships and keep themselves and their friends safe.

Sexual and Relationship Violence and Stalking Prevention Programming during COVID-19

As we seek to respond to COVID-19, our field needs to understand how college and university campuses and community-based organization are adapting their violence prevention and awareness-raising efforts due to COVID-19 and subsequent consequences. PIRC is



partnering with the [Campus Advocacy and Prevention Professional Association \(CAPPA\)](#) to develop a survey for prevention practitioners.

We will announce more information about this important project soon. For more information, contact jane.stapleton@unh.edu.

One Love Foundation Evaluations



For the past year, Drs. Sharyn Potter and Elizabeth Moschella have been fortunate to collaborate with [One Love](#), an organization dedicated to educating young people about healthy and unhealthy relationships. They have been assisting with the evaluation of several of their widely used teen dating violence prevention programs.

Explore workshops offered by One Love [here](#).

Meet Jennifer Demers, PIRC Faculty Fellow



PIRC Fellow, Dr. Jennifer Demers, is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Wichita State University and Director of the Social Action, Violence, & Inequities (SAVI) Lab, which conducts empirical research that aims to inform new prevention methods and improved response services for victims of interpersonal violence. PIRC has a long collaboration history with Dr. Demers. While she was earning her doctoral degree at UNH she was the project manager on PIRC's national research for the *White House*

Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault to examine best ways for

institutions of higher education to deliver sexual misconduct policy information to their students. This research resulted in a widely circulated [white paper](#) and a peer reviewed journal article published in the [Journal of American College Health](#).

After earning her doctoral degree, Dr. Demers continued to collaborate with PIRC by coordinating the data analysis for their bystander video games studies. Two papers resulted from this work including a paper published in [Games for Health Journal](#) detailing how gameplay shows promise as an effective way to introduce the concept of bystander intervention and increase bystander attitudes and efficacy in situations of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to first-year college students. In a second paper published in the [Psychology of Violence](#) the authors describe how video games can be used a mechanism for students to practice newly learned bystander skills and can be part of a larger institutional comprehensive prevention strategy.

Dr. Demers has a particular interest in investigating how social media communities, collective actions, and new technologies might facilitate these goals. Dr. Demers earned a Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of New Hampshire in 2018 and received a B.A. in Psychology from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts in 2005. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence and is currently a PIRC [Fellow](#). Her scholarship has been published in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Journal of American College Health, and Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, & Trauma, among others.

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