

Running head: BYSTANDER OPPORTUNITY

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION OPPORTUNITY AMONG ADOLESCENTS:  
DEMOGRAPHIC, PSYCHOSOCIAL, AND BEHAVIORAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND  
CHANGES OVER TIME

BY

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## ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to examine how demographic, psychosocial, and behavioral factors are associated with bystander opportunity among adolescents, and how bystander opportunity changes across one year. Participants for the study consisted of 1,322 adolescents who took an initial survey (Wave 1) and a survey one year later (Wave 4). Participants were 50.3% (n=658) female, 14.1% (n=182) identified as a sexual minority, and 88.9% (n=1140) identified as white, non-Hispanic, 11.1% (n=143) identified as non-white or Hispanic, with the mean age of 15.7 (SD = 1.2) years at Wave 1. Bystander opportunity was examined by measuring six individual opportunities. I hypothesized that demographic, psychosocial, and behavioral factors will be associated with the likelihood of bystander opportunity over time. Additionally, I predicted that adolescents will be more likely to have intervention opportunity types at Wave 4, compared to Wave 1 due to increase in age. Partially consistent with hypotheses, minority status, greater victim empathy, and binge drinking were consistently correlated with opportunity to intervene across all six opportunity variables. These results contribute to bystander theory by illustrating factors associated with opportunity and have implications for bystander intervention programming.

## **Introduction**

According to Baker (2017), between 10-20% of adolescent dating relationships have physical or sexual violence present with rates of emotional violence and controlling behaviors reportedly even higher. Sexual assault is also high among adolescents; when more inclusive measures of sexual assault are used (kissing, intercourse, coercion), self-report rates of sexual assault victimization are found to be as high as 48% of adolescent girls (Maxwell et al., 2003). One important aspect of dating and sexual violence prevention among adolescents is engaging bystanders; a bystander, rather than the perpetrator or victim, is a witness to an emergency or crime (Banyard & Moynihan, 2011). According to bystander theory and the Situational Model (Latané & Darley, 1970), the first step toward being a positive active bystander is noticing the event, thus having the opportunity to intervene. In order to better understand bystander behavior, it is crucial to look at the opportunity that adolescents have to intervene. Burn (2009) addresses the importance of being able to recognize a situation as a problem; without knowledge of the signs of risky situations that may lead to sexual assault bystanders cannot act to combat it. Certain characteristics and behaviors may cause some individuals to have a greater likelihood of intervention opportunity. For instance, age, gender, sexual orientation, alcohol use, and personal knowledge and beliefs may all influence opportunity differently. The purpose of this study is to (1) examine how demographics, behavioral, and psychosocial factors are associated with individuals' opportunity to intervene and (2) examine how individual opportunity to intervene changes over time.

### **Opportunity is a Key Feature of the Situational Model**

Latané and Darley (1970) developed a five-step model to bystander intervention beginning with noticing an event (step one) to deciding to act (step five). Based off the situational model created by Latané and Darley (1970), Burn (2009) examined five specific

barriers to intervention in situations of sexual assault: failure to notice, failure to identify a situation as risky, failure to take intervention responsibility, failure to intervene due to skill deficit, and failure to intervene due to audience inhibition. According to the situational model, the first step to intervention is noticing that there is a problem. The focus of the current study is this first step: noticing a situation, and thus, having the opportunity to intervene. According to this model, if bystanders do not notice an event in which intervention is necessary (harassment, use of sexist jokes, assault, dating violence, etc.), they cannot intervene (Burn, 2009).

### **Understanding Bystander Opportunity**

Researcher suggest that one-third of sexually violent events occur in the presence of a bystander (Lukacena et al., 2019). Based on self-report surveys of 427 women victims of sexual assault, researchers suggest that there was opportunity for bystander intervention in or before one-fourth of victim-reported cases of sexual assault (Haikalis et al., 2018). Results from another study found that bystanders were present in almost two thirds of emotionally violent and physically violent victimization, both pieces involved in dating violence (Hamby, Weber, Grych, & Banyard, 2016). Additionally, another study found that of those who reported experiencing dating violence, 66% experienced such in front of a witness (Black, Tolman, Callahan, Saunders, & Weisz, 2008). Given this information, and given the frequency of dating and sexual violence among adolescents, it is clear that intervention opportunity is salient among adolescents.

