Student Stories of Resilience After Campus Sexual Assault

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all victim-survivors of campus sexual assault.

Abstract

Undergraduate students who experience campus sexual assault (CSA) are faced with a wide array of potentially detrimental mental health and educational outcomes that may significantly impact their sense of well-being. Many researchers have focused on documenting these consequences of CSA, but there is a dearth of research on students' post-assault experiences. Specifically, there is a lack of scholarship exploring the lived experiences of resilience as students navigate post-assault life on campus. The purpose of this dissertation study was to explore the phenomenon of resilience among undergraduate students who have experienced CSA, through a qualitative inquiry that used post-intentional phenomenological (PIP) methods and was informed by socio-ecological and intersectional feminist based theoretical perspectives.

This study was conducted at a large, urban, public land grant University with a sample of undergraduate students who had experienced CSA while being an undergraduate student at the University, were currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at the University, and were between the ages of 18 and 24. Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were conducted with six eligible participants, in order to explore, in-depth, the phenomenon of resilience among undergraduate students as they navigate their post-assault life on campus. In using PIP methods of analysis, four tentative manifestations of the phenomenon were found to include resilience within the context of agency, coping, connection, and hope. These productions and provocations of resilience are further discussed and analyzed in relation to post-reflexions and, broadly, the CSA and resilience scholarship. Recommendations and implications across research, policy, and practice are presented, specifically those identified by the participants as recommendations for change in addressing CSA and supporting student experiences of resilience.

Key words: Campus sexual assault, resilience, post-intentional phenomenology, qualitative inquiry

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

Sexual assault on college campuses is a significant concern across the United States (U.S.). Inquiries on campus sexual assault (CSA) reveal variation in definitions and prevalence. Definitions of sexual assault vary depending on local, federal, and tribal policies; but most state that sexual assault is any sexual contact without consent (U.S. Department of Justice, 2017). Institutions of higher education (IHEs) use similar language in their definitions of sexual assault that are specific to campus members, including students, employees, and staff. For example, at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus (UMN-TC), the definition of sexual assault includes, "actual or attempted sexual contact without affirmative consent" and extends to all students, employees, and third parties who may be engaged in various campus activities, such as volunteers or visitors (University of Minnesota, 2020). In this Chapter, I will define the topic of CSA and introduce the dearth of research on student victim-survivors'[1] experiences of resilience.

Defining the Problem

Prevalence of CSA

In a systematic review of research from 2000 to 2015, rates of CSA for females ranged from 2–34%, with most rates being around 20% (Fedina et al., 2018). In a study of undergraduate students (*N*=1,671) from Columbia University and Barnard College in

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[1] In this study, I use victim-survivor, reflecting what Fine (1998) called "working the hyphen" (p. 135), to create space for individuals' multiple identities, contexts, and choice to be both a victim and a survivor, as well as any other potential label or identity/identities. Often the label of "victim" or "survivor" is placed on the individual, without recognizing whether or not the individual identifies with it. The label of victim-survivor acknowledges the dynamic, complex, and diverse experiences that vary for each individual following the trauma of sexual assault.

New York City, 22% of victim-survivors reported at least one incident of sexual assault since entering college, with gender nonconforming students reporting at the highest rate of 38%, followed by females at 28% and males at 12.5% (Mellins et al., 2017). Students in this study were between the ages of 18 and 29 and actively enrolled in their freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or fifth-year senior academic year.

Despite these statistics, several researchers have contended that current CSA statistics are not inclusive of all student identities (e.g., international, Native American, and LGBTQIA+ students) (Brubaker et al., 2017; Coulter & Rankin, 2017). Also, given the low reporting numbers of CSA to campus authorities (Sinozich & Langton, 2014), CSA rates are likely higher than what is being reported (De Heer & Jones, 2017; Perkins & Warner, 2017). Some scholars have argued that research on CSA is biased toward focusing on the experiences of White, heterosexual, cisgender, female students and excluding the experiences of the entire campus community (Brubaker et al., 2017). Several scholars have claimed that students who identify as a racial, sexual, or gender minority may experience CSA outcomes to a higher degree, given the added elements of racial discrimination, societal oppression, and other forms of trauma (Coulter & Rankin, 2017; De Heer & Jones, 2017).

Researchers also have studied risk factors associated with the prevalence of experiencing CSA, such as drinking (Dir et al., 2018), hook-up culture (Mellins et al., 2017), age (Mellins et al., 2017), and prior victimization (Herres et al., 2018). In data collected from 474 college campuses by the National College Health Assessment survey between 2011 and 2015, significant predictors of experiencing CSA included binge drinking, having a younger age, identifying as a sexual minority, and reporting experiences of discrimination (Moylan et al., 2019). In another study, researchers examined risk factors associated with CSA across campuses (*N*=1,423) and found that campuses with higher liquor violations and higher proportions of fraternity men and athletes were more likely to have CSA reports (Wiersma-Mosley et al., 2017).

Individual Outcomes of CSA

Experiencing CSA can have significant and devastating consequences for individual students, including mental health problems, increased substance use, and academic difficulties. In one study of female undergraduate students who had experienced CSA in the past year (*N*=495), 6.4% of the participants reported a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), 19.8% reported anxiety, 19% reported depression, and 8.9% reported panic attacks (Eisenberg et al., 2016). Students who attended colleges with more sexual assault resources reportedly experienced lower rates of mental health symptoms compared to students who attended colleges with less resources available (Eisenberg et al., 2016; Graham et al., 2019). Increased alcohol and drug use (Combs-Lane & Smith, 2002) and lower academic performance (Jordan et al., 2014) have also been cited as outcomes of experiencing CSA.

Some of these outcomes, including PTSD, may increase for victim-survivors who receive negative social reactions when disclosing their sexual assault (Orchowski & Gidycz, 2015; Orchowski et al., 2013; Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2014). Negative reactions also may increase feelings of self-blame, guilt, shame, and internalized rape myths—all of which have the potential to negatively impact a victim-survivor's wellbeing (Ahrens, 2006; Peter-Hagene & Ullman, 2018; Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2014).

Reporting CSA

In a sample of over 4,000 female undergraduate students who had experienced CSA, less than 5% of the participants reported the assault to police or campus authorities, 70% of the participants disclosed their assault to close relations, including friends or family (Fisher et al., 2003). Reasons for not reporting to authorities included belief that the event was not serious enough or did not warrant a crime, as well as fear and distrust of not being believed (Fisher et al., 2003). Results from this study were part of a larger project, the National College Women Sexual Victimization research project, which collected data from female college students (Fisher et al., 2003). Other scholars have found undergraduate female students did not report CSA due to a general distrust and fear of police and campus authorities (Holland & Cortina, 2017; Sinozich & Langton, 2014). The prevalence, reporting, and help-seeking behavior related to CSA depends on the campus context, culture, social norms, and policies, and researchers should consider the uniqueness of campus environments and academic institutions (Coulter & Rankin, 2017; Holland & Cortina, 2017; Martin, 2016; Moylan & Javorka, 2020).

Historical and Policy Contexts of CSA

Several key policies and studies throughout the history of higher education have impacted how CSA has been viewed and shaped, particularly between the 1970s and 1990s (Driessen, 2020a). In 1972, Title IX officially became part of the Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title IX, 1972). Title IX served as the major policy used by IHEs to recognize sexual violence as a form of sexual discrimination (Title IX, 1972). In 1985, a landmark study was led by Mary Koss, who conducted the largest research project at the time on what was referred to as "acquaintance rape" on campuses (Warshaw & Koss, 1988). Over three years and across multiple campuses, Koss surveyed undergraduate students (*N*=6,100) and reported that 1 in 4 female students had experienced rape. The Clery Act was passed in 1990 as an amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965, with the goal of holding IHEs accountable for their reporting of crime statistics, including CSA, and requiring IHEs to strengthen their prevention and safety efforts (Clery Act, 1990).

The next major piece of policy focused on CSA was the Campus SaVE Act, which was added to the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in 2013 and increased the reporting requirements and rights of students on campus (Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, 2013). During the Obama administration, other guidelines and requirements were released by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the newly established White House Task Force to protect students from sexual assault. For example, as a result of fervent advocacy by student activists during the Obama-Biden Administration, the ED released a *Dear Colleague Letter* naming IHEs that were out of compliance with the ED in their handling of CSA cases and reports (ED, 2011). The ED specifically clarified policies pertaining to having a Title IX campus coordinator, mandatory reporting, consent policies, and standards of evidence to be used during investigation proceedings.

Under the Trump administration, these policy recommendations continued to evolve and impact decisions made by IHEs. For instance, in 2018, the ED Secretary, Betsy DeVos, proposed an amendment to Title IX for IHEs to uphold a stricter level of evidence in campus proceedings than the Obama Administration had recommended. IHEs again had to adjust their policies and respond to federal regulation. For instance, the

UMN-TC released a public statement to its campus members in August 2020 outlining new changes to their Sexual Misconduct Policy, such as creating a live hearing and appeal process and establishing one process for all sexual misconduct proceedings, regardless if a faculty member, staff, or student (University of Minnesota, 2020). Given President Biden's commitment to CSA advocacy, education, and prevention during the Obama-Biden Administration, IHEs may continue to experience more changes and CSA guidance under the new Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, and the Biden-Harris Administration.

CSA and Resilience

Most literature on CSA has focused on prevalence and prevention efforts with less research focused on victim-survivors' lived experiences of resilience and post-assault life in the context of campus environments (Brubaker et al., 2017; Fedina et al., 2018; Graham et al., 2019; Moylan & Javorka, 2020; Perkins & Warner, 2017). Research is limited in studying how students practice agency and respond to CSA, including displays of resilience from ecological and strengths-based perspectives (Germain, 2016; Moylan & Javorka, 2020). The focus on resilience and the strength of victim-survivors provides the opportunity for a unique analysis of the impact of CSA and how students heal and navigate campus life after an assault. Given the low reporting rates and low use of formal campus supports, research efforts on CSA, to date, do not fully capture how students choose to navigate their campus environment post-assault. Listening and learning to victim-survivors creates the potential to support students at the micro level and for entire campus communities to strengthen policies and prevention efforts to develop a safer learning environment.

Researcher Positionality and Post-Reflexion Plan

According to post-intentional phenomenology (PIP), post-reflexivity is, “a type of researcher reflexivity that emphasizes how the researcher’s positionality is in flux (ever-changing) and contextual. It asks the researcher to try to *see what frames their seeing*” (Vagle, 2018, p. 15, emphasis in original). As a White, heterosexual, cisgender female social worker and researcher, I bring and participate in clear systems of power that have framed my engagement with participants and the data throughout the study. I also identify as a victim-survivor of CSA and am shaped by this experience in various ways. Although I may relate and identify with some experiences that were shared by study participants, I believe that each person who experiences CSA has an individual story and experience that is unique and separate from my own. Throughout this study’s process, I created my own practices to stay grounded and take care of myself in order to be as present as possible to the stories shared by study participants.

I also believe it is important and noteworthy to recognize the contexts that have surrounded and shaped the development of this study. I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval at the beginning of April 2020, as IHEs continued to make their final decisions regarding the rest of the spring semester due to the impact of COVID-19. After completing a stressful remaining spring semester in the midst of a pandemic, I witnessed the incredible activism particularly led by students in my local community and across the nation in response to police brutality, racism, and the murder of George Floyd. Students called upon their University presidents to re-think, limit, and abolish their contracts with local police departments. It was also during this time that new social media accounts on Instagram appeared that were organized and student led, often with the handle of “black at (name of IHE)”. Students began to use these platforms to engage in conversations around issues of race and racism in ways that they argued they could not with their institution. Similarly, new accounts appeared on Instagram with the handles of “campus survivors” or “surviving at (name of IHE)”. These accounts became a place where students posted and shared their stories of CSA, with the goal of calling out their IHE and demanding change. COVID-19, student activism, and the backdrop of a major Presidential election have continued to be at play throughout this study and impacted not only my own thought processes, readings, and analysis but also my ability to connect with and interview students.

