Chapter 17

Preventing Sexual Violence among Adolescents and Young Adults

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OVERVIEW

Sexual violence is a pervasive public health issue in the United States, and globally (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2004; Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). Sexual violence impacts adolescents and emerging adults (i.e., individuals between the ages 13 and 25 years) at rates higher than any other age group (Black et al., 2011; Rennison, 2001). Moreover, sexual violence leads to a host of negative psychological, physical, social, academic, and occupational/economic outcomes (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Banyard, Weber, Grych, & Hamby, 2016; Edwards, 2015b; Holt & Espelage, 2007; Peterson, DeGue, Florence, & Lokey, 2017). Thus, the primary prevention of sexual violence is a public health priority (Health & Services, 2012). Primary prevention, used interchangeably with universal prevention, targets the general population with the goal of preventing sexual violence from occurring in the first place (Kellam & Langevin, 2003). As such, the vast majority of sexual violence primary prevention initiatives have targeted adolescents and emerging adults (DeGue et al., 2014).

The aims of this chapter are to (1) define and document the scope of sexual violence, (2) summarize literature on the etiology of sexual violence, (3) review the research on sexual violence prevention initiatives, and (4) delineate implications for research, practice, and policy. We note at the outset that the range of research we review is somewhat broad because the definitions of adolescence and emerging adulthood encompass many different potential developmental moments that have implications for prevention. Most research to date on sexual violence with adolescents and emerging adults has included individuals ranging in age from approximately 12 years (early adolescence) to 25 years (late emerging adulthood). The current

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chapter will summarize etiological research that identifies the foundation of prevention work, and promising or effective prevention methods that target these different groups of etiological or contextual factors. We will then make the case that a more comprehensive and synthesized set of strategies are needed that weave together efforts across pieces of the social-ecological model (Banyard, 2013) and that focus on many different prevention entry points or target audiences. We conclude with the argument that a focus on actionist intervention training (used interchangeably with bystander-focused training), along with programming that reduces risk and increases protective factors for sexual violence victimization and perpetration, is one possible theme that can integrate these prevention pieces.

DEFINITION AND EPIDEMIOLOGY

Sexual violence is defined as "a sexual act committed against someone without that person's freely giving consent" (Basile, Smith, Breiding, Black, & Mahendra, 2014). Sexual violence exists on a continuum, ranging from unwanted sexual contact (e.g., unwanted fondling of breasts) to attempted or completed rape. Research suggests that 1 in 5 women and close to 1 in 59 men will experience an attempted or completed rape during their lifetime (Black et al., 2011). Moreover, 27.3% of women and 10.8% of men report experiencing unwanted sexual contact in their lifetime (Black et al., 2011). Adolescence and emerging adulthood is marked by disproportionately high rates of sexual violence victimization experiences, with 79.6% of female rape victims reporting their first rape before the age of 25 years (Black et al., 2011). When sexual violence is broadly defined by all acts ranging from unwanted sexual contact to completed rape, 51% of high school girls and 26% of high school boys report being sexually assaulted by a peer during their lifetime (Young, Grey, & Boyd, 2009). Looking specifically at high school students who dated during the past year, 10.6% were victims of sexual dating violence just in the past year; rates of sexual dating violence were higher for female students (15.6%) than male students (5.4%) (Kann et al., 2014). Researchers have also documented that sexual violence occurs at concerning rates among emerging adults as well, including college students. For example, the Association of American Universities conducted a survey of 150,072 college students at 27 institutions of higher education; results documented that 23.1% of undergraduate women had experienced sexual violence during college (Cantor et al., 2015).

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: THEORY, CAUSES, AND PREVENTION

The prevention of sexual violence has historically focused on three different entry points for prevention messaging and skill building: potential perpetrators, potential victims, and potential bystanders (who we call actionists).