Bystander opportunity happens in a variety of ways. For example, one bystander opportunity may be hearing someone make a sexist comment. Another opportunity could be seeing someone bring an intoxicated person to a secluded area. Although the risk level of these opportunities is very different, with the sexist comment being low-risk, and the secluded area being high-risk, they are both opportunities for intervention, as a low-risk situation can escalate to a high-risk

situation. These two situations both present opportunity for primary prevention, or intervention before an event takes place (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). Some situations present opportunity for secondary prevention, or intervention during an event where intervention is warranted. An example of this opportunity is walking into a situation where an intoxicated person is being assaulted, or helping a friend leave an abusive relationship (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). A third type of opportunity can occur when a victim of assault confides in someone after a sexual assault or instance of dating violence has taken place. In this case, the bystander has the opportunity to help the victim (called tertiary prevention; McMahon & Banyard, 2012).

In order to intervene one must first be presented with the opportunity to do so. Much of the literature regarding bystander intervention focuses on ways to increase bystander intervention by providing skillsets and increased confidence to those who are likely to witness sexual assault (Banyard et al., 2004). However, little research has examined the predictors of opportunity. The current paper examines factors associated with bystander opportunity.

### **Potential Factors Associated with Opportunity to Intervene**

As expressed via the Situational Model by Latané and Darley (1970), and reiterated by Burn (2009), opportunity for intervention begins with noticing an event, thus having the opportunity to intervene. There are a number of reasons that contribute to why a bystander may or may not notice an event. It is important to understand these reasons in order to best educate adolescents who are likely to be presented with intervention opportunities. Some demographic factors may be associated with opportunity. While both men and women are bystanders of sexual assault, researchers suggest that women are more likely to intend to intervene. (Banyard, 2008). Along with greater intent to intervene, women also self-report greater actual intervention and are more likely to confide in another women, rather than a man, regarding a sexual assault

(Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012). Given that women are more likely to report an assault to another woman, and that women self-report higher levels of intervention, women may also report more frequent opportunity to intervene. Sexual orientation may also affect bystander opportunity. Despite already high levels of sexual harassment, assault and dating violence among all youth, even higher levels are reported by sexual minority individuals (Hatchel, Espelage, & Huang, 2018; Edwards, et al., 2015). Because sexual minority individuals report higher levels of interpersonal violence victimization, it is plausible to assume that sexual minority individuals may have more exposure to violence victimization among their peers, and thus, have more opportunities to intervene in similar situations (i.e., experiencing a greater number of disclosures or witnessing more first-hand victimization) than heterosexual individuals. In addition, Anderson, Wandrey, Klossner, Cahill and Delahanty (2017), found that sexual minority men, rather than heterosexual men, were more likely to acknowledge situations of victimization as rape.

Along with demographic factors, some psychosocial factors may be associated with opportunity. An individual's level of rape myth acceptance is associated with both intent to intervene and actual intervention. McMahon (2010) found that those who endorsed rape myths were less likely to intervene as a bystander. However, limited research has been done regarding rape myth acceptance and opportunity. Less acceptance of rape myths and increased knowledge of what constitutes rape could impact an individual's opportunity to intervene because they are more likely to recognize a situation as an opportunity for intervention. For example, Anderson and colleagues (2017) note that sexual minority men may be more likely to acknowledge a situation as rape because their increased risk for assault may lead to greater wealth of knowledge regarding assaults and greater level of sensitivity on the subject of sexual assault and dating

violence. Similarly, victim empathy has been shown to be associated with intervening (Ahrens & Campbell, 2000). Those with greater victim empathy may be more alert and observant due to their greater empathy for others, therefore be more likely to notice an event and be presented with an opportunity to intervene.