At times, I became overwhelmed with the stress and anxiety of my personal life being impacted by these various contexts, from family related illnesses to work to future unknowns. Although I took time to care for myself and loved ones, I never lost the irony of studying resilience throughout all of this. I read many publications, both academic and non-academic, that commented on the pros and cons of the concepts of resilience and trauma. I frequently saw aspects of this study’s phenomenon on the daily news and social media. Yet, it was during these moments that I also revisited and reminded myself of what participants had shared. As I will discuss later, one participant described resilience as a tree that bends and sways during a storm but nevertheless is still rooted.

In order to be fully aware of my positionality and its potential impact on this study, I engaged in a post-reflexion plan throughout the entire study. My post-reflexion plan took the form of writing in a field note journal about my on-going observations and post-reflexions after each interview of potential manifestations. I also returned to this journal to process my thoughts and analysis as I read literature, listened to and re-read interviews, or faced various challenges or frustrations. These field notes also served as a source of data to revisit during the data analysis process and will be further discussed in future chapters.

Statement of the Research Question and Overview of the Study

In this dissertation study, I began to address the gaps in the literature by examining how students responded to their post-assault life on campus and assessed the resulting mechanism of resilience that took place in their unique campus environment. Specifically, this research sought to address the following question, “How might resilience take shape for undergraduate student victim-survivors of CSA as they navigate their post-assault life on campus?”

In an attempt to answer this research question, I conducted a qualitative inquiry using PIP methods. Phenomenology is the study of how phenomena manifest in the world. The phenomenon of this study was the resilience that CSA victim-survivors displayed as they navigated their post-assault lives. The research study was conducted at the UMN-TC, a large, urban, public land grant institution, hereafter referred to as the “University”. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with eligible participants (*N*=6), who were currently enrolled undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24 and experienced sexual assault while being an actively enrolled undergraduate student at the University.

Organization of Chapters

In Chapter 1, I have presented the introduction and background to the topic of CSA, as well as an initial statement of the research question and my positionality. In Chapter 2, I review the literature and research related to the context and the phenomenon of this study, specifically as it relates to resilience, and briefly introduce theoretical perspectives that have informed this study. In Chapter 3, I present an overview of the PIP methodology used for this qualitative inquiry, including the steps of data collection and analysis. Then, I present my findings on the four tentative manifestations of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope in Chapter 4. Finally, in Chapter 5, I present the conclusions, the study's limitations, and recommendations for future research, practice, and policy as a result of conducting this research study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In this Chapter, I first review the literature on resilience, specifically paying attention to key conceptual definitions and quantitative and qualitative studies. I also review related concepts that were found in the resilience literature, such as post-traumatic growth (PTG) and recovery. I then articulate my conceptualization of resilience based on the scholars reviewed. I also briefly introduce two theoretical perspectives that have informed and guided this study, including socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspectives, using a PIP approach. Finally, I identify the purpose of this study in the context of how it contributes to the resilience and CSA scholarship.

Literature Review

Resilience

Key Conceptual Definitions

Bonanno (2012), a researcher in the field of psychology whose focus is on grief and loss, is often cited across the resilience scholarship for his definition of resilience as, "a stable trajectory of healthy functioning in response to a clearly defined event" (p. 742). Individuals who display healthy functioning post-trauma are able to positively adapt to adversity and cope with minimum negative symptoms with little to no impact on their daily routines (Bonanno, 2012). According to Bonanno (2004), the majority of individuals move through trauma without any disruption to their daily life or functioning. He described resilience as the process of an individual's ability to maintain stability in normal functioning, where psychopathology may be initially present, but the symptoms are few and brief. For Bonanno (2004), recovery, which differs from resilience, can be defined as, "a trajectory in which normal functioning temporarily gives way to threshold or subthreshold psychopathology" (p. 20). When describing the relationship between PTSD and resilience, Bonanno and Mancini (2010) stated that initially an individual's post-trauma experience may include some PTSD symptoms, such as intrusive thoughts or difficulty sleeping, but that they will return to their baseline functioning relatively quickly, such as within a few weeks or months, with minimal experiences of symptoms. Although individuals have different experiences of trauma and resilience, resilience remains the "common response to potential trauma" (Bonanno & Mancini, 2010, p. 77) as a normal process of human adaptation in the midst of trauma or adversity.

Although Bonanno (2012) argued that the literature surrounding resilience and trauma remained limited, the varying definitions of resilience continue to contribute today to misunderstandings of how to research it. Bonanno (2012) wrote that three common approaches to resilience have contributed to misconceptions in the field. These include when resilience is viewed solely as a personality characteristic, the absence of psychopathology, or the "average levels of psychological adjustment" (p. 754). In order to avoid these misconceptions, Bonanno (2012) encouraged researchers to clearly define resilience and clearly identify and describe the topic of adversity at hand. However, as this literature review demonstrates, these misconceptions and ambiguity of defining and researching resilience remain.

Steenkamp et al. (2012) applied Bonanno's (2004) definition of resilience, as a return to baseline functioning, to their study of PTSD among adult, female victim-survivors of sexual assault. Steenkamp et al. (2012) defined resilience as both a process and outcome of, "an initial period of mild symptoms and disruption in functional abilities, followed by a return to baseline functioning”, and recovery as, “an initial period of moderate to severe symptoms that dissipate in the weeks and months following trauma” (p. 469). The researchers collected data at one, two, three, and four months post-assault for adult females (*N*=119) who had experienced sexual assault. Steenkamp et al. (2012) predicted that resilience would not be the modal outcome, given the severity of the potential trauma symptoms. Although the authors used the conceptual definitions of resilience and recovery by Bonanno (2004), they did not have a specific measurement for either. Instead, resilience was measured according to the presence and duration of trauma symptoms, including PTSD, depression, and dissociative experiences.

Contrary to Bonanno’s (2004) conceptualization of resilience, participants in Steenkamp et al.’s (2012) study reported high levels of distress and recovery, but not resilience. Bonanno (2013) responded to Steenkamp et al.’s (2012) study and argued that their results were due to their methods, sampling bias, and theoretical modeling and that it was very unlikely to find no reports of resilience. In response to Bonanno’s (2013) commentary, Steenkamp et al. (2013) disagreed with Bonanno’s critiques of their methods and argued that sexual assault is a different type of trauma than what he studies—meaning that the conceptualization and context related to resilience and recovery is different than grief and loss.

Ungar, a social work researcher, is also referenced for his conceptualization of resilience, which developed from a large, international mixed methods research study of resilience among children and older youth (Ungar et al., 2007). Ungar (2004) proposed what he called a, “constructionist interpretation of resilience” (p. 341) as well as an “ecological expression of resilience” (Ungar, 2012, p. 19). Ungar (2004) defined resilience as, “an outcome from negotiation with the environment for resources to define one’s self as healthy amidst adversity” (p. 344). In Ungar et al.’s (2007) study, they found no singular pattern of resilience prediction and that resilience is a process and an outcome that depended on “an individual’s capacity to overcome adversity” and, “the capacity of the individual’s environment to provide access to health-enhancing resources in *culturally relevant ways*” (p. 288, emphasis in original). For Ungar (2008), resilience indicated recovery from trauma. Ungar (2004, 2008) also argued that resilience research needs to include an intersectional lens and capture a diversity of experiences in culturally relevant and meaningful ways as individuals navigate their recovery.

Another social work researcher, Brown (2006), developed shame resilience theory (SRT), from a grounded theory study of women and their diverse experiences of shame and resilience pertaining to a variety of categories, including body image, sexuality, motherhood, parenting, and surviving trauma. Information about these specific types of experiences was not included in the study. For Brown (2006), the categories of vulnerability, critical awareness, building relationships, and learning how to speak about shame created a continuum through which an individual moves while experiencing varying degrees of shame and resilience. One end of the continuum represents shame and the other represents empathy. Shame is defined as, “an intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging” (Brown, 2006, p. 45). Empathy is described as the opposite of shame and is defined as, “the ability to perceive a situation from the other person’s perspective” (p. 47). As individuals move through the continuum and increasingly experience empathy, they build resilience to shame, which Brown (2006) identified as the concept, “shame resilience”. Still, the exact pathways to resilience that an individual may experience remain unclear in the SRT.

Brown (2010) wrote that based on her review of the adult resilience scholarship five attributes of resilient individuals are commonly identified. Resilient individuals tend to: 1) be resourceful and have problem-solving skills, 2) seek help, 3) believe in their ability to cope, 4) have social support, and 5) connect with others. Based on her own research around resilience, Brown (2010) added three more attributes, which she described as related to an individual’s sense of spirituality, and identified them as the ability to cultivate hope, practice critical awareness, and practice vulnerability. According to Brown (2006), hope is, “a combination of setting goals, having the tenacity and perseverance to pursue them, and believing in our own abilities” (p. 66). Critical awareness, “also referred to as critical consciousness and/or perspective” (Brown, 2006, p. 48), includes the ability for individuals to be aware of the connection between their personal experiences with broader societal or cultural expectations (Brown, 2010). Finally, vulnerability is the courage and openness to engage authentically with others in various situations that are often times of uncertainty, risk, or emotional exposure (Brown, 2006, 2010).

Brown continues to develop her work on resilience through research and practice in mainstream writing, although it is limited in peer-reviewed journals. Brown’s work has been integrated into recent dissertations, including studies that have researched intimate partner violence (IPV) victim-survivors’ perceptions of service use (Scordato, 2013), sexual shame among religious women (Schmidt Siemens, 2015), workplace aggression and shame (Schiffelbein, 2019), negative body attitudes among young women (Dimattia, 2019), women who experience complex trauma and substance abuse (Robertson, 2019), shame among college student-athletes (Diehl, 2020), and academic shame among medical students (Coudret, 2020).

Finally, Masten (2011), whose research is focused on child development, defined resilience as, “the capacity of a dynamic system to withstand or recover from significant challenges that threaten its stability, viability, or development” (p. 494). According to Masten (2014), resilience can be expressed through various pathways over the course of life development or functioning. Each of these pathways depict resilience somewhat similar to Bonanno (2004), in reflecting an individual’s “ordinary resources and processes” (p. 3) to maintain adaptive functioning. Two of Masten’s (2014) resilience pathways included recovery and PTG.

Masten (2007, 2009, 2011) wrote that the resilience scholarship, which mostly has focused on children’s risk and resilience, is in its fourth wave. The first wave, which began in the 1970s, focused on descriptors of resilience and explored different measurements and characteristics of resilience among children. The second wave explored the processes of resilience, although Masten (2011) wrote that researchers have described resilience as both a process and an outcome. The third wave looked to test experiments on resilience, with the hope of increasing prevention and intervention efforts. The fourth and current wave approaches the resilience scholarship from a systems, strength-based and ecological approach that acknowledges and incorporates the influence of culture and context (Masten, 2007, 2009, 2011). While using the above definition of resilience, Masten (2011) described the fourth wave of research as focused on resilience as an iterative process of positive adaptation and recovery. Furthermore, Masten (2011) added that the purpose of studying resilience is to understand not only how to promote resilience but also to further understand and prevent risk and harm.

Scales and Measurements

Several researchers (e.g., Crann & Barata, 2016; Murphy et al., 2009; Ullman, 2014; Ungar, 2004) assert that more qualitative measurements, such as in-depth interviews, are needed to increase the overall understanding of resilience. These scholars believe that qualitative research has the strength of providing the tools with which to increasingly understand and provide thick descriptions of participants' experiences, contexts, and understandings of the phenomenon of resilience. Given the varying definitions and measurements used in the resilience literature, qualitative methods might provide the opportunity to increasingly strengthen and clarify the conceptualization of resilience.

Despite some opinions that resilience is best understood through qualitative data, researchers have developed scales to assess resilience through numeric data. Some of these instruments are the Resilience Scale (RS-25; Wagnild & Young, 1993), the Scale of Protective Factors (SPF-24; Ponce-Garcia et al., 2015), and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25; Connor & Davidson, 2003). The CD-RISC has been shown to be both reliable and valid in measuring resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Connor and Davidson (2003) stated that, "resilience embodies the personal qualities that enable one to thrive in the face of adversity" (p. 76). The original CD-RISC is a 25-item, self-report scale measuring the psycho-social-spiritual dynamics of resilience using a 5-point range of responses varying from 'not true at all' (0) to 'true nearly all the time' (4) (e.g., "Able to adapt to change" and "Can deal with whatever comes”). The instructions inform respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statements as they apply within the last month and, if the situation did not occur within the past month, to still answer according to how they might have responded.