Each of them has strengths and limits as a focus of prevention work. Thus, an understanding of risk and protective factors for sexual violence perpetration and victimization and factors that facilitate or hinder positive action in sexual violence situations is critical in order to develop sexual violence prevention efforts. These factors illuminate key attitudes and behaviors that are both distal and proximal to the occurrence of an assault and that, if changed, might keep the incident from happening.

At the outset we note that most sexual violence prevention initiatives target individual and relational level risk factors as opposed to community and social factors. We have tried to include relevant research from these other layers when possible. Furthermore, most sexual violence prevention has been school-based, that is, delivered as part of a curriculum in middle school, high school, and/or college, and this is reflected in the review below. Finally, although a number of curriculum-based sexual violence prevention initiatives have been developed, only a few have been rigorously evaluated (i.e., experimental or quasi experimental methods) and even fewer have demonstrated promising changes in sexual violence behaviors. To date, approximately 150 articles have been published that report on the outcomes of sexual violence prevention initiatives. A review of all of these articles is beyond the scope of one book chapter, thus we focus most specifically on programs that have shown some impact on behavior and used more rigorous evaluation designs. We begin with a brief summary of factors that correlate with and/or predict being a sexual violence perpetration risk, sexual violence victimization risk, and positive actionists in sexual violence situations. We then discuss how this research has been leveraged in prevention initiatives that target potential perpetrators, potential victims, and potential actionists, with a specific emphasis on prevention initiatives that have demonstrated reductions in rates of sexual violence.

Sexual Violence Perpetration

Overview

Responsibility for sexual violence rests first and foremost with perpetrators, who choose to use force and coercion to engage in sexual behavior without the consent of the other person. Fundamental prevention of sexual violence involves keeping perpetrators from acting, and this is one of the most important strengths of focusing prevention work on this entry point. As a result, a number of theories of sexual violence perpetration have been proposed and researched, though theory has been developed more with adult samples than with adolescents and work remains to be done to examine whether theoretical models equally apply across age groups and developmental moments (Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001; Dardis, Dixon, Edwards, & Turchik, 2014; Tharp et al., 2013).

A widely used theory to explain sexual violence perpetration is the confluence model (Malamuth, 1986; Malamuth, Heavey, & Linz, 1993; Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995; Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991). Grounded in interdisciplinary theories (e.g., feminist theory, evolutionary theory), the confluence model asserts that there are two primary pathways to sexual violence perpetration: (1) Adolescent delinquency and impersonal sex (that result from early risk factors such as child abuse) and (2) attitudes accepting of hostile masculinity and aggression. This and other theories posit that it is a combination of more distal, early life experiences (especially victimization and trauma) and the formation of several different types of attitudes that increase sexual violence perpetration propensity. Indeed, one of the challenges of focusing on perpetrators as the target audience for prevention is the number of potential risk factors to be addressed, which often conflicts with the limited resources for prevention work that restrict the scope of content that can be built into the program.

Correlates and Theories

Research has identified a number of individual, relational, cultural, and societal factors that increase or decrease risk for sexual violence perpetration; this has led to the popularity of the social–ecological model for organizing our understanding of both etiology and prevention of this problem (Tharp et al., 2013). Individual factors that increase risk for sexual violence perpetration include alcohol and drug use, delinquency, early sexual initiation, attitudes accepting of violence, general aggressive tendencies, coercive sexual fantasies, preference for impersonal sex, sexual risk taking, exposure to and preference for sexually explicit media, hostility towards women, hyper masculinity, adherence to traditional gender roles, and a history of sexual victimization and/or perpetration (Tharp et al., 2013). Relationship factors related to sexual violence perpetration include a violent and/or emotionally unsupportive family environment, history of childhood abuse, poor parent–child relationships, and associations with peers who are aggressive, hyper masculine, and/or delinquent (Tharp et al., 2013). Community factors related to sexual violence perpetration include social processes (community ties) and community "accountability cues," which (McMahon, 2015) describes as policies or well publicized sanctions that are indicators to community members that violence is taken seriously and met with clear negative consequences. For example, variables related to sexual violence perpetration include poverty, lack of employment opportunities, weak community sanctions against sexual violence perpetrators, and general community tolerance of sexual violence (Tharp et al., 2013), and also variables such as the availability of alcohol and the use of sexualized and sexist images in conjunction with alcohol sales (Lippy & DeGue, 2014). Finally, societal factors related to sexual violence perpetration include high rates of other forms of violence, weak laws and policies regarding sexual violence and gender equality, and