Behavioral factors such as alcohol use, specifically binge drinking, may also be associated with opportunity to intervene. Alcohol is the most expansively used substance among adolescents (Villa, Fazio & Esposito, 2016), with as many as 60% of high school seniors reportedly getting drunk within a year time frame (Wolfsberg, 2006). Alcohol use increases over time; while middle and high school students both report drinking behavior, an increase from 20% to 60% of students report drinking within the last month when examining eighth grade students versus 12<sup>th</sup> grade students (Wolfsberg, 2006). Alcohol use is a significant factor in cases of sexual assault; results from a primarily female sample of adolescents under the age of 21 indicated that 74% of adolescents reported alcohol use as a factor in their sexual assault (Sheridan, & Evans, 2019). Another study found significant association between alcohol use and teen dating violence among both boys and girls (Parker et al., 2017). As a result, it is possible that alcohol use could result in greater opportunity for intervention because adolescents are in contexts where dating violence and sexual assault often occur. However, alcohol also has inhibitory factors as well. Although one may have more exposure to potential opportunities to intervene when in a risky drinking situation, alcohol intoxication impairs both perception and thoughts, which could decrease ability to notice an opportunity (Steele & Josephs, 1990).

Bystander opportunity may also be impacted by age. That is, bystander opportunity may increase as adolescents get older. As adolescents age, they are more often unsupervised (Rubin, Bukowski, Parker, 2006) and more often engage in sexual and dating relationships (Connolly,

Craig, Goldberg, Pepler, 2004). In addition, risk factors for sexual and dating violence increase across adolescence, such as alcohol use (Schulenburg & Maggs, 2002). All these factors likely cause adolescents to have increasing bystander opportunity, as they are increasingly in situations where sexual and dating violence is likely to occur.

### **Current Study**

The current study used data collected as part of dating and sexual violence prevention program evaluation in high schools in the northeastern United States (Edwards et al., 2019). In this study, I examined adolescents' opportunity to intervene in sexual assault and dating violence scenarios. In order to maximize the benefits of bystander intervention programs, prevention research and practitioners could target adolescents most likely to have the opportunity to intervene. In the current study, I examine factors associated with opportunity for intervention. Specifically, I examine the association of demographics, psychosocial, and behavioral factors with high school adolescents' opportunity to intervene. I also examine opportunity to intervene over time.

### **Hypothesis 1**

Demographic, psychosocial, and behavioral factors will be associated with the likelihood of bystander opportunity over time. Specifically, I hypothesize that:

**1a: Demographic.** Girls will be more likely to report bystander opportunity than boys, sexual minority adolescents will be more likely to report bystander opportunity than heterosexual adolescents.

**1b: Psychosocial.** Adolescents with greater knowledge of sexual assault, lower rape myth acceptance, and more victim empathy will have more opportunity to intervene.

**1c: Behavioral.** Adolescents who engaged in binge drinking in the past 30 days will be

more likely to have the opportunity to intervene than adolescents who did not engage in binge drinking in the past 30 days.

## **Hypothesis 2**

Adolescents will be more likely to have intervention opportunity types at Wave 4, compared to Wave 1, due to increase in age.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants for this paper consisted of 1,322 adolescents from the control arm of a randomized control trial to evaluate a bystander-focused violence prevention curriculum (Edwards et al., 2019). Adolescents were from 13 schools. Average age of participants was 15.7 (1.2) years at the start of Wave 1. Participants were 49.7% ( $n= 651$ ) male and 14.1% ( $n=182$ ) identified as a sexual minority. Within the sample, 88.9% ( $n=1140$ ) reported that they were White non-Hispanic, 11.1% ( $n=143$ ) and 18.6% ( $n=234$ ) reported receiving either free or reduced lunch. Follow-up surveys were administered at three time periods (W2, W3, W4) after the initial baseline survey (W1). The first follow-up survey (W2) occurred an average of 44.2 days after the W1 (Range = 21-109 days). The second (W3) occurred an average of 97.9 days after W1 (Range = 50-133 days), and the third (W4), occurred an average of 423.9 days after W1 (Range = 393-481 days). Data used in the current study does not include information from W2 as behavioral data was not collected at this time point.

### **Measures**

**Demographics.** Demographic data for race and ethnicity was collected based on questions modeled after federal standards and previous research (Office of Management and Budget, 1997). Other demographic questions included age, gender, and sexual

attraction/orientation.