Research is limited in the use of CD-RISC among undergraduate students who experience CSA; but, this scale has been used among related populations, including females who experience IPV (Anderson et al., 2012; Renner et al., 2020; Renner & Hartley, 2018). One group of researchers also derived two items from the scale that focused on social support to assess resilience as a baseline measurement among a large sample of first-year undergraduate students, specifically when examining correlates of sexual assault (Conley et al., 2017). In terms of resilience, the authors found that social support was a protective factor for both male and female students.

Post-Traumatic Growth

Key Conceptual Definitions

The PTG scholarship often appears in the literature pertaining to resilience. PTG theory first emerged in the 1990s and was developed by Tedeschi and Calhoun. PTG theory, which is also referred to as a model, has been studied and revised over the years through different types of trauma research. However, the concept of PTG, which is described as both a process and outcome, has relatively remained the same in being defined as, “positive psychological changes experienced as a result of the struggle with traumatic or highly challenging life circumstances” (Tedeschi et al., 2018, p. 3). PTG is described through five domains that continue to be empirically measured throughout different studies on trauma. The domains include: 1) personal strengths, 2) relating to others, 3) new possibilities, 4) appreciation of life, and 5) spiritual and existential change

(Tedeschi et al., 2018). As an individual engages with these different domains post trauma, multiple interactions between the individual's core beliefs, rumination, disclosure, and distress may occur. PTG becomes initiated after a traumatic experience that challenges an individual's core beliefs and assumptions. These shifts in beliefs and viewing the world become part of the person's growth following trauma.

Tedeschi et al. (2018) admitted that resilience, recovery, and coping are frequently used to discuss concepts similar to PTG. Tedeschi et al. (2018) viewed these concepts as distinct, but related. They stated that resilience is a concept that is part of PTG theory, but it is a separate process and outcome than overall PTG. Similar to Bonanno (2004, 2012), they described resilience as the ability to "bounce back" after adversity or trauma to baseline functioning (Tedeschi et al., 2018, p. 72). Tedeschi et al. (2018) wrote, "PTG is conceptually different than resilience because resilience describes the characteristics of people who can adjust quickly and successfully, even under the most stressful circumstances" (p. 722). Scholars also have described that PTG is a potential outcome of resilience but that not all those who experience resilience may experience PTG (Lepore & Revenson, 2006).

Likewise, in further elaborating on the difference between resilience and PTG, Lepore and Revenson (2006) wrote that resilience, "refers to dynamic processes that lead to adaptive outcomes in the face of adversity" (p. 29). Lepore and Revenson (2006) also wrote, "we are concerned with understanding human resilience and a particular form of resilience, posttraumatic growth (PTG), in the face of adversity" (p. 24). This quote from Lepore and Revenson (2006) may make a reader wonder if PTG is an outcome of resilience or, potentially, a further trajectory of resilience. However, neither of these assumptions are accurate reflections of the PTG model put forth by Tedeschi et al. (2018), which depicts resilience as both a separate outcome independent of an individual following trauma as well as potential trajectory that may occur for individuals after they experience the outcome of PTG.

Lepore and Revenson (2006) argued that further confusion to the construct of resilience has occurred in research because it is described as both a process and an outcome, and involves both internal and external factors. Lepore and Revenson (2006) disagreed with Bonanno's (2004) definition of resilience, specifically with respect to the immediate and quick recovery following adversity along with the limited potential for negative reactions following an event. Instead, Lepore and Revenson (2006) agreed with other resilience scholars, such as Masten and Reed (2002), who saw resilience as, "a slowly unfolding process, evident only in retrospect and, possibly, only years after an extreme stressor has passed" (p. 28). PTG scholars, however, have debated the element of time and disagreed with how quickly an individual either may experience resilience or PTG (Lepore & Revenson, 2006; Tedeschi et al., 2018). As such, Lepore and Revenson (2006) put forth three interrelated elements of resilience to consider in research, including recovery, resistance, and reconfiguration. Recovery is the process of returning back to baseline functioning, resistance includes experiencing limited to no symptoms, and reconfiguration addresses the processes and outcomes that may include potential growth or transformation following adversity. Lepore and Revenson (2006) identified resilience as both a process and outcome that includes the interaction of the three dimensions of recovery, resistance, and reconfiguration.

Some scholars have shared their thoughts and reflections on the debate of resilience versus PTG. For instance, in a literature review studying PTG and resilience, Anderson (2018) identified many similar words, such as adaption, surviving, thriving, healing, recovering, and searching for meaning. Anderson (2018) agreed with Tedeschi et al. (2018) that resilience and PTG are complementary but distinct concepts, and contended that more researchers should focus on the intersectionality of these two concepts. Others have increasingly criticized PTG for being too poorly defined and not well theorized, especially in its relationship and ambiguity with resilience (Westphal & Bonanno, 2007).

Scales and Measurements

PTG calls for quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research and measurements (Tedeschi et al., 2018). Concerning quantitative measurements, Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996) developed the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) that has been applied to various research studies and has been demonstrated to be a valid and reliable tool (Tedeschi et al., 2018). The PTGI is a 21-item scale where participants respond to various statements using a 6-point set of response options to indicate ‘no experience’ (0) to ‘experiencing the statement to a great degree’ (5). The PTGI includes statements that address each of the five domains of PTG, including relating to others (e.g., “I accept needing others”), new possibilities (e.g., “I established a new path for my life”), personal strength (e.g., “Being able to accept the way things work out”), spiritual change (e.g., “A better understanding of spiritual matters”), and appreciation of life (e.g., “An appreciation for the value of my own life”).

Since the development of the original PTGI-21, a shorter version (PTGI-SF) has been developed and includes 10 items from the PTGI-21 (Cann et al., 2010). This shorter scale has demonstrated sufficient reliability and validity in various research studies (Kaler et al., 2011). An expanded scale, the PTGI-X, has also been developed (Tedeschi et al., 2017). Additional items were added to the PTGI-21 to expand upon the spiritual-existential domain of PTG that may vary across cultures. The PTGI-X has shown strong reliability and validity, with an improved internal consistency for the spiritual-existential domain than the PTGI (Tedeschi et al., 2017). Finally, the PTGI has been adopted to specific populations and research studies, such as the PTGI for children (PTGI-C; Cryder et al., 2006).

Researchers have used these scales, especially the PTGI-21, as well as other adapted scales specific to the given study, to analyze PTG among those who have experienced sexual assault (Barnett & Maciel, 2019; Cole & Lynn, 2010; Frazier et al., 2001; Grubaugh & Resick, 2007; Hassija & Turchik, 2016; Ullman, 2014). Several of these researchers specifically focused on the relationship between PTG and PTSD and found mixed results (Barnett & Maciel, 2019; Cole & Lynn, 2010; Grubaugh & Resick, 2007). However, the majority of these findings show some degree of growth for study participants, even as soon as two weeks after the trauma (Frazier et al., 2001).

With respect to qualitative methods, Tedeschi et al. (2018) wrote that the use of semi-structured interviews, open-ended responses, and focus groups all work to increase the understanding, nuances, and lived experiences of PTG in varying types of trauma, contexts, cultures, and time. Tedeschi et al. (2018) argued that qualitative methods have significantly contributed to understanding the context of PTG in different countries as well as varying types of trauma. The qualitative components of PTG studies support and help researchers further understand the PTG domains and quantitative measurements. Tedeschi et al. (2018) wrote that researchers in quantitative studies tend to measure PTG only as an outcome instead of a process—a component that qualitative research can address.

Recovery and Meaning-Making

Key Conceptual Definitions

Some scholars viewed meaning-making as integral to the recovery process and, thus, related to resilience and growth (Altmaier, 2017; Herman, 2015; McAdams & Jones, 2017; Park, 2010). McAdams and Jones (2017) wrote, "As natural-born storytellers, human beings cannot help but make meaning out of their personal experiences. But every person makes meaning in a unique way, and within a specific social, cultural, and historical context" (p. 14). McAdams and Jones (2017) referenced Bonanno's (2004) definition of resilience and wrote that resilient individuals may not need to make new meanings, given that, by definition, they quickly return to baseline functioning without much disruption to their life assumptions. Yet, they wrote that the presence of resilience and meaning-making depends on the context of trauma. Traumatic events that cause individuals to question their sense of worth or identity, such as sexual assault, may pose greater challenges to recovery and, consequently, lead to individuals needing to make sense of their trauma differently than resilient individuals.

Herman (2015) wrote that the recovery process includes three fundamental stages of, "establishing safety, reconstructing the trauma story, and restoring the connection between survivors and their community" (p. 2). For Herman (2015), the second stage is where the victim-survivor makes meaning of their experience through building a trauma narrative and story. According to McAdams and Jones (2017), meaning-making is the process by which individuals assign meaning to events that shatter their core beliefs or assumptions. McAdams and Jones (2017) wrote that this process of rebuilding or reconstructing a sense of meaning following trauma can result in PTG. Therefore, resilience is the ability to "bounce back" quickly and recover following trauma, but some individuals, depending on the type of trauma, may have a different process of recovery requiring meaning-making that, in turn, can result in PTG. Yet, it is unclear still to what extent resilience, growth, recovery, and meaning-making are related and/or are different concepts.

Altmaier (2017) also viewed recovery and meaning-making as connected, and that recovery is not a linear process nor the absence of trauma or mental health symptoms. Recovery is the "ultimate goal of treatment" (Altmaier, 2017, p. xi) and a process through which individuals navigate life following trauma. She agreed that it is a challenging concept to define and fails to provide an explicit definition of it, including its relationship to meaning-making, growth, or resilience. However, according to Altmaier (2017), recovery must include "resources" of connectedness, storytelling, hope, identity, meaning, and empowerment (p. xii). As such, making or rebuilding meaning appears to be a core component of recovering from trauma. Similar to theorists studying resilience and PTG, Altmaier (2017) argued that trauma has the potential to shatter core beliefs, referencing Janoff-Bulman's (1992) shattered assumptions theory, and meanings that an individual once had, leading to the possibility of new meanings to be developed throughout recovery. Janoff-Bulman (2006) wrote that both meaning-making and PTG are processes and outcomes in recognizing the complexity and depth of trauma, which includes positive and negative reactions that overtime may bring new beliefs, growth, and meaning. Altmaier (2017) wrote,

> resilient people may not need to engage in substantive sense making in the wake of trauma . . . [but] successful recovery may depend, in part, on being able to construct a sensible explanation for the meaning and significance of the trauma. (p. 9)

In his meaning-making model of trauma, Park (2010) drew from Janoff-Bulman's (1992) shattered assumptions theory and Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping theory. Like other models and depictions of resilience, the concepts of recovery, growth, meaning-making, and resilience become difficult to tease out. However, Park (2010) identified several different types of meaning-making, indicating that it is situational and global and includes meaning-made versus meaning-making. Meaning-made refers to the changed meaning of the trauma and changes in resulting beliefs, identity, and growth. Meaning-making is the active process of trying to reconcile previously held beliefs by re-interpreting them and identifying new beliefs post-trauma. Park (2010) argued that individuals who go through the process of meaning-making have more positive adjustments to trauma than individuals who do not and that not all individuals will engage in the meaning-making process. However, it is not clear to what extent this active process of meaning-making relates to the concepts of recovery, growth, or resilience.

In further explicating between meaning-making, recovery, and PTG, Frazier et al. (2017) contextualized the trauma of sexual assault as a situational meaning, using Park's

(2010) model. Frazier et al. (2017) referenced Bonanno (2004) in defining resilience as low levels of symptoms post-trauma and defining PTG as an example of positive meaning made. Resilience, PTG, and meaning-making occur as an individual navigates their recovery process (Park, 2010). Yet, Frazier et al. (2017) warned that positive meaning-making does not necessarily indicate better adjustment or growth following trauma. Therefore, it is clear that although researchers comment that these concepts are related, they fail to identify a singular definition and application of meaning-making, recovery, PTG, and resilience.