societal norms that support sexual violence, male superiority and entitlement, and women as inferior to men (Tharp et al., 2013).

One limitation of this research is that studies of adolescent and adult sexual violence perpetration have been relatively siloed. We have a number of studies of risk factors for sexual violence perpetration for teens and studies of risk factors for sexual violence perpetration among adult samples. Little has been done, however, to examine how these risk factors may shift and change their influence over time. For example, Reyes and colleagues followed students in 8th−12th grades to examine whether the impact of alcohol use was a risk factor for persistent teen dating violence; the researchers found that the association between heavy alcohol use and sexual violence perpetration was less strong among older students compared to younger students (Reyes, Foshee, Bauer, & Ennett, 2012). This is consistent with the recent work by Swartout and colleagues who documented that there were different trajectories of perpetration for subgroups of young men in college who had a history of sexual violence perpetration, with some escalating and some diminishing over time (Swartout, Brennan, & White, 2015). These findings remind us that adolescent sexual violence prevention must use a developmental lens, and different risk factors may need to be the focus of prevention attention at different ages, given that adolescence itself represents a broad array of ages and developmental moments.

Prevention

The earliest prevention work had its foundations in trying to change the attitudes of men and boys who might be at risk for perpetration of sexual violence. Programming that targets increasing knowledge and shifting attitudes has been around for decades, but meta analyses suggest these types of programs do not lead to reductions in sexual violence (Anderson & Whiston, 2005) or may have some negative effects (Darnell & Cook, 2009). DeGue and colleagues conducted a comprehensive review of the research literature and concluded that only three prevention initiatives had unequivocally led to reductions in sexual violence (DeGue et al., 2014). These initiatives include Safe Dates, Shifting Boundaries, and the Violence Against Women Act. Safe Dates and Shifting Boundaries specifically target adolescents and are discussed in more detail.

Safe Dates is a school-based program for middle and high school students (Foshee & Langwick, 2010). Safe Dates includes a number of components including classroom-based instruction on healthy relationships, effective and respectful communication, warning signs related to dating and sexual violence, activities to shift traditional notions of gender roles, and how to get help for issues related to dating and sexual violence (Foshee & Langwick, 2010). Thus, at the core, this program targets some of the central risk factors for perpetration documented in the literature

(Foshee & Langwick, 2010). Different iterations of Safe Dates also can include booster doses through newsletters home to students' families, student engagement in designing and performing skits at school, and holding community training forums to increase community capacity for responding to dating violence including sexual violence (Foshee & Langwick, 2010). Research on this program have shown that it decreases sexual violence and dating violence perpetration among adolescents (Foshee et al., 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2005). Mediators of behavioral outcomes include changes in dating violence norms, gender role norms, and awareness of community services. Moreover, findings suggested that Safe Dates worked equally as well for boys and girls and for all races/ethnicities (Foshee et al., 1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2005).

The Shifting Boundaries program was evaluated in middle schools; results suggested that classroom-based educational sessions on healthy relationships and understanding violence was not effective in decreasing sexual violence perpetration. However, school-wide prevention strategies including identifying particularly at risk locations and diverting more adult monitoring to those locations, improving violence response policies as strong cues for accountability, and school wide social marketing materials about sexual violence and harassment did result in reductions of sexual violence perpetration (Taylor, Stein, Mumford, & Woods, 2013).