**Knowledge.** A six-item questionnaire was developed, similar to those used in previous evaluation studies (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007; Foshee & Langwick, 2010), to evaluate student's knowledge of sexual assault and dating violence. The Knowledge Questionnaire (KQ) was created based on information provided from the Bringing in the Bystander—High School Curriculum (Leyva & Eckstein, 2015). Questions were presented in two ways, two “circle all that apply” as well as four multiple choice questions. The two “circle all that apply” questions were used to evaluate the accuracy of the participant's knowledge, and the four multiple choice questions looked for one correct answer to a question. For example, “according to the FBI, \_\_\_\_\_ of rapes that are reported to the police are false reports (the person reporting lied)”, response options (a) 2%, (b) 10%, (c) 30%, (d) 60%, (e) *I don't know*. All items were scored as either *inaccurate* (0) or *accurate* (1). Scores were then added together, in which the higher the score the greater knowledge regarding relationship abuse and sexual assault ( $M=9.5$ ,  $SD = 3.4$ ). This questionnaire was administered at each wave of the study.

**Rape Myth Acceptance.** In order to assess participant agreement with common rape myths, a shortened version (Coker et al., 2011; Cook-Craig, 2012) of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) was used. This shortened form of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance is made up of 6 items. Items used included “*When girls are sexually assaulted, it is often because the way they said ‘no’ was unclear*”. Responses for questions were indicated on a 4-point Likert scale from *disagree strongly* (1) to *agree strongly* (4). As revealed by factor analyses, Traditional Gender Expectations (Cronbach's alpha = .78,  $M=4.1$ ,  $SD= 1.4$ ) and Rape Denial (Cronbach's alpha = .73,  $M=6.1$ ,  $SD=2.2$ ) are the two factors represented by the 6 questions in the scale. Items from the scale are summed; those with higher

scores for each factor indicate levels of higher rape myth acceptance. This survey was administered at each wave of the study.

**Victim Empathy.** Using existing measures (Ahrens & Campbell, 2000; Smith & Frieze, 2003), a new measure of victim empathy was created for this study. The Victim Empathy Scale (VES) is composed of 3 items (e.g., “I feel that I am able to understand what the victim of relationship abuse and/or sexual assault goes through.”). Items responses range from *Disagree Strongly* (1) to *Agree Strongly* (4). Higher summed scores indicate a higher level of victim empathy. VES was administered at all waves, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .79, ( $M=7.2$ ,  $SD=2.2$ ).

**Binge Drinking.** One item from the Center for Disease Control’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (Eaton et al., 2012) was included to assess alcohol use, specifically binge drinking, over the past month. The question addressed how many days out of the month a person binge drank (4 or more drinks in a row for girls/women and 5 or more boys/men). Possible responses included: *never drank alcohol*, *0 days*, *1 or 2 days*, *3 to 9 days*, *10 to 19 days*, and *20 to 31 days*. This variable was recoded as *never drank alcohol* and *no binge drinking in past 30 days* (0), *binge drank 1 or 2 days* (1), and *binge drank 3 to 9 days, 10-19 days, or 20-31 days* (2). We also dummy coded this variable to use in the logistic regression analysis.

**Bystander Opportunity.** A measure adapted from Cook-Craig and colleagues (2014), the Bystander Behavior Scale, was used. This scale is made up of 18 items, of which six items (examples below) were used to assess a 12-month period prior. Items addressed bystander behavior prior to, during, and after a sexual assault or instance of dating violence. For each item participants could respond by either indicating how many times they intervened, or by choosing “I haven’t been in this situation”. Each of the six items was recoded into *Opportunity* (1) or *No opportunity* (0). The scenarios were as follows: *Tell someone to stop talking down to, harassing,*

*or messing with someone else,” “Speak up when you heard someone blaming a victim of relationship abuse or sexual assault,” “Talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend,” “ Ask someone that looked very upset at a party/dance/ sports event if they were okay or needed help,” “Speak up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex with them,” and “Get help for a friend because they had been forced to have sex or were physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend.”*

### **Analysis**

I first examined descriptive statistics. To address hypothesis 1, I conducted bivariate correlations of Wave 1 demographic (gender and sexual orientation), psychosocial (knowledge, rape myth acceptance, and victim empathy), and behavioral (binge drinking) factors with opportunity to intervene at Wave 1. I used Bonferroni Correction to account for the number of correlations. To further address hypothesis 1, I conducted six multiple logistic regression analyses where Wave 1 demographic, psychosocial, and behavioral factors are the independent variables. The six dependent variables are the six opportunity variables. To address hypothesis 2, I performed a McNemar Test that compares intervention opportunity types at Wave 1 and Wave 4.