Scales and Measurements

Park (2010) argued that the literature has not provided a strong understanding or measurement fully comprehensive of meaning-making. Similar to other critiques of PTG and resilience studies, Park's (2010) review of the meaning-making and recovery literature identified a gap between the meaning-making model and the research being conducted. Park and George (2013) wrote that this scholarship does not sufficiently measure or define meaning constructs, resulting in a lack of standardized measurements. They also criticized researchers for picking and choosing parts of the meaning-making model to study instead of applying the entire model to create a common foundation of what constitutes meaning. Consequently, Park and George (2013) wrote that the literature has yielded mixed results, with varying measurements and studies.

Nonetheless, in his review of the meaning-making and recovery literature, Park (2010) identified numerous scales that were used in quantitative studies. Several of these measures included varying coping scales, such as the COPE subscales of Emotional Processing and Positive Reappraisal Scale (Carver et al., 1989), intrusive thoughts scales, such as the Intrusions subscale of the Impact of Events Scale (IES; Horowitz et al., 1979), and other forms of questionnaires designed specifically for a particular study. The variation in measurements and operational definitions of meaning-making resulted in Park calling for more research evidence in general and specifically for more qualitative research. Consequently, Park (2010) was wary of making too many claims on the meaning-making literature, including the relationship between meaning-making and recovery, due to the varying and, at times, conflicting definitions, measurements, and studies.

In addition to the use of quantitative measurements, researchers exploring meaning-making in the context of sexual violence have relied heavily on qualitative methods (e.g., Hannagan, 2017; Monahan-Kreishman, 2012; Murphy et al., 2009). For instance, in an ethnographic study of military sexual assault, Hannagan (2017) found participants identifying the significance of language, context, and lived experiences that shape various labels, such as victim, and meanings associated with them. Monahan-Kreishman (2012) and Murphy et al. (2009) also conducted qualitative studies on meaning-making, specifically looking at the lived experiences of survival following sexual assault. Both of these studies applied phenomenological methods, which enable the researcher to critically analyze and identify the meaning for participants who have experienced and engaged with certain phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These researchers also found important connections between a participant’s environment and context to their meaning-making and survival journey following the trauma.

Literature Review Conclusion

The preceding literature review on resilience, and related concepts, reflects the varying definitions, contexts, and debates among researchers as to what constitutes resilience. In order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon of resilience and how victim-survivors experience it, more qualitative research is needed (Martin, 2016; Moylan & Javorka, 2020; Murphy et al., 2009; Perkins & Warner, 2017; Ullman, 2014; Ungar, 2004; Voth Schrag, 2017). Furthermore, this type of research will continue to meet the call for more research on CSA by social work researchers (see McMahon & Schwartz, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2015; Voth Schrag, 2017). The values of the social work profession play an important role when analyzing and contextualizing CSA, particularly through a critical social justice lens that recognizes the dignity and worth of the individual, relationships, and the person-in-environment (National Association of Social Workers (NASW), 2017; Swigonski & Raheim, 2011).

For the purposes of my study, I particularly drew upon the work of Ungar (2004), Brown (2010), and Masten (2011) to define resilience as an individual's capacity to move through trauma in their environment in ways that promote healing. These scholars have argued that *how* an individual experiences resilience depends on their trauma, environment, and cultural contexts—all of which become critical points of inquiry when studying the context of sexual assault in campus environments. The focus on resilience and the strength of victim-survivors provides the opportunity for a unique analysis of the impact of CSA and how students heal and navigate campus life after an assault.

Theoretical Perspectives

Researchers and scholars vary and frequently debate their definitions and application of theory within their studies. In PIP, the role of theory becomes central throughout the study (Vagle, 2018) and reflects what Jackson and Mazzei (2012) called the “plugging in” of theory throughout a research study (p. 1). By “plugging in”, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) did not mean that theory is an afterthought but instead should be interwoven and intentionally engaged with throughout the entire study. PIP calls on researchers to question, revisit, and use theoretical perspectives to think through and with the data and study as the phenomenon calls for it (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Vagle, 2018). For the purposes of this study, I have used conceptual understandings of resilience, which were discussed in the above literature review, and socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspectives, to inform this study and serve as a lens through which the data will be analyzed in future chapters. I use the term, “theoretical perspective”, to reflect what Abend (2008) described as a type of theory to see, guide, and interpret a phenomenon, versus other theories that are explanatory or predictive in nature. I will briefly introduce two theoretical perspectives that have informed this study.

A Socio-Ecological Theoretical Perspective

Researchers both within the CSA (Campbell et al., 2009; Hirsch & Khan, 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Moylan & Javorka, 2020) and resilience (Liu et al., 2017; Masten, 2011; Southwick et al., 2014; Ungar, 2012) literature have called for an increase in studying these phenomena from a socio-ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979). A socio-ecological perspective approaches a phenomenon from the understanding that it is situated within multiple social contexts, systems, cultures, and time.

Consequently, when thinking about resilience in the context of post-assault for victim-survivors of CSA, the various systems (e.g., friends, family, work, etc.) and identities (e.g., race, gender, socio-economic class, etc.) at play not only in a student's life but also within and across their campus environment (academics, campus resources, housing, policies, type of institution, etc.) need to be considered. Moylan and Javorka (2020) specifically called for several ecological considerations in the context of CSA, including service and resource availability, alcohol, athletics, fraternities, experiential learning, student demographics, policies on campus and at the local and federal levels, and other variables such as campus size, location, private vs. public, crime rates, etc. CSA scholars also have argued that applying this type of framework situates CSA within a more nuanced conversation that recognizes the complexity of diverse sexual experiences and consent (Khan et al., 2020).

Liu et al. (2017) and Harms (2015) encouraged scholars to position resilience within a multi-system model that recognizes the individual, interpersonal, and social factors that impact the core experience of resilience. Harms (2015) wrote that three core approaches of a socio-ecological perspective include acknowledging that the person and their environment are in constant and frequent interaction, various processes and outcomes occur across these systems, and that these processes and resources can help foster or hinder resilience. Harms (2015) wrote, "resilience is therefore seen as the adaptive capacity of a system" (p. 126). Similarly, for both Masten (2011) and Ungar (2012), understanding and applying ecological perspectives were integral to their definition of resilience. Masten (2011) described resilience as "the capacity of a dynamic system” (p. 494), and Ungar (2012) called for the, “ecological expression of resilience” (p. 19).

Hirsch and Khan (2020) also took a socio-ecological approach in their mixed methods, ethnographic study that researched the roles of sex, power, and assault at a large, urban undergraduate campus. They argued that it is critical to examine CSA from a systems approach and view how individuals, policies, contexts, and environments interact to shape and respond to it. As a result, they outlined three key concepts in relation to students’ experiences of sex and CSA, including sexual projects, sexual citizenship, and sexual geographies. Each of these concepts describe how students interact sexually on campus in ways that are shaped by multiple intersecting social factors, environments, and systems. Sexual projects include the reasons, motivation, and experiences that lead to sexual interactions, which can include anything from one’s identity to sexual norms to hook-up culture to how society educates and shapes the narrative of sex. Then, according to Hirsch and Khan (2020),

> Sexual citizenship is a community project that requires developing individual capacities, social relationships founded in respect for others’ dignity, organizational environments that seek to educate and affirm the citizenship of all people, and a culture of respect (p. xvii).

Finally, sexual geographies describe how the environment, physically, socially, and culturally, shapes both sexual citizenship and sexual projects. Resilience and CSA scholars understand the importance of seeing a person in their environment and within the multiple, diverse systems they participate in across the micro, mezzo, and macro systems (Campbell et al., 2009). The phenomenon of this study, resilience as it took shape for victim-survivors of CSA, interacts with multiple systems that may support or hinder it depending on the person, their environment(s), or resources.

An Intersectional Feminist Theoretical Perspective

Khan et al. (2020) wrote that, “A gendered framework fits within an ecological model, as gender can be conceptualized at multiple levels of analysis-the individual, relational, organizational, and cultural” (p. 143). Although Crenshaw’s (1989) and Collins’ (2003) intersectionality frameworks have been applied throughout feminist scholarship, they have been limited in the CSA literature (Armstrong et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2020; Krause et al., 2017; Swigonski & Raheim, 2011). Puar (2017) wrote, “The theory of intersectionality argues that all identities are lived and experienced as intersectional” (p. 596). Scholars have called for concepts often cited in feminist based perspectives, such as gender, power, agency, anti-oppression, and inequality, to be recognized as multiple and intersecting across systems, contexts, and time (Deisinger, 2016; Khan et al., 2020; Swigonski & Raheim, 2011; Worthen & Wallace, 2017). Harms (2015) also wrote that scholars should recognize and examine the diverse systems of power that privilege and/or disempower individual experiences of resilience. Harms (2015) wrote, “resilience can be seen as the capacity to exercise freedom, equality and agency in the face of adversity” (p. 146). Consequently, in applying this perspective to resilience, the concepts of power, control, and intersecting identities are critical to consider in relation to an individual’s capacity and lived experience of resilience (Harms, 2015).

In applying an intersectional feminist perspective, the phenomenon of this study is recognized as not being a singular victim-survivor experience or narrative but varies and is complex depending on multiple domains and systems of power across sexuality, gender, race, class, and ethnicity (Crenshaw, 1989). Applying an intersectional feminist perspective provides a way for researchers to look at how an individual experiences, understands, and heals from sexual assault is shaped through gender, race, sexuality, and class (Armstrong et al., 2018; Deisinger, 2016). CSA cannot be studied without considering gender inequality and the ways that society socializes relationships, power, and gender (Hirsch & Khan, 2020). These intersecting power inequalities have produced and promoted problematic societal messages around consent, silence, rape myths, and toxic masculinity, among others (Hirsch & Khan, 2020). Hirsch and Khan (2020) wrote

> A better accounting of power relations in campus sexual assault must go beyond a singular focus on gender in two ways: it must be more intersectional, and it must acknowledge the social fluidity of power-that there are forms of power where, situationally, the same person could be on either side of the equation (p. 230).

Feminist phenomenologists (Burke, 2019; Oksala, 2011) have also called for similar efforts in future scholarship focused on experiences of sexual violence broadly. In reflecting on applying intersectional feminist perspectives to sexual violence, Burke (2019) wrote, “there is nevertheless a central commitment to an account of the harm of rape as sexual domination-that is, as a denial of agency and personhood achieved through a particular gendered use of sex” (p. 10). An intersectional feminist perspective also addresses the gap in the CSA literature that is not fully inclusive of participants with diverse identities, such as gender (e.g., including only female cisgender participants). Instead, researchers should continue to expand an awareness and understanding of multiple experiences of varying identities and, thus, experiences of sexual assault and resilience (Armstrong et al., 2018; Hirsch & Khan, 2020; Krause et al., 2017; Sharp et al., 2017; Worthen & Wallace, 2017; Voth Schrag, 2017).

Purpose of this Study

Given the debates surrounding the conceptualization of resilience, it is imperative to listen and learn from victim-survivors of CSA about how they describe, define, and experience resilience. It is also relevant to consider how contextual dynamics specific to university campuses may impact victim-survivors of sexual assault, specifically through the lens of resilience and socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspectives. Although much of the CSA literature has focused on prevalence and the negative consequences of the CSA, fewer researchers have focused on victim-survivors' lived experiences of post-assault life (Brubaker et al., 2017; Fedina et al., 2018; Perkins & Warner, 2017; Voth Schrag, 2017). Specifically, research is limited in studying how student victim-survivors respond to and navigate campus life after CSA, including displays of resilience, from ecological and strengths-based perspectives (Germain, 2016; McMahon & Schwartz, 2011; Moylan & Javorka, 2020). Understanding resilience is also important to understand, prevent, and address mental health or other academic outcomes associated with CSA for student victim-survivors and uncover how students heal after an assault. Through my dissertation study, I began to address these gaps in the literature by examining how students respond to their post-assault life on campus and assess the resulting mechanism of resilience that takes place in their unique campus environment.