More recently, programs with adolescents and late adolescents/early adults (in college samples) have sought to expand the range of risk factors that are the focus of prevention work beyond attitudes specific to sexual violence and relationship behaviors to other proximal variables identified in perpetration research. For example, work conducted in both United States and international contexts has focused on improving social norms related to gender and masculinity to promote more gender equitable norms and attitudes (Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Katz, Heisterkamp, & Fleming, 2011). Other prevention efforts, evaluated primarily with college men, have worked to change misperceptions men have of how much their peers support sexual violence prevention and how much their peers frown upon the use of coercion in relationships (Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003; Gidycz, Orchowski, & Berkowitz, 2011).

Also at the relational level of the social–ecological model are efforts to implement prevention through key adult relationships in the lives of youth and emerging adults such as coaches (Kroshus, Paskus, & Bell, 2015). The most well known of these efforts is Coaching Boys to Men, a program that trains high school coaches to teach their athletes about dating violence and sexual violence prevention and respect in relationships. Coaching Boys to Men increased positive actionist behavior (see below, for a fuller discussion of this form of prevention) and changed some risky attitudes (Miller et al., 2012, 2013). Moreover, Coaching Boys to Men reduced some forms of

dating violence perpetration, but sexual violence perpetration was not measured, specifically (Miller et al., 2012, 2013).

Other prevention efforts have had more success by focusing on the broader context in which perpetrators may try to act to prevent these behaviors. For example, studies of college campuses found that reductions in the availability of alcohol were associated with declines in sexual violence (Lippy & DeGue, 2014). These lines of inquiry are promising, but more research is needed. Reviews like those by DeGue and Lundgren point out that few evaluation studies measure perpetration as a behavioral outcome. Most studies are done in well resourced, developed countries, and few use strategies that address many different risk factors for perpetration across parts of the ecological model simultaneously.

Sexual Violence Victimization

Overview

A second point of entry, or target audience for prevention work, focuses on potential victims. This was also a foundational approach to rape prevention. A challenge of this focus is that perpetrators are solely responsible for sexual violence, and both researchers and practitioners have raised legitimate concerns about how a focus on victims in education and skill building efforts has a strong potential to blame victims for assaults. In the past two decades, however, important advances have been made in this work, framing these strategies as an important and potentially empowering corollary to primary prevention methods to reduce perpetrator behavior. Primarily, this work has been done with late adolescents and emerging adults in college but internationally some programs are showing very positive results with high school girls. A strength of this approach is that it does give girls, who are disproportionately the victims of sexual violence, tools that they can use to try to resist an assault if they become an unwitting target of a perpetrator, to feel like they can try to take action, while also providing very clear training in messages that sexual violence is never the fault of the victim. Thus, the strategies try to empower women and girls through risk reduction strategies and work to inoculate women and girls against social norms that lead to high levels of self blame among victims if they do, through no fault of their own, encounter a perpetrator and are assaulted.

Correlates and Theories

Several theories have been used to organize risk and protective factors for sexual victimization. For example, emotion regulation theories suggest that dysregulated emotional states (e.g., alexithymia) increase risk for sexual violence victimization. Factors that mediate this relationship are deficits in risk recognition and lack of effective responses to risk (e.g., not exiting