## **Results**

### **Hypothesis 1**

Descriptive statistics are presented in Tables 1 and 2 and bivariate correlation results are presented in Tables 3 and 4. As demonstrated by bivariate correlations, heterosexual boys were less likely than other students to have an opportunity to talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend and ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help. Heterosexual girls were more likely than other students to have

an opportunity to ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help. Sexual minority girls were more likely than other students to have opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone, speak up when they heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault, ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/ sports event if they were okay or needed help and get help for a friend because they'd been forced to have sex or were physically hurt by a boyfriend/ girlfriend. Adolescents with more knowledge were more likely to have opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone. Adolescents with higher rape myth acceptance specific to rape denial were less likely to have opportunity to talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/ girlfriend, and more likely to have opportunity to speak up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex. Adolescents with more victim empathy were more likely to experience opportunity among all six individual opportunities.

Adolescents who reported no binge drinking within the last 30 days were less likely than those who binge drank within the last 30 days to have opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone, talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/ girlfriend, ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/ sports event if they were okay or needed help and speak up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex. Those who reported binge drinking one or two times within the last 30 days were more likely to have opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down to, harassing, or messing with someone, talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/ girlfriend, and ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help. Adolescents who reported binge drinking 3 or more times during the last 30 days were more likely to report opportunity to speak up when they heard someone blaming a victim of

abuse or assault, talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend, ask someone who looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help, speak up to someone who was bragging about making excuses for forcing someone to have sex and more likely to have an opportunity to get help for a friend because they'd been forced to have sex or were physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend.

Logistic regression analyses are presented in Table 5. Analyses are adjusted for age and race. Sexual minority girls, compared to heterosexual boys, were more likely to have opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone, speak up when they heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault, talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/ girlfriend, and ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/ sports event if they were okay or needed help. Heterosexual girls, compared to heterosexual boys, were more likely to have opportunity talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend and more likely to have opportunity to ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/ sports events if they were okay or needed help. Adolescents with greater knowledge for rape were more likely to have opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone. Adolescents with more rape myth acceptance (denial) were more likely to have opportunity to talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend and more opportunity to speak up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex. Adolescents with greater victim empathy were more likely to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing or messing with someone, speak up when they heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault, talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/ girlfriend, speak up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex, and get help for a friend because they'd been forced to have sex or were

physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend. Adolescents who binge drank once or twice in the past 30 days were more likely than adolescents who didn't binge drink in the past 30 days to have an opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone, to talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend, to ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help, and ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/ sports event if they were okay or needed help. Adolescents that reported binge drinking 3 or more times within the last 30 days were more likely than adolescents who didn't binge drink in the past 30 days to have opportunity in all six scenarios.

### **Hypothesis 2**

McNemar test results are presented in Table 6. Adolescents reported more opportunity to talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend and more opportunity to speak up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex. Adolescents reported less opportunity to ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help at wave 4 compared to wave 1.

### **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to identify predictors of bystander opportunity, and to examine change in bystander opportunity across one year in adolescence. Results were consistent with many of the hypotheses. I found that demographic, psychosocial, and behavioral factors were associated with bystander opportunity. This study, unlike many others that relate to bystanders and sexual assault/harassment, examined adolescent opportunity to intervene rather than actual intervention. Results from this study are important because they could potentially be used to help adolescents for and implement intervention programs.

Consistent with much of the literature and with my hypothesis, girls, compared to boys,

were more likely to have an opportunity to intervene in several specific opportunities. Girls were significantly more likely to have an opportunity to talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend and more likely to have an opportunity to ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help. Girls may have been presented with more opportunity because, consistent with the literature, girls are more likely to confide in each other rather than in a male friend (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2012). Girls were also more likely to have an opportunity to ask someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help. This could be due to women noticing these opportunities more than men, as women have been found to be more empathetic to survivors of sexual assault and may be more aware of the signs that someone has been victimized (Ahrens & Campbell, 2000). Also consistent with my hypothesis, sexual minority adolescents were more likely to have opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone and to speak up when you heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault. Given that sexual minorities are more likely to acknowledge situations of victimization as rape, they may also be more likely to recognize and acknowledge other forms of victimization (Anderson et al., 2017).