Research Question

In order to meet the need for more research on resilience in the context of CSA, I conducted a qualitative inquiry using PIP methods. The phenomenon of study was the resilience that CSA victim-survivors displayed as they navigated their lives post-assault. The research question that guided my study was, “How might resilience take shape for undergraduate student victim-survivors of CSA as they navigate their post-assault life on campus”?

Chapter 3: Post-Intentional Phenomenological Methodology Approach

Phenomenology is the study of how phenomena manifest in the world. PIP is an emerging branch of phenomenology that seeks to “see what the phenomenon might become” (Vagle, 2014, p. 119). This method recognizes that phenomena are constantly evolving and expressed in various ways. The phenomenon of this study was the resilience that CSA victim-survivors displayed as they navigated their post-assault lives. Chapter 3 provides an overview of this methodology and how it was applied to this dissertation study.

Design Approach and Research Question

The purpose of my study was to examine resilience among a sample of undergraduate students who had experienced CSA. Current theoretical understandings of phenomenology are grounded in the philosophical teachings of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger (Dahlberg et al., 2008; Sokolowski, 2000; Vagle, 2014, 2018). Although it has evolved and modern methods vary in reference to the original, phenomenology calls back to its origins of the philosophy and early methods of Husserl and Heidegger. This method recognizes that phenomena are constantly evolving and expressed in various ways. As qualitative, exploratory research, my study was grounded within an interpretivist paradigm that recognized the multiple, constructed, and holistic nature of realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within an interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is assumed to be built from shared understandings and social contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). PIP offers the method and tools for researchers interested in phenomena that are difficult to grasp and fully understand. PIP is also influenced by French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (1987), specifically their concept of “lines of flight" (p. 128) that guide the acknowledgement that phenomena are many, partial, and tentative (Vagle, 2014, 2018). A core phenomenological principle is intentionality, which is "used to signify how we are meaningfully connected to the world" (Vagle, 2014, p. 27), and becomes a critical tool to understand the phenomenon.

Although research using PIP and phenomenology, in general, is limited in studying CSA, some researchers have used phenomenological methods to study aspects of sexual assault, including the lived experiences of adult female sexual assault victim-survivors (Hellman, 2016), the reporting experiences of female victim-survivors of CSA (Park, 2015), and the experience of Title IX administrators with CSA (Steiner, 2019). I have not found a study focused on the experiences of resilience among victim-survivors of CSA in which the researchers has used PIP methods. Scholars ambiguously have defined resilience, and I selected PIP for use in my dissertation study due to its focus on understanding complex phenomena. The research question that guided my study was, "How might resilience take shape for undergraduate student victim-survivors of CSA as they navigate their post-assault life on campus?"

Data Collection

Site

This study was conducted at a large, urban, public land grant institution. Prior to any recruitment or data collection activities, I received study approval from the University's IRB. I used nonprobability methods of purposive and snowball sampling for participant recruitment. Qualitative scholars have recommended smaller sample sizes for phenomenological participant selection based on these sampling methods, in order to provide an in-depth access to the phenomenon and rich, thick raw data for the study (Cilesiz, 2011; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith et al., 2009; Vagle, 2014).

Recruitment

Several UMN-TC centers and groups work to prevent, address, and support students who are impacted by CSA (see Appendix A). Utilizing my established relationships with The Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education, the Minnesota Student Association, and the Women's Center, I provided recruitment flyers for distribution through each partner's email listservs, social media, and bulletin boards in common student areas (see Appendix B). The IRB approval was received in April 2020 (see Appendix C) and recruitment began that same month. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on this study, students, and campus life in spring 2020 through fall 2020, recruitment flyers were predominantly distributed electronically and on social media platforms. The flyers included a Qualtrics link where interested participants could go to learn more information about the study and determine their eligibility. Recruitment continued into the fall 2020 semester and concluded on December 18, 2020.

Eligibility

Interested participants followed a secure Qualtrics link on the recruitment flyer that directed them to complete a three-item screener in order to determine study eligibility (see Appendix D). To be eligible for the study, an individual had to be currently enrolled at UMN-TC as an undergraduate student, between the ages of 18-24 years old, and have experienced CSA as a UMN-TC undergraduate student.

To assess the experience of CSA as an undergraduate student, participants responded either 'yes' or 'no' to the question of, "Do you identify as having experienced any attempted or actual sexual contact without your consent while you were an undergraduate student at the University?" Two other questions assessed whether the individual was currently enrolled as an undergraduate at the University and if they were between the ages of 18 and 24 years old. Anyone who responded "yes" to all three screening questions was eligible to participate in the study.

Each eligible person indicated whether they consented to being contacted to complete a one-to-one semi-structured interview. If the person indicated consent to be contacted for an interview, they entered their first name and email address. This information was used to contact the eligible participant and schedule an interview. An automated email was sent through Qualtrics to participants if they did not meet the three eligibility criteria. A total of N=10 students completed the Qualtrics screener, 8 of whom were eligible to participate in the study.

Online Data Collection

The eight students who met the eligibility criteria and consented to be contacted for an interview were sent an email to schedule an interview (see Appendix F). In this email, I included a second Qualtrics link (see Appendix G) for participants to complete an electronic online consent form (see Appendix H) and respond to several demographic questions (e.g., race, gender, age, etc.). Completing this survey took approximately 10 minutes.

Consent Process

Originally, interviews were expected to be conducted face-to-face at a preferred location of the participant's choice. However, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the adherence to safety measures that required physical distance, all interviews occurred via a Zoom session. Each interview was video recorded and audio recorded through Zoom.

The day before the interview was scheduled, participants were emailed a consent form (see Appendix I), along with my phone number and verification of the participant's phone number. Eligible participants had previously provided their phone number as a safe way to reach them and stipulated that I could leave a voicemail identifying myself in the event that the call was dropped due to them appearing distressed or due to technological difficulties (e.g., link not working). All phone numbers remained confidential and were securely stored in an online Box account to meet the IRB requirements for safe and secure data storage. All phone numbers and personal information were destroyed once data collection was completed in December 2020. All video and audio recordings were destroyed once the interview transcript was completed. Prior to beginning the interview and per IRB instruction, I also asked participants to confirm that they had the study's resource list (see Appendix K) provided in the Qualtrics link in front of them.

The consent form explained the purpose, risk, benefits, and compensation of the study. The form also included four questions assessing if the participant consented to being contacted for follow-up questions pertaining to the interview, if they consented to being contacted for member checking, if they consented to being contacted by this researcher via the number they provided in the event of the call being dropped due to the participant appearing distressed or to technological difficulties, and if they would like to be notified of any final written report or publication of the study's findings. The IRB granted a waiver of written consent which protected participants by eliminating the risk of providing identifiable information. Participants did not sign the consent form for this study but instead verbally consented to participation after reading through the consent form and asking any questions.

Interview Process

A total of six participants were interviewed, one interview per person, between April and May 2020. Interviews ranged in length from about 60 to 90 minutes, with the average interview duration being 72 minutes. At the time of the interview, participants were in their sophomore (n=1), junior (n=2) or senior (n=2) academic year, with one enrolled as a fifth-year senior. Students' ages were 20 (n=3), 21 (n=1), and 22 (n=2) years old. Students identified their race as either Asian American (n=3) or White (n=3). Five identified their gender as female and one identified as nonbinary. Students' sexual identities included queer (n=1), bisexual (n=4), and heterosexual (n=1). See Appendix E for additional participant demographic characteristics.

Participants could have felt distressed during the interview as they thought about and shared their experiences related to the sexual assault. I encouraged each participant to take their time during the interview process and to tell me if they ever wished to take a break. I also routinely assessed nonverbal cues from participants. When anyone appeared distressed, I asked if they wished to take a break. All participants, including those who only attempted the Qualtrics eligibility survey, were given a list of resources that provide support and counseling to victim-survivors of sexual assault (see Appendix K). The resource list included campus and local community resources and contact information and was inputted electronically into the Qualtrics survey and emailed to participants after their interview.

For completing the interview, participants were eligible to enter a drawing for one of two $50 gift cards for Amazon.com. Participants who wished to be entered into the drawing confirmed their first name and preferred email address. I kept these raffle slips in a secured, locked file cabinet that only I had access to until data collection concluded. The drawing for the two gift cards took place on December 21, 2020, after recruitment ended. For a total sample of six participants, the probability of winning was 1 in 3. I notified the two winners by email and provided each person a link to the gift card.

Interview Content. Throughout the interview, I explored how the context of students' CSA had produced and provoked experiences of resilience. I used an in-depth, semi-structured interview protocol to guide my questions that was informed by scholars' conceptualizations and research of resilience, along with the socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspectives (see Appendix J).

I started each interview with questions that included, "Can you start by telling me a little bit about yourself and how you became interested in this study?", and, "Can you tell me about your experience(s) of sexual assault that occurred while being a college student?" Related questions explored participants' reporting and disclosure process, navigation of campus life post-assault, and other contextual information relevant to their experience.

During the interview process, I did not define resilience for participants. I intentionally did this to not influence their conceptualization of resilience, which allowed participants to freely share their own understanding and experiences of resilience. Interview questions focused on resilience included, "What does the word "resilience" mean to you? How would you describe and/or define it?", "In what ways do you identify or describe yourself as being resilient?", and, "Tell me about moments following your experience of campus sexual assault when you felt resilience?" Additional questions were asked from the interview protocol guide and/or developed through the dialogue between the participant and me (as the interviewer).

Although frequently used in the resilience scholarship, I disagree with Bonanno's (2004, 2012) definition of resilience, particularly given what is known about the prevalence of PTSD, depression, and anxiety for individuals who have been sexually assaulted. According to Bonanno (2004, 2012), individuals who navigate their post-assault recovery while also having a diagnosis of PTSD may not be resilient, depending on if they do not "bounce back" quickly to baseline functioning. I am reminded of the collection of CSA stories by activists and victim-survivors, Annie Clark and Andrea Pino (2016), who write, "Trauma isn't something you 'get over,' but you can get through it . . . there is no blueprint to 'moving on' from trauma, and there isn't a wrong way to heal" (p. 158).

I agree, however, with other aspects of resilience that are described and defined throughout the literature (see Chapter 2), particularly the components that acknowledge the importance of the person in their environment, cultural context, intersectional identities, and available environmental resources. As a result of the literature I reviewed and for the purposes of informing this dissertation, I specifically drew upon Ungar (2004), Brown (2010), and Masten (2011) to define resilience *as an individual's capacity to move through trauma in ways that promote healing within the context of their environment*. Socio-ecological and intersectional feminist perspectives also support this conceptualization of resilience and informed my study. This literature will be further incorporated into the study’s findings, discussion, and implications. Further research on the experiences of resilience, including my dissertation study, has the potential to clarify the experiences and connections of these concepts.

Power Dynamics and the Interview Process. As previously noted, I participated in clear systems of power and privilege as a researcher in this study. In approaching this study from a social work lens, a socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspective, and a PIP methodological approach, I addressed the power dynamics during the interview process through engaging with several strategies. I collaborated with key campus partners that students may have already been engaging with following a CSA. I worked closely with The Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education, the Women’s Center, and the Minnesota Student Association, all of whom helped to inform this study and recruit students. Ideally, students, who were recruited through these partners, may have already had some degree of trust in the interview process, knowing that I had built relationships with a campus partner whom they may also have trusted or known.

I started the interview process by naming the power dynamics inherently present with me as a researcher. However, I also began with extending my gratitude to participants for agreeing to share their stories and I reiterated that the interview could be paused or stopped at any moment. Throughout the interviews, I tried to be as present as possible with the stories being told in order to listen to the phenomenon being expressed by the participants. Finally, I concluded each interview by asking participants to briefly describe how the interview process was for them. Although the power dynamics present may have influenced their responses, this question was another way for me to engage with participants about their interview experience.