a dangerous situation); Cloitre & Rosenberg, 2006; Walsh, DiLillo, & Messman Moore, 2012). Cognitive ecological theory asserts that women's response to sexual violence situations is impacted by cognitive processing of environmental cues (i.e., primary and secondary appraisals) (Nurius, 2000; Nurius & Norris, 1996). Primary appraisals involve identification (or lack thereof) that a situation is dangerous (Nurius & Norris, 1996). For a number of reasons (e.g., alcohol), risk cues may be ignored. Secondary appraisals include the process of weighing the cost and benefits of responding to a perceived threat. Individuals may not react assertively (scream for help physically push the perpetrator away) because they perceive that the social consequences (e.g., social rejection) outweigh the benefits to responding (Nurius & Norris, 1996). Consistent with these theories, research suggests that certain, modifiable risk factors place women at increased risk for experiencing a sexual violence, specifically (1) deficits in recognizing risk in potential perpetrators and situations in which sexual violence is likely to occur, (2) difficulties in responding assertively to unwanted sexual advances from men, and (3) lack of engagement in self protective behaviors (Gidycz, McNamara, & Edwards, 2006; Gidycz, Van Wynsberghe, & Edwards, 2008). Thus, enhancing protective factors to decrease victimization risk includes heightening perceptions of risk to help women and girls get out of escalating situations, teach tools and skills for exiting risky situations safely as much as possible, and teaching strong messages that work against victim blame if an assault occurs.

Risk Reduction Programming

Several researchers have documented the effectiveness of empowerment and feminist-based rape resistance programs among emerging adults in college. Charlene Senn and her colleagues evaluated a 12-hour program entitled *Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act* (EAAA). EAAA includes ample opportunity for verbal and physical resistance training and practice, while underscoring that blame for sexual violence lies solely with the perpetrator. Results from a rigorous evaluation of EAAA suggested that this program reduced sexual violence by about 50% (completed rape) to 66% (attempted rape). Other researchers have documented similar promising findings, specifically that feminist self defense training reduces rates of sexual violence, although some research suggests that that this type of programming is more effective for women without histories of sexual victimization than women with histories of sexual victimization (Gidycz et al., 2001, 2015; Gidycz, Rich, Orchowski, King, & Miller, 2006; Hollander, 2014, 2015; Marx, Calhoun, Wilson, & Meyerson, 2001; Orchowski, Gidycz, & Raffle, 2008).

Internationally, a few studies are among the only research to examine risk reduction and rape resistance education as a prevention tool for high

school girls. Although sexual violence is a global health issue, rates of sexual violence are among the highest in Nairobi's (Kenya) informal settlements ("slums," i.e., communities with extreme poverty, high crime, minimal infrastructure, and unsanitary living conditions such as minimal running water and electricity). Indeed, 12%–25% of girls in informal settlements of Nairobi are victims of sexual violence each year (Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya, 2008; Kenya Nation Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) & ICF Macro, 2010). Recent research documented that IMpower, an empowerment-based self-defense course, reduces the sexual violence rate by over 40% among adolescent girls living in informal settlements in Nairobi (Sarnquist et al., 2014; Sinclair et al., 2013). IMpower consists of six 2-hour sessions taught by local women (Ujamaa Africa's instructors from the informal settlements in which they are teaching) and emphasizes empowerment, verbal negotiation and de-escalation skills, and self-defense (Sarnquist et al., 2014). We are unaware of any studies in the United States that have rigorously evaluated an empowerment-based self-defense course among high school age girls.

Positive Actionists in Sexual Violence Situations

Overview

The third entry point for prevention is relatively new and focuses on training individuals to challenge norms that condone sexual violence, interrupt situations of escalating risk to prevent sexual violence, and support sexual violence survivors after an assault (Banyard, 2015b; Banyard et al., 2016; Edwards, Rodenhizer Stämpfli, & Eckstein, 2015). One of the strongest features of this approach is that it gives everyone a role to play in sexual violence prevention and reduces defensiveness to messages (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). Termed "bystander intervention," work in this area has historically been guided by the framework proposed by Latane and Darley (1970), and more recently has been adapted for sexual violence (Banyard, 2011) to include relational and community factors that may impact actionists. It was brought into the field of sexual violence prevention in work by Katz and Berkowitz 20 years ago (Berkowitz, 2002; Katz, 1995). Since then, there has been a burgeoning interest in actionist training, and a number of sexual violence prevention initiatives have been created that are grounded in or incorporate actionist training.