Adolescents with greater knowledge of sexual assault were more likely to have opportunity to tell someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone. This finding is consistent with the literature and rationale behind my hypothesis that those with greater knowledge may be better equipped to recognize situations of harassment, and therefore have more opportunity to intervene. Adolescents with more rape myth acceptance (denial) were more likely to have opportunity to talk to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend and more opportunity to speak up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex. Although these results are not exactly what I

hypothesized, the discrepancies between the hypotheses and the results can be explained. Latané and Darley's (1970) five-step model to bystander intervention begins with noticing an event. Burn (2009) took this five-step model of bystander intervention and applied it to sexual assault. According to this model, if an event goes unnoticed (harassment, use of sexist jokes, assault, dating violence, etc.), intervention cannot take place (Burn, 2009). However, despite the fact that noticing an event is the first step toward intervention, there are four other steps. Burn (2009) identifies four other barriers to intervention: failure to identify a situation as risky, failure to take intervention responsibility, failure to intervene due to skill deficit, and failure to intervene due to audience inhibition. Therefore, the discrepancy between my hypothesis and the results may be a consequence of adolescents who believe and endorse rape myths (denial), but still see and recognize situations as they unfold but think that what they are seeing is acceptable. Additionally, adolescents who have higher rape myth acceptance are frequently surrounded by others who are also high in rape myths acceptance, and are more likely to believe that it is acceptable for men to be dominant (Davies, Gilston, & Rogers, 2012).

Adolescents with greater victim empathy were more likely to have opportunity to intervene in five of the six opportunities. Although this finding was anticipated, it is particularly interesting. Previous studies have addressed and have positively improved empathy among participants after implementation of empathy building programs (Hines, Bishop & Pam Reed, 2019). Findings in this study as well as findings from previous studies help to set the groundwork for future studies as well as improvement of middle and high school education and bystander programming. This improvement could include empathy building exercises implemented beginning at a younger age, as well as greater education surrounding sexual assault and harassment.

Adolescents who binge drank at least once or twice in the past 30 days, compared to those who did not binge drink were more likely to have an opportunity to intervene in three of the six opportunities. Those who reported binge drinking three or more times in the last 30 days were more likely than those who did not binge drinking to report opportunity in all six scenarios. This finding has implications for future bystander programming. High rates of sexual assault and dating violence take place in the presence of alcohol (Sheridan & Evans, 2019; Parker et al., 2017). Although binge drinking within the last 30 days does not mean that each opportunity was presented when an individual was drunk or drinking, it is reasonable to assume that drinking may be involved with the intervention opportunities. In light of these findings, prevention programming could target adolescents who are binge drinkers, and could teach bystander skills in the context of binge drinking.

Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. Increased opportunity was reported for two of the six scenarios. However, a decrease in opportunity from Wave 1 to Wave 4 was reported in the fourth scenario. This hypothesis was based on the theory that as adolescents age, they are exposed to more variable, higher-risk situations (lack of supervision, increased dating and sexual relationships, and increased alcohol use) and thus, may have more opportunity to intervene (Rubin, et al., 2006; Connolly, et al., 2004; Schulenburg & Maggs, 2002). Although the literature shows that this is a consistent finding, there was a relatively short amount of time (12 months) between Wave 1 and Wave 4. Despite that the participants were older at this point, they were not very much older, and few changes may have taken place in regard to factors like parental supervision. Additionally, there this lack of change between Wave 1 and Wave 4 may be due to the lack of variety of opportunity expressed within the scenarios.