Data Analysis

Vagle's (2014) whole-part-whole process of analysis was used to analyze and deconstruct the data. This type of analysis, congruent with PIP, included completing line-by-line readings of the interview transcripts, lived experience descriptions, field notes in the form of post-reflexions, and revisiting and incorporating theory to think with and through the data. These analytic steps provided the opportunity to identify how the phenomenon of resilience in the context of CSA is produced and provoked in multifaceted ways. This form of analysis in PIP also draws upon Finlay's (2014) process of dwelling with the data to describe the process of becoming present with the data to make "room for the phenomenon to reveal itself and speak its story into our understanding" (p. 1).

All interviews were transcribed near-verbatim through assistance by a transcription computer program, Temi. Temi identifies as having a 90-95% accuracy rate (Temi, 2020). I was able to access and delete all files that were uploaded to Temi once the interview transcript was completed and moved onto the secure Box account. Temi provided an initial transcription of the interview. After that, I completed multiple readings of each transcript and listened to the audio file to edit for accuracy and deleted any personal names or identifying information. I also re-read each transcript multiple times to increase my immersion and presence with the data.

Next, I followed the whole-part-whole process of analysis that consisted of six iterative steps. First, I completed a holistic reading of the entire text, which included all of the transcripts. Second, I conducted a line-by-line reading of the data, which included taking notes and marking excerpts that contained important meanings. Third, I identified follow-up questions that emerged through the previous steps in the data analysis to clarify meanings with the participants. Fourth, I went through a second line-by-line reading of the data to further articulate the meanings being developed throughout the previous steps of analysis, participant responses to questions, and my ongoing post-reflexion process. The fifth step continued with a third line-by-line reading of this ongoing, iterative process of the data to further immerse myself in the phenomenon that manifested. Finally, the sixth step involved subsequent readings, which included reading across the data to identify patterns of meanings, themes, critical analysis, and writing thick descriptions of participants' lived experiences.

During the interview, I asked each participant to report, to the best of their ability, when and where the assault occurred, including information about their potential relationship to the alleged perpetrator (see Appendix E). These data were included in the descriptive statistics to describe the context of CSA. Univariate statistics included percentages of the number of participants completing each step of the study process (i.e., eligibility and interview), along with the means and frequencies of demographics for participants who completed the interview.

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I engaged with post-reflexion through written, analytic memos in a post-reflexive journal, to align with the PIP method. This journaling included moments when I connected or disconnected with the data, assumptions of normality, beliefs, perceptions, perspectives, or opinions that I had, and moments when I was surprised by the data (Vagle, 2014).

Enhancing Rigor

Scholars have debated what terms and perspectives to use when discussing the rigor and strength of qualitative research. For instance, Lincoln and Guba (1985) are often cited as historical scholars in putting forth the terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to enhance a study's overall trustworthiness. These terms mirror and respond to the terms often used in quantitative and mixed methods research, to include internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. For the purposes of increasing the rigor of this study, I identified and incorporated several strategies that I used to increase the study's overall trustworthiness, such as post-reflexing, member checking, peer debriefing, and thick descriptions of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I applied several measures to enhance the trustworthiness and rigor of this inquiry. First, by utilizing PIP as the methodological framework that informs this inquiry, I recognized that my subjectivities were an inherent part of my research. Through practicing post-reflexing in my field notes, I attempted to create space to critique myself—my positionality and experiences as a former undergraduate student who experienced CSA—within the larger macro level contexts at play throughout this inquiry. My post-reflexing also allowed me to document personal reflections regarding data collection efforts and what I was learning methodologically about myself as a researcher. I also wrote thick descriptions of participants' lived experiences of CSA, a form of data collection encouraged in PIP. Thick descriptions of participants and the data strengthen the trustworthiness of the data and reflect a more in-depth presence with the data for analysis purposes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Furthermore, various measures were taken to ensure that I intentionally worked with participants to design, implement, analyze, and represent the various student voices and perspectives in this inquiry. For example, participants were invited twice to review and comment on their interview transcripts as well as emerging themes and initial findings throughout the data analysis stages of this inquiry. Participants (*N*=6) who consented to being contacted with any interview follow-up questions and member checking were included in this process. Although these measures alone did not guarantee equitable participation in the research process for participants, they moved this inquiry towards a more collaborative research model between the researcher and participants.

Other measures to enhance this inquiry included IRB approval, in-depth interviews for data collection to fully immerse myself with the participants and their stories, and faculty support. Prior to beginning this inquiry, I obtained approval from the UMN-TC's IRB. The IRB requires that researchers consider human subjects protections, including informed consent, confidentiality, and minimization of identified risks. The IRB extensively deliberated this dissertation study and posed various questions and steps to consider to enhance not only the study's rigor but also participant safety. Throughout the design, data collection and analysis, and reporting processes, this inquiry was overseen by my faculty advisor, Dr. Lynette Renner, and members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Megan Morrisey, Dr. Patricia Shannon, and Dr. Mark Vagle. The guidance of these content and methodological experts helped to ensure that this inquiry was carried out methodically and ethically. These various measures all aimed to enhance the rigor of this inquiry.

Chapter 4: Tentative Manifestations

In this chapter, I share the four tentative manifestations that emerged from my interviews with the six participants. The tentative manifestations include participants' description of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope. In order to provide more context, I first introduce each participant through a short narrative, lived experience description, congruent with PIP. The names shared are pseudonyms that either the participant specifically chose or I selected if they did not have a preference. I de-identified all information from the interviews to maintain confidentiality for all participants. These profiles reflect the participants' lives at the time of the interview.

Participant Lived Experience Profiles

Emi

Emi is a 20-year-old Asian American student, specifically identifying as Japanese-American, and is currently a senior but will return next year as a fifth-year senior. Emi identifies their gender as nonbinary and their sexual orientation as queer. The pronouns that Emi uses are they and them. Their academic majors include Asian American studies, music education, and racial justice and urban schools. Emi is actively involved on campus through student leadership, specifically in Asian American and queer student groups, and is a teacher's assistant for a music class. Emi was sexually assaulted at the beginning of their fall semester of freshman year by a senior male student who attended the University, was a fellow music major, and spoke Japanese. The CSA occurred in his dorm room on campus, where he also was a community advisor[2] (CA).

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[2] Community advisors are undergraduate students, who usually are either in their junior or senior academic year, and live in campus student housing to help build community and support other student residents, such as with roommate conflicts or other general concerns.

Emi returned to their dorm after the assault and eventually told their CA, who identified what had happened as an assault and reported it to the Title IX Office. Emi decided to go through the University's Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA) reporting process and an investigator originally found the other student to be responsible for sexual misconduct, which is a violation of the Student Conduct Code. However, the offending student appealed the verdict, which was overturned to not guilty. Emi described that in the aftermath of struggling with the EOAA verdict, they overdosed on Benadryl, not as a suicide attempt but in trying to cope with the pain, and had to be hospitalized during spring semester of freshman year. Emi identified as initially developing a drinking problem, their GPA dropping, and missing enough classes in their majors that graduation had to be pushed back. Emi also initially experienced panic attacks, increased stress levels, depression, and general avoidant behavior of social life, to the extent that they moved from a queer housing community into a single dormitory freshman year and, eventually, a crisis house off campus to receive more support during sophomore year.

Hannah

Hannah is a 21-year-old White, female student who identifies her sexual orientation as bisexual and is completing her junior year. Hannah uses the pronouns she and her. Hannah is a family social science major, but originally entered the University as a nursing major and switched her major after experiencing the CSA. Hannah was sexually assaulted during the spring semester of her freshman year by a male student who attended a different local college. Hannah met the male student through a dating app. They talked for a while and decided to go on a date. After the date, they went back to her dorm room where the CSA occurred. After he left, Hannah went to the bathroom and was crying, where her CA heard and found her. The CA identified what had happened as a sexual assault and reported it to the Title IX Office. The CA also encouraged Hannah to go to the hospital that night to get an exam, which the CA attended with her. The Title IX Office reached out to Hannah with various campus resources, which she was grateful for but she decided not to go through the formal reporting process. After the CSA, Hannah described experiencing increased levels of anxiety, paranoia, and panic attacks. She found it difficult to leave her room and be with her friends or in groups. Eventually she went to the campus disability resource center (DRC) to request an accommodation given her anxiety and challenge to complete her courses, where her class attendance and grades had dropped. Sophomore year felt like a fresh start as Hannah moved into a new apartment, began socializing more with friends, and, by the end of the year, had joined groups that focused on women's social and political issues. Since her switch in majors after the CSA, Hannah has interned and volunteered at various campus and local organizations that focus on sexual and domestic violence.

Dana

Dana is a White, female student who identifies as bisexual and studies psychology as a fifth-year senior. Dana identifies her pronouns as she and her. Dana was sexually assaulted the fall of her sophomore year, the year that she transferred to the University. The CSA occurred in a male student's dormitory at the University. Dana identified that the CSA initially resulted in her past eating disorder flaring up and that she engaged in some self-harm behavior. Since the CSA, Dana described developing a general hatred towards the campus. She avoids being on campus for classes and social activities; and when she is on campus, she reflects that it is nerve-wracking. Dana opted to enroll in online versus in-person classes, avoids the campus transit system, and is very careful in mapping out her routes when she does have an in-person class or needs to be on campus. Dana first worked overnight shifts at an on-campus job when she transferred, but her supervisor thought something may have happened to Dana and instructed her to go to the DRC before returning to work. Dana described this process as frustrating and very dehumanizing. She has since found an off-campus job that aligns better with her career goals. She has always lived in off-campus housing, but resides close to campus. She described that this has limited her connections with fellow students. In the spring of her senior year, she challenged herself to explore more to increase her connections. She has since found her own network of support in predominately off-campus friendships and supports. However, she has attended a support group through the AC.

Rupi

Rupi is Asian American, specifically identifying as an Indian-American, heterosexual female finishing her senior year. Rupi identifies her pronouns as she and her. Her majors are nonprofit management and information systems. Rupi was sexually assaulted off-campus the spring semester of her sophomore year by an older man she met at her program's International Women's Day celebration for female Students of Color, which had been incredibly impactful for her as she struggled with feeling supported on the campus in identifying as a Brown woman. The man introduced himself expressing his desire to interview her for a documentary that he was completing around related topics and offered to complete the interview at an Indian restaurant. On the day the interview was supposed to occur, he sent a taxi for her to meet him at his place, where the assault occurred. After the assault, Rupi remembers going back to her apartment and immediately washing her clothes and scrubbing her body with dish soap. She called her best friend a week later and described what had happened, and the friend identified it as sexual assault. Rupi chose not to report the CSA to formal campus entities. Rupi described how after the assault she became easily startled, hyperaware, and experienced panic attacks and increased stress. Her class attendance and grades also dropped, as well as her engagement in social activities. Although campus already had not felt like an inclusive, supportive place, her sense of feeling unsafe only heightened. Rupi lives off-campus but nearby, and has continued to rely on her friends and supports to increase her ability to go out more and attend social events.

Violet

Violet is an Asian American female, who identifies as bisexual, and is in her junior year. Violet uses the pronouns she and her. She lives on-campus where she works as a CA and cares deeply about LGBTQIA+ issues on campus. She experienced sexual assault several times in a brief relationship she had with another female student, who also attended the University, during her freshman year. Violet described the layers of ongoing assault in the relationship that negatively affected her self-esteem, confidence, and self-worth. After the relationship ended, she became terrified of seeing this other student on campus. Violet would avoid places on or around campus where she had spent time with this other student, such as dorm buildings or near-by coffee shops. She relied on her friends to help her feel safe walking around. She described experiencing increased depression, difficulty sleeping, anxiety attacks, self-harm, and negative ideas of herself. She also struggled to maintain housing situations and commuted for a time after moving back in with her parents. Although she is not involved in other formal student groups, she has increased her engagement with social activities, specifically events focused on LGBTQIA+ students, with her friends.