Correlates and Theories

Actionists are individuals who are adults, peers, parents, and/or community members who are not themselves perpetrators or victims but witness some aspect of a sexual violence incident or escalating risk for an incident. Originally studied as people who, during an emergency situation,

stand by and do nothing, for those focused on sexual violence prevention, the bystander term itself is limited, as it often brings to mind passive observers who turn their back and choose not to help. In our discussion below we introduce the term "actionists" to signify observers who choose to step in or take some action to show that sexual violence is not accepted and that victims should be supported and believed (Banyard, 2015b).

There is a rich and growing literature on what variables make it more likely that an actionist will step in across the continuum of sexual violence risk. The foundation was set by Latane and Darley's model that describes stages or pieces of the action process (Latané & Darley, 1970). They asserted that taking action involves first noticing the situation as problematic, assuming responsibility to do something about it, creating a course of action for what must be done, and lastly, choosing to act. Banyard (2011) expanded this model and suggested that intrapersonal variables (e.g., gender and attitudes towards violence) and contextual variables (e.g., closeness to the victim, severity of the situation) may also impact actionists in situations of sexual violence (Banyard, 2015a; Bennett, Banyard, & Edwards, 2015). Possessing the knowledge and skills to intervene effectively is also essential. Actionists must notice risky situations, label them as problematic, take responsibility for doing something, and overcome barriers to intervention to actually take action.

This model and its expansion has been the subject of many empirical studies. Research has documented a number of factors that relate to taking action in situations of violence. Individual factors that increase the likelihood of action include being a female, possessing less accepting attitudes towards violence, greater victim empathy, and more confidence to intervene (Banyard, 2011, 2015a). Relationship factors related to positive actionism include peer group norms that support helping behaviors, adults like teachers and coaches indicating support for actionists, and modeling disapproval of coercive behaviors (Banyard, 2011, 2015a). Extending to outer realms of the social-ecological model, action is more likely to happen in communities characterized by high levels of collective efficacy, which consists of the social bonds and ties that can enable neighbors or groups of people to work together to form shared goals and collaboratively achieve them (Banyard, 2011; Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007; Edwards, 2015a; Edwards, Mattingly, Dixon, & Banyard, 2014; Frye, 2007).

To date, most research on actionists has focused on college students, and less so on middle and high school youth. We know that there are developmental similarities and differences across the ages of adolescence and emerging adulthood in terms of correlates of actionist mobilization. For example, Edwards et al. (2015) documented via focus groups that there were factors that both facilitated (e.g., victim at risk for serious harm) and hindered (e.g., getting involved with "drama") helping in situations of dating and

sexual violence. Edwards and colleagues also documented that "hot spots" (e.g., school buses, house parties) for dating and sexual violence were locations in which there were the most opportunities for helping in addition to specific ways in which youth helped (e.g., causing a distraction, directly confronting perpetrators). Other research has examined school personnel as individuals who can be actionists to prevent sexual violence among youth. In a qualitative study with 22 high school personnel researchers documented that school personnel intervened both during (e.g., breaking up fights between dating partners) and after (e.g., comforting victims) instances of teen sexual violence (Edwards, Rodenhizer Stampfli, & Eckstein, 2016). Furthermore, in another study with school personnel, researchers found that actions in situations of teen dating and sexual violence were more likely to occur when self-reported barriers to these actions were perceived to be low(Edwards, Banyard, Sessarego, & Mitchell, 2017b).

Actionist Focused Prevention

Prevention strategies that aim to increase actionists and improve their prevention of sexual violence are increasing. These programs take many forms including online modules, in person training workshops, social marketing campaigns, and interactive theater (Banyard et al., 2007; Cares et al., 2015; Jouriles et al., 2016; McMahon, Postmus, Warrener, & Koenick, 2014; Moynihan et al., 2015; Potter, 2012). These programs have differences but often share core elements that map onto the research about what makes it more likely that actionists will step in including building knowledge of warning signs and risk factors, so that actionists will know a risky situation when they see it, modeling and discussing more positive social norms that show that everyone has a role to play in ending sexual violence, and teaching specific skills to build an actionists' toolkit for intervening.