### **Limitations**

In this study, I examined bystander intervention opportunity, whereas previous studies have examined bystander behavior. Results from this study are important, but they are also limited. These limitations suggest opportunity for future research. First, though the study was longitudinal, the study did not go beyond a 12-month follow-up. Although this is better than a one-time collection, a study with a longer follow-up period may show different results. For example, research that follows adolescents past high school will likely demonstrate an increase in intervention opportunity due to factors such as increases in binge drinking and decreased parental supervision. Second, this sample lacked diversity (88.9% White non-Hispanic). Future studies would benefit from studying a more racially inclusive group; the results of the current paper may not generalize beyond the population surveyed. Third, there were only six scenarios regarding bystander opportunity that were examined. A greater variety of opportunities may also change the outcomes. Additionally, the scenarios could be broken down further into those that deal with opportunity to intervene before or after an assault or risky situation or helping a victim after the fact. A fourth limitation of the study was the binge drinking measure. This measure looked at drinking within the last 30 days, whereas opportunity was measured over the course of a year. Fifth, as technology changes, so do avenues for harassment and stalking. Future studies could also benefit from a more inclusive measures of opportunity including online sexual harassment and online stalking. Sixth, this study was limited by the small effect size.

### **Conclusion**

Latané and Darley (1970) set a framework for bystander intervention with their five-step model. This study focuses only on the first of five steps to examine the opportunity for bystander intervention. While each of the four other steps are important when considering actual intervention, this study examined the first in regard to intervention opportunity. It is important to

examine opportunity, the first step, among adolescents because one cannot intervene if they do not know that an intervention is necessary. Therefore, this study was created to examine which demographics, psychosocial, and behavioral factors make an individual more apt to have an intervention opportunity. Cumulatively, the study results indicate demographic, psychosocial, and behavioral associations with bystander opportunity that can be used in the future. Results from this study should first be used as a groundwork for similar studies to examine bystander intervention opportunity separate from bystander intervention. The results indicate that variables such as gender, sexual orientation, victim empathy, and binge drinking can all be used to help further address actual intervention, rather than simply identify intervention opportunity. By knowing who encounters more opportunity there is greater ability to address actual intervention. Greater knowledge of who may experience more opportunities for intervention could help to target those who should be equipped with the skills to do so in order to impact both sexual and dating violence on a population level.

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Table 1. *Descriptive statistics for demographics and key study variables*

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	Percent
Heterosexual Boy/Man	96.1%
Sexual Minority Boy/Man	3.9%
Heterosexual Girl/Woman	61.0%
Sexual Minority Girl/Woman	39.0%
White Non-Hispanic	88.9%
Free/Reduced Lunch	18.6%
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade at Wave 1	28.3%
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade at Wave 1	34.5%
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade at Wave 1	18.6%
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade at Wave 1	18.6%
No Drinks	70.7%
1 or 2 Drinks	9.2%
3 or More Drinks	6.5%

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Table 2. *Bystander opportunity: Wave 1 vs. wave 4*

Bystander Opportunity	Wave 1	Wave 2
	Percent	Percent
1	74.4%	71.4%
2	26.5%	26.2%
3	25.9%	26.5%
4	66.0%	57.7%
5	15.0%	16.6%
6	13.7%	14.5%

*Note.* 1= told someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone; 2= spoke up when you heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault; 3= talked to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend; 4= asked someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help; 5 = spoke up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex; 6= got help for friend because they'd been forced to have sex or were physically hurt by boyfriend/girlfriend

Table 3: *Bivariate correlations for Hypothesis 1*

	Bystander Opportunity	Heterosexual Boy/Man	Heterosexual Girl/Woman	Sexual Minority Boy/Man	Sexual Minority Girl/Woman	Knowledge	Rape Myth Acceptance - Rape Denial	Rape Myth Acceptance - Traditional Gender Expectations	Victim Empathy
1		-.07	-.01	.01	.13*	.14*	-.02	-.07	.12*
2		-.08	-.04	.04	.14*	.05	.02	.02	.17*
3		-.08*	.03	.04	.07	-.00	-.10*	.04	.17*
4		-.12*	.09*	-.02	.08*	.05	.04	-.05	.10*
5		-.32	-.01	.02	.07	-.02	.13*	.05	.11*
6		-.06	-.01	.03	.09*	-.01	.04	.02	.21*

*Note.* \* $p < .005$ ; 1 = told someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone; 2 = spoke up when you heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault; 3 = talked to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend; 4 = asked someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help; 5 = spoke up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex; 6 = got help for friend because they'd been forced to have sex or were physically hurt by boyfriend/girlfriend