Sarah

Sarah is a White, female student, currently in her sophomore year, and who identifies as bisexual. Sarah identifies her pronouns as she and her. Her majors include psychology, public health, and neuroscience. She plans to graduate a year early, after her junior year. She works as a CA in one of the on-campus apartment buildings, mostly working night shifts. Sarah experienced CSA the fall of her sophomore year when after a fourth date with a male student who attended a different local college, they went back to his apartment. After the CSA, Sarah felt increasingly unsafe on and around campus and went into overdrive mode with productivity in her work, school, and social activities. Then, she described crashing for about two weeks, where she could not get out of bed, attend class, or go to work. She took many showers and scrubbed so hard that her skin cracked. She experienced panic attacks and avoided large crowds and any physical touch. She tried to take the campus underground tunnels as much as possible to avoid certain locations and made sure her close friends knew where she was at all times by sharing her phone's location. She also reported testing positive for a sexually transmitted infection (STI) as a direct result of the CSA. Sarah relied on her friends to support her as she increasingly began re-engaging with work, school, and social events.

Tentative Manifestations

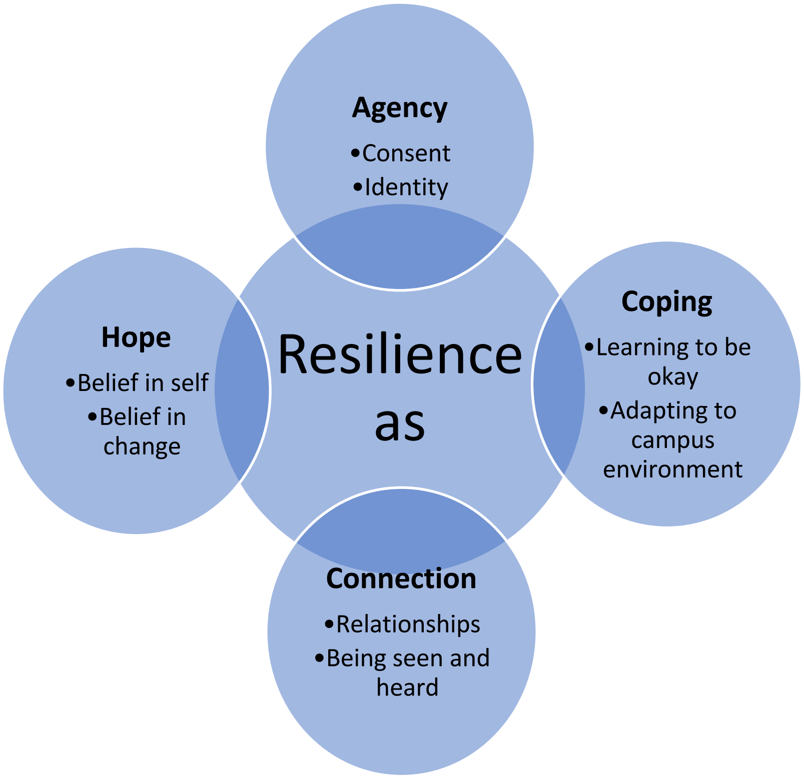
The post-intentional data analysis and synthesis of how the data were produced and provoked, including lived experience descriptions and in-depth interviews, revealed participants' descriptions of four tentative manifestations of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope (see Figure 1). Within each tentative manifestation, the findings are illustrated and discussed through post-reflexions. The post-reflexions include both my personal analysis and thoughts, along with a discussion of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks that the phenomena provoked.

Although PIP as a method was previously discussed in Chapter 3, it is worthwhile to briefly name again a few key assumptions in PIP with regard to the writing process, analysis, and post-reflexing. For example, in the sections that follow, I discuss and write about the phenomenon in ways that make the phenomenon read as if it is its own being or noun that takes shape by itself. Other times, I write about the phenomenon through what the participants shared about how they experienced the phenomenon. Also, I use the process of post-reflexion to further apply PIP to think with and through the phenomenon in relation to other literature, theory, and even my own personal lived experiences. I present these post-reflexions after each tentative manifestation. Vagle (2018) described this PIP style of writing as one that will "move across boundaries" (p. 109). This crafting of the phenomenon, which occurs through the participants, post-reflexions, thinking with theory, and other ways that the phenomenon may take shape, "is hardly clean" (Vagle, 2018, p. 124). Vagle (2018) wrote,

> I stressed my desire to imagine a philosophical and methodological space in which all sorts of philosophies, theories, and ideas are put in conceptual dialogue with one another – creating a productive and generative cacophony . . . It is in this playfulness (as opposed to dialogue) where weeds (and flower and stalk) grow (p. 124).

Figure 1

Tentative Manifestations of Resilience


Agency
•Consent
•Identity
Hope
•Belief in self
•Belief in change
Resilience as
Coping
•Learning to be okay
•Adapting to campus environment
Connection
•Relationships
•Being seen and heard

Tentative Manifestation: Resilience as Agency

Resilience as agency included participants discussing the importance and challenges of consent, along with the many choices they have had to make during surviving the CSA and navigating campus life post-assault. These multiple and, at times, challenging decisions and choices are part of the broad manifestation of consent within the context of agency. Issues around consent also affected how participants made sense of how they identified with the CSA, whether they chose to identify as a victim and/or survivor, naming what had happened as an assault or trauma, or the challenges in relation to being a "perfect victim" and the agency that they embodied. Participants emphasized that each victim-survivor was unique and that their experience should not be a prescription of a singular, right, or perfect way to be resilient following CSA. Reflecting on these various moments of consent throughout the CSA and post-assault life connected to participants' reflections of resilience.

Consent

Each participant described the moment(s) of actively not consenting and the consequences of this both during and after the assault. Participants shared that at some point the perpetrator "lost control" and refused to listen to their active 'no'. It was during these moments that each victim-survivor made choices, sometimes even subconsciously, of how to practice agency to survive their assault. Rupi shared,

> I completely dissociated. I was in a lot of pain the whole time and the way he was on my body and on my throat I thought I was gonna die . . . Now that I know there's nothing that I could have done differently in that situation and there's nothing, there's no way I could have been safer.

Sarah also reflected on the role of agency during the CSA as she said,

> I was just kind of thinking through, well, what are my options? I don't really know where I am. If I did hit him and get him off and take off, would I even know where to go? And, I don't even know if this person's intention is to hurt me. I don't think that he really knows what he's doing even despite that I've said no, and like I'd rather you didn't and what not. But, I remember then saying something along the lines of, 'I need to check the time to make sure I'm ready for work'. Because he knows I need to be at this location tonight.

Participants identified that these moments of practicing agency through consent and their various choices following the CSA of what they consented to supported their experience of resilience even beyond surviving the CSA. Agency as an opportunity to demonstrate power, control, and the ability to make choices for their individual well-being supported participants' resilience. In making certain choices in their reporting process, Emi noted,

> I view getting over that [EOAA verdict] as just as important because I feel like I didn't have control during the assault, but I had control during that process. I could have said no [to the investigation process]. Theoretically, I could have chosen not to. And the fact that I chose to keep going, I think that definitely makes me feel resilient.

Another aspect of consent, within the context of agency, was the emphasis that, again, it is specific to the individual, their individual choices, and their timeframe about how and when they may experience resilience. Hannah said, "There's an element of empowerment that comes from realizing that there's no specific timeframe for healing and for getting through it. And you don't always know that time is going to help until it does." Hannah believed that within the context of what an individual consents to, both during and after the CSA, it is empowering for victim-survivors to remember that there is no one way or timeframe that will lead to experiences of resilience. Experiences of resilience and post-assault life depend on the individual's sense and practice of agency. In reflecting on when a person might begin to feel resilient in this context, Emi said, "I like to give like a long time window for like how long it takes to get there." Emi emphasized that in the process of experiencing resilience, victim-survivors will have to continue to exercise consent across multiple choices within various timeframes that are specific to their life and experience. Again, participants strongly emphasized the role of individual choice, including what they consented or did not consent to, in relation to agency and how this, in turn, supported their resilience.

Participants described the process of learning how to be a better self-advocate in these moments of consent and agency, and how developing this sense of self-advocacy became part of how they viewed their resilience. In describing what part of resilience is within the context of agency, Rupi said, “Advocating for what you need.” Other participants also shared how these moments of practicing agency throughout various moments of decisions that they consented to bolstered their resilience. Sarah discussed this connection between consent, agency, and resilience as she said,

> When anyone encounters something difficult . . . you can kind of choose to let that consume you in a bad way or you can choose to accept it. You can choose to move past it, you can choose to work with it. But overall you have to choose what you’re going to do with that piece of newness.

Violet said, “And you can, you can just end it. But that’s not resilience. It’s just giving up.” Each of these participants described how making choices, where they felt in control and believed these choices to be in their best interest, supported and increased their sense of resilience.

The participants also reflected on the broader policies and culture of consent on campus and believed that consent remains a pertinent issue that is not yet fully addressed nor supported, which affected how students felt supported in their post-assault journey. Participants described how besides the perpetrator violating their consent, they experienced multiple moments in feeling like their consent and agency were not respected as they made choices about how or if to report or seek help. These reflections from participants demonstrate how broader, macro contexts of consent impact the individual experience of resilience on campus. Dana said,

> There's also a lot of questions about that [reporting] still and like stigma towards people if they do report, which is a whole other problem, which I think is really problematic because I didn't want to . . . it's just a whole thing and then really kind of hard on the survivor . . . because they lose a lot of choice in that.

In regard to mandatory reporting and being contacted by the campus Title IX office, Hannah said, "I was a little surprised in hearing from Title IX when it wasn't necessarily something that I had initiated myself which was a little jarring . . . it made me less inclined to want to report." Sarah said, "My really only big fear was, you know, someone pointing a finger at me and saying, 'Oh, this was all your fault'. And then that made me kind of fear mandatory reporting. So I avoided that." These participants described their hesitancy and resistance, at times, to these policies not supporting their individual consent and agency, which created a challenge to experiencing resilience.

Some participants believed the broader culture of consent still overly focuses on the victim-survivor's actions, instead of seeing accountability for the perpetrator who acted with agency in a violent manner against their consent. The participants strongly emphasized that if campuses want to fully address CSA and support victim-survivors and all students, broader conversations must include critically thinking about consent in the context of campus life and healthy and safe relationships and sexuality. Ultimately, participants wanted their campus to honor and respect what they consented to and their agency. Emi said,

> The affirmative consent policy would help if it were upheld, which it really clearly was not. So the initial investigation found that he wasn't guilty and had the audacity to say that we just both needed to be more careful and like it was really clearly missed, like not applied.

Sarah also reflected on this and said,

> The main belief is a lot of people say no and they think it means persuade me. And I was taught when I was little that no means no . . . And they don't take no as a point to just stop and they just take it as a suggestion instead of just listening to it.

Emi further reflected on how these varying interpretations of consent can create a challenge for how victim-survivors move through post-assault life and experience resilience. They commented, "I think that being surrounded by people who have a different idea of consent from you can be a barrier." Each of these participants shared how the violation of their consent deeply impacted their resilience, not only in the CSA itself, but also the post-assault messages they received on campus as they tried to navigate resources, processes, and seeking support. Participants expressed their desire for other students and the campus as a whole to respect their agency through their individual choices and consent. During the times when they felt like their sense of agency was violated, they felt like their experience of resilience also was negatively impacted.

For the participants of this study, some trust had already been established to a degree with the perpetrator, and the perpetrator was an acquaintance and not a complete stranger. Participants discussed that having this initial trust complicated their experience of resilience, as they felt the questioning either by others or themselves about the choices they made. Emi said,

> I went over there willingly and then ended up not, pretty clearly saying, like I told him that he was being rough, and he replied with, ‘I thought you liked it that way’. And I was like, no. Like if I say no, you need to stop. And then I was told, but you wouldn’t say no. And so, at that point, my reaction was not to fight or to flee, it was just a freeze.

Emi described their reporting and adjudication process as a very negative experience, where her consent was questioned along with her initial decision to go to the student’s room. Emi said, “Other people may perceive me being in control and wanting this to happen, but that’s not the narrative and being able to assert that is an important part of resilience and what a resilient person hopefully is.” Again, participants frequently had to navigate this tension between defending their agency and wanting their agency respected. Other participants similarly described having negative experiences with other supports on campus, whether it was a therapist, health professional, professor, or DRC staff. Participants discussed experiences of not feeling heard, validated, respected, or supported when trying to navigate campus resources or systems. In reflecting on her experience with the DRC, Dana said, “It was really awful. And so I’ve actually really avoided them ever since . . . they treated me like an infant. I was like, no, I’m capable.” However, these students’ ability to continually return to believing in their own sense of agency through advocacy and what they consent to choose or not choose to engage with supported their sense of resilience. Consequently, participants demonstrated how consent was not only taken away during the assault but also challenged at times afterwards in navigating campus processes and resources.