Most of the evaluation of actionist training efforts has been with emerging adults on college campuses, and the outcomes show promise for increasing rates of positive actionist behavior when there is risk for sexual violence. With the exception of two studies, one with college men and one with full campuses, the outcomes measured have mainly been actionist behavior to intervene in situations of sexual violence, rather than measuring actual reductions in rates of sexual violence perpetration or victimization (Coker et al., 2014, 2016; Gidycz et al., 2011). Although findings were somewhat mixed and more rigorous research methodologies are needed, results from the several studies that measured sexual violence suggested that actionist focused programming may be effective at reducing rates of sexual violence among emerging adults.

Actionist mobilization has also been used with younger populations of adolescents. Four programs appear in the evaluation literature with a specific bystander focus that are tailored to high school students: Coaching Boys to

Men (Miller et al., 2012), Mentors in Violence Prevention (Katz et al., 2011), Green Dot (Coker et al., 2017), and the Bringing in the Bystander High School (Edwards, Banyard, Mitchell, & Sessarego, 2017a; Leyva & Eckstein, 2015). Again, many of the promising outcomes are that these programs increase positive actionist behaviors to interrupt risky situations, support survivors, and to model social norms that show violence will not be tolerated. Green Dot, however, has been evaluated and found to lead to reductions in rates of sexual violence among high school youth (Coker et al., 2017),

Key Ingredients of Effective Prevention

Across prevention programing that targets potential perpetrators, potential victims, and potential actionists, it is critical to identify ingredients that make programs effective. Researchers have identified key characteristics of efficacious prevention programming, and much of this knowledge comes from the broader field of prevention science (Banyard, 2015b; Crooks, Jaffe, Wolfe, Hughes, & Chiodo, 2010; Crooks, Scott, Ellis, & Wolfe, 2011; Edwards, Neal, & Rodenhizer Stämpfli, in press; Mihalic, Fagan, Irwin, Ballard, & Elliott, 2002; Nation et al., 2003). Research is clear that prevention initiatives are more likely to be effective if they are grounded in theory and research on the etiology of the targeted health behavior (Edwards et al., in press; Nation et al., 2003). Moreover, prevention initiatives are most effective if they are sufficiently dosed, comprehensive, multilevel, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, provide opportunities for skill building, and include highly trained facilitators/instructors (Banyard, 2015b; Crooks et al., 2010, 2011; Edwards et al., in press; Mihalic et al., 2002; Nation et al., 2003).

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE PRIORITIES

Our understanding of sexual violence prevention has substantially increased over the past few decades. Not only have we begun to identify best practices for sexual violence prevention but several prevention initiatives have also demonstrated reductions in rates of sexual violence. In fact, reductions in rates of sexual violence have been associated with programs that target potential perpetrators, potential victims, and potential actionists. These findings in conjunction with myriad risk and protective factors for sexual violence underscore the need for comprehensive sexual violence prevention.

There are two dimensions to a comprehensive sexual violence prevention approach: (1) dosage (i.e., programming initiatives that have multiple sessions) and (2) inclusivity of myriad strategies and content (i.e., targeting risk and protective factors for sexual violence perpetration, victimization, and bystander non action). First—dosage—whereas current sexual violence prevention approaches show some promise in changing the risk and

protective factors associated with sexual violence, the effects of single programs tend to dissipate over short term follow up periods, with few programs being associated with reductions in rates of sexual violence. Because programs are often only a few hours in length, there is also question as to whether the dosage of current sexual violence prevention efforts is sufficient to engender lasting change in desired outcomes.