Table 4. Bivariate correlations for hypothesis 1, continued

Bystander Opportunity Drinks	No Drinks	1 or 2 Drinks	3 or More Drinks
1	-.13*	.12*	.07
2	-.08	.03	.10*
3	-.14*	.12*	.12*
4	-.10*	.08*	.08*
5	-.12*	.06	.12*
6	-.06	-.01	.14*

*Note.* \* $p < .005$ ; 1=told someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone; 2=spoke up when you heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault; 3=talked to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend; 4=asked someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help; 5=spoke up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex; 6=got help for friend because they'd been forced to have sex or were physically hurt by boyfriend/girlfriend

Table 5. *Logistic regression results. Opportunity at Wave 1*

Bystander Opportunity	1	2	3	4	5	6
	OR (95% CI)					
Sexual Minority Boy/Man	.83 (.39, 1.77)	1.22 (.59, 2.49)	1.37 (.66, 2.84)	.89 (.46, 1.74)	1.38 (.58, 3.26)	1.15 (0.48, 2.76)
Sexual Minority Girl/Woman	3.76** (1.73, 8.19)	2.73*** (1.67, 4.45)	1.86* (1.11, 3.12)	2.10** (1.23, 3.57)	2.09* (1.15, 3.80)	1.66 (0.90, 3.05)
Heterosexual Girl/Woman	1.00 (.73, 1.38)	1.13 (.81, 1.57)	1.51* (1.10, 2.11)	1.72*** (1.30, 1.28)	1.22 (.81, 1.84)	1.18 (0.76, 1.82)
Knowledge	1.08** (1.03, 1.13)	1.03 (0.98, 1.08)	0.98 (0.94, 1.03)	1.01 (0.97, 1.06)	0.99 (0.94, 1.05)	0.98 (0.92, 1.04)
Rape Denial	1.01 (0.94, 1.12)	1.04 (0.96, 1.14)	1.12* (1.03, 1.22)	1.07 (0.99, 1.16)	1.19** (1.08, 1.32)	1.08 (0.97, 1.20)
Traditional Gender Expectations	0.93 (0.82, 1.05)	1.08 (0.95, 1.25)	1.06 (0.93, 1.19)	0.96 (0.86, 1.07)	1.09 (0.95, 1.26)	1.07, (0.92, 1.25)
Victim Empathy	1.08* (1.00, 1.16)	1.16*** (1.09, 1.25)	1.20*** (1.12, 1.29)	1.07 (1.00, 1.14)	1.14** (1.05, 1.26)	1.37*** (1.25, 1.50)
1 or 2 Drinks	4.26*** (2.16, 8.41)	1.24 (.79, 1.95)	2.15*** (1.40, 3.29)	1.87** (1.17, 2.99)	1.61 (.95, 2.73)	0.90 (0.48, 1.68)
3 or more Drinks	3.11** (1.43, 6.77)	1.87* (1.10, 3.17)	2.05** (1.21, 3.48)	2.24** (1.22, 4.12)	2.83*** (1.58, 5.07)	2.49** (1.38, 4.50)

*Note: \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; 1=told someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone; 2=spoke up when you heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault; 3= talked to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend; 4=asked someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help; 5=spoke up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex; 6=got help for friend because they'd been forced to have sex or were physically hurt by boyfriend/girlfriend.*

Table 6: McNemar test results: Opportunity at Wave 1 versus Wave 4

Bystander Opportunity	Wave 1	Wave 4	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
	Percent	Percent	
1	74.4%	71.4%	.48
2	26.5%	26.9%	.15
3	25.9%	26.5%	.01*
4	66.0%	57.7%	.00***
5	15.0%	16.6%	.02*
6	13.7%	14.5%	.30

Note: \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; 1=told someone to stop talking down, harassing, or messing with someone; 2=spoke up when you heard someone blaming a victim of abuse or assault; 3= talked to a friend who was being physically hurt by a boyfriend/girlfriend; 4=asked someone that looked upset at a party/dance/sports event if they were okay or needed help; 5=spoke up to someone who was bragging or making excuses for forcing someone to have sex; 6=got help for friend because they'd been forced to have sex or were physically hurt by boyfriend/girlfriend.