Second—strategy and content—it seems logical to conclude that the next step in advancing the science and practice of sexual violence prevention is to develop and evaluate a more intensive and comprehensive prevention package that incorporates multiple approaches, including those that target potential perpetrators (via social norms and healthy masculinity programming), potential victims (via feminist empowerment self-defense trainings), and potential actionists (via bystander trainings). This assertion is consistent with a large body of efficacy research noting that increased doses of an intervention lead to enhanced outcomes, and that a combination of interventions should increase effectiveness (Banyard, Weber, Grych, & Hamby, 2015; DeGue, 2014; Edwards et al., 2015; Nation et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2013). Each approach is uniquely justified, targets a complimentary array of modifiable risk and protective factors for sexual violence, and has promising efficacy in promoting positive change in desired outcomes. Thus, a prevention package that integrates these three components will likely be more effective at reducing sexual violence than any of the individual components alone.

Research is needed to understand how to best implement comprehensive sexual violence prevention programs. Whereas a comprehensive and intensive prevention package that combines multiple programming strategies is most likely to lead to long lasting reductions in the rates of sexual violence, little is known about the most optimal way to deliver comprehensive sexual violence prevention and the gap between implementation of sexual violence prevention in the context of a carefully controlled study with research resources to rigorously implement and evaluate the program, and actual implementation of the same program in the real world context of schools and communities is vast and well documented (Noonan et al., 2009).

Also, given that sexual violence prevention initiatives have overlapping components (e.g., addressing victim blaming attitudes in both bystander trainings and feminist empowerment self-defense training), comprehensive prevention programming would need to be streamlined in order to avoid redundancy which could impact program participant adherence. Moreover, more rigorous methodologies such as dismantling designs are needed to determine which components of programs are driving change. In a time of limited resources, this type of information is critical for communities to know when making decisions about which sexual violence prevention initiatives to implement.

More research is also needed on the optimal ordering of various prevention components (Potter et al., 2015). For example, which component is the

best frontline approach? Although it is plausible that the ordering of intervention components always matter, it also is feasible that ordering may only matter for some individuals depending on their profile of risk and protective factors. These are important and practical questions that have yet to be addressed within the sexual violence prevention field. Researchers have highlighted the utility of identifying the optimal ordering of prevention strategies in order to maximize program impact (Banyard, 2013); noting that it is important to identify the ordering of intervention components that maximize program impact. Key theories of health behavior and attitude change also lend support for considering the optimal ordering of intervention components. For example, theories of readiness for change describe how it is important to first move individuals to a stage of awareness and recognition of the personal relevance of an issue, which subsequently should lead to a sense of responsibility for enacting change. Next, individuals should develop specific skill sets and a sense of confidence in enacting those skills, and finally, enact the behaviors and endorse a new set of attitudes (Banyard, Eckstein, & Moynihan, 2010). Therefore, it is logical to conclude that various sexual violence prevention strategies should be ordered in a manner capitalizing on these stages of change. Part of this ordering is considering prevention across the full age spectrum of adolescence and emerging adulthood. We need answers to questions like what impact does it have if middle school students receive effective sexual violence prevention programming when they enter high school and are again exposed to prevention messages? What is the best sequencing of sexual violence prevention content to connect with middle school students, then build on this training in high school and ultimately in college?

Final Thoughts

In summary, the past few decades have witnessed an exciting surge of research on the etiology of sexual violence in adolescence and emerging adulthood and on strategies to prevent sexual violence. It is a good moment to reflect on the strengths of this work and lessons learned. There have been promising reductions in sexual violence related to programs that focus on risk factors for perpetration and empowering risk reduction for potential victims. The added focus on actionists has reduced defensiveness to sexual violence prevention messages and expanded conversations about and buy in for prevention efforts. But ongoing surveillance data make clear that we are still a long way from reaching a goal of preventing sexual violence in this at risk age group. Future solutions will come from comprehensive approaches that combine promising strategies researched to date, and from the use of new research designs to answer questions about important key ingredients for effective prevention.

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