Identity

Related to consent in the context of agency was identity. Participants described their choices, questioning, and challenges with making sense of the CSA and reflecting on who they were, are, and continue to be as they navigated post-assault life. Hannah summarized this by commenting, "You learn a lot about yourself when you hit rock bottom". One of the most prominent ways that identity appeared within the context of agency was how participants viewed and chose to engage with the labels, and related meanings, of victim and/or survivor. As participants reflected on the victim and survivor narratives that are often interwoven into CSA, participants identified the presence of victim-blaming, shame, guilt, and stigma that they had to, and continue to, navigate in moving through their post-assault life. Dana said, "I had a lot of shame because of the whole thing. Because then I felt that people were just looking into my business." Yet, participants continued to return back to the role of agency in these moments. Participants emphasized that it was their individual choice of how they identified themselves and continued to practice agency, whether in the context of the assault, self-identities, or navigating campus life. Participants described how these labels supported or hindered their sense of resilience and how imperative it was to have agency within resilience.

Emi reflected on the conflicts and challenges they felt with these identities in moving through post-assault life,

> For the first year too, I wasn't a victim, I wasn't a survivor. Because it didn't happen to me. And I wasn't anything other than all of the identities I'd had

> before. But, in general, I was definitely a victim. I was like, I haven't survived anything. This has happened to me. This man has ruined my life. There's like a really good essay[3], I'm sure you've seen it, about someone who's like, I'm a victim. It shouldn't be on me to survive this thing that someone else did. And so I really identified with that for a while because I think I was like, I'm never going to be okay.

For Emi, naming the CSA as a trauma was an individual practice of agency that supported their ability to be resilient. They said,

> Being able to name it as, yeah, I went over there and also it wasn't my fault. It's felt so reassuring to me because I still, there's days that I don't completely believe that, but it is helpful to assert that to other people, both to survivors with like similar experiences and to people who haven't experienced that because I think they should know that if they ever do that to someone, it will be named as assault.

In reflecting the conflicting feelings at times with how and when to choose to identify with these labels, Violet said, "People can find validation and support in those labels. Because, yeah, I am a victim and I am also a survivor". Regardless of these conflicting feelings, participants stressed that the choice of identity rests with the individual and is critical for their experience of resilience. Violet continued,

> Sometimes you just want to forget it's there, but also you don't want to be defined by what happened to you because it's not like victim and survivor. It's based on

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[3] This essay was written by Kate Harding (2020) for *Time* Magazine and was titled, "I've Been Told I'm a Survivor, Not a Victim. But What's Wrong With Being a Victim?" Harding (2018) writes, "In truth, I am both and neither. I am one human being with a particular story about a life-shaping act of violence that, no matter how many times I tell it, only I will ever know by heart. Call me whatever you like."

> your experience and what that person did to you. And my life should not be based around the person that did this to me. It should not be based around that experience because I have other experiences and without them I'm still, you know, me, whatever I am.

Dana also related these conflicting feelings to identifying as resilient, "It's hard trying to figure out what's an accurate self-perception of how resilient I am or just how I'm not . . . if I think about everything, well I'm very resilient". Although participants occasionally struggled with the word resilience and other related labels, when asked if they identified as being resilient, they all responded, "yes".

Sarah further described the struggles with these labels in relation to a sense of how they processed their CSA and resilience by saying,

> I remember thinking, oh my goodness, you put on makeup, you wore red lipstick, you wore a tight black shirt and really nice pants cause you were really proud of how you looked and you wanted to be a little flirty and show off some booty, because why not? And so for a while I let myself believe that I had asked for it. And so I think that that belief hindered me a lot in the time that it affected me.

She later said,

> I've not used the word victim and I've not used the word survivor. I just think I'm a person who had something particularly bad happen and I'm in charge of what I do next and what I can call myself and I just continue to maintain. I'm a person who experienced something bad. And although sometimes it could be bad, for the most part things are good and that's just kind of what I've been doing.

Within the realm of identity, participants also reflected on the potential impact of race, gender, and class on their experiences, including resilience. Participants highlighted that CSA occurs in a unique environment where there are multiple cultures, systems, and identities that students have to navigate. However, it was incredibly important to these participants that their agency be supported in choosing how they identify, or do not, with their experience of CSA, victim-survive labels, and resilience.

Emi discussed the initial trust and connection they felt with the student who assaulted them, given that they were both Japanese and that their parents were immigrants. Emi's connection with the other student with respect to how they identified affected their experience of the CSA and the pain that they navigated post-assault in relation to identities, agency, and resilience. They shared,

> Another factor is that I'm Japanese and speak Japanese. And where I came from, there weren't that many people like that. And this student also was and his parents are also immigrants. And so that was a big factor I think in me trusting him and like wanting to spend time with him.

Students reflected how finding campus supports that were specific to how they chose to identify influenced their experiences of resilience, whether it was supported or challenged. Emi, who identifies as non-binary, said,

> I'm like iffy because a lot of them are women centered and I identify as non-binary . . . a non-binary trans queer specific support group. The fact that I am a queer person of color is also really important to me. And so in an ideal world, that is the group that exists for me . . . because I'm not willing to go to a support group that centers women . . . but that's not the identity that's prioritized.

Hannah also reflected on the role her gender identity played in relation to resilience following CSA and said,

> The fact that I am a woman, it does make it somehow easier because it's just easier to find other women who have been through the same experience. Like I'm thinking of people who are male identified or non-binary and how much harder it is for them to probably find people who have shared their experiences and it's harder I think to find people who even like believe that men can be assaulted. And so I think that would be another barrier is like how much do you kind of fit in with the rest, like the general demographic of what it looks like.

Yet, Hannah later said, "Typically women aren't believed or people are blamed for assault and then this [mandatory reporting] happens. And that's obviously a whole other barrier that they have to now deal with."

Rupi described how it had already been difficult for her to navigate campus life and how she felt isolated due to identifying as a Woman of Color. Her self-identities influenced both how she experienced campus before the CSA and after the CSA, which, in turn, affected how she experienced resilience on campus. She said,

> I'm Indian, and I haven't unfortunately found a lot of support from people in my community at this school . . . so that's something that I'm just now I'm coming into a support group which is just for South Asian women to talk about some of the things that they've experienced in the culture.

Rupi attended an event for female BIPOC students in her department with the hopes of connecting with other students like her. It was also at this event where she initially met the man who later assaulted her, as he struck up a conversation with her and shared how he would value her voice in a documentary he was creating based on issues around race and gender.

Hannah further reflected that these various identities and lived experiences affect how students not only experience campus life but also then how their experiences of resilience are either supported or hindered. She said,

> It's like a privilege issue. So, for example, students who are able to live on campus, just that in and of itself opens itself up to a whole other level of resources because all of a sudden you're connected . . . it can be really difficult to be resilient when the more barriers you have obviously the more challenging it can be . . . I was fortunate enough, I have the ability to seek therapy. I have health insurance. I have enough time, I don't work full-time, I don't have a family.

For each of these participants, their multiple, intersecting identities across race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, as well as identities of being a victim and/or survivor, impacted how they experienced CSA, navigated life on campus post-assault, and experienced resilience. Participants described how integral agency was to experiences of resilience.

Post-Reflexions

In her qualitative study of students (*N*=28) who experienced CSA, Germain (2016) discussed the "paradox of embodied agency" (p. 23) within the context of the harmful narratives surrounding the "perfect victim" to which so many victim-survivors compare themselves to. Similar to the participants in my study, the participants in Germain's (2016) study compared themselves to stereotypes around the perfect victim without necessarily naming it as such. Participants felt like they had to justify why they made the choices they did or why they chose not to report given the potential questioning. For example, the perfect victim is often seen as someone who fights back with force and has concrete evidence of physical injuries. Germain (2016) wrote,

> The perfect victim icon sets up a false reality about what “counts” as force, and therefore what “counts” as sexual assault. Incongruence between their own experiences and those of the perfect victim were connected with questions about whether or not they deserved justice (p. 27).

However, each participant practiced agency in navigating their CSA through implementing various strategies, whether it was using work, a friend, freezing, or dissociating, to survive. Germain (2016) highlighted the paradox of agency by identifying the conflicting protocols and policies set up by a university for the choices a victim-survivor should make following an assault. For instance, students are often encouraged to seek immediate medical or mental health treatment or report to an official campus entity. Yet, for most of the participants, these were not choices that they made, and many of the participants felt the contradictions between knowing what the campus told them they “should” do versus what they felt was the most appropriate choice for them at that moment. Germain (2016) reflected the resulting comparison to the perfect victim,

> The perfect victim would not make such calculations or decisions. She would follow the directions given by the University regardless of her own needs or desires. Thus, as each woman compared her actions to those of the perfect victim, she expressed feelings of guilt and self-blame (p. 32).

Similar to how Germain (2016) demonstrated the influence of the perfect victim on students’ agency, Hockett and Saucier (2015) noted the potential influence of the labels of victim and survivor on the identities of individuals who have experienced sexual violence. Based on their systematic literature review on these labels, Hockett and Saucier (2015) found that, “the rape victim literature emphasizes oppression and the rape survivor literature emphasizes resistance to oppression and empowerment” (p. 4). This also reflects Cole and Lynn’s (2010) call for more nuanced, multidimensional understandings of victim-survivor identities that reflect more complicated, diverse meanings and experiences.

The participants also demonstrated support for the theoretical perspectives presented in Chapter 2, including both the socio-ecological and intersectional feminist perspectives. These two theoretical perspectives recognize the intersecting identities, systems, and culture at play that participants have to navigate in their post-assault life on campus. Whether the participants reflected on the implications of racial, gender, or class experiences, participants were aware of the multiple identities they had, how their experiences may or may not be perceived, and what supported or challenged these experiences of resilience. Khan et al. (2020) affirmed these conflicting feelings that victim-survivors may have with their assault, with victim and survivor labels, and with their various identities and have called for applying a social risk framework to CSA as it,

> Points to how making sense of an experience of assault requires embedding within aspects of individual identity, within dynamics of social networks, and within broader culturally gendered and sexual structures and scripts. In short, making sense of sexual assault, both scholastically and for those who experience it, requires a broad ecological approach (p. 455).

The perfect victim and other various identities, whether victim and/or survivor or self-identities, have the potential to impact and be impacted by rape myths (Deming et al., 2013; O'Connor et al., 2018). Deming et al. (2013) wrote that other contributing factors and contexts often exist within sexual violence that make identifying and labeling experiences of sexual violence difficult. For instance, factors such as if the perpetrator was an acquaintance or if alcohol was involved, both of which occurred for many of the participants in this study, can make it more ambiguous and challenging for victim-survivors to choose to identity or label their experience as assault (Deming et al., 2013). O'Connor et al. (2018) argued that the subtlety of rape myths can lead to increased victim-blaming, shame, and guilt, as victim-survivors struggle with how to make sense of their experiences.

How individuals practice agency in surviving their assault and navigating their post-assault life can bolster and hinder experiences of resilience. Regardless of the choices made, participants of this study emphasized the importance of respecting an individual's choices and timeframe. As Burke (2019) wrote, CSA is a denial of another individual's agency and reflects the harms of society's gendered sexual norms. As presented above, participants in this study demonstrated their resilience in practicing agency in the context of consent, choices, advocacy, and engagement with identities and labels. Participants also reflected a strong sense of critical self-awareness as they referenced the paradox between agency and the perfect victim (Germain, 2016). Throughout the interviews, participants reflected on how their experiences of resilience were bolstered or challenged by certain barriers as a result of the impact of their embodied agency. As will be shown next, participants continued to practice agency to support their resilience as they learned how to cope in the aftermath of their CSA.

Tentative Manifestation: Resilience as Coping

Resilience as coping was evident throughout the interviews as participants shared their coping practices and strategies that they depended on to support their resilience post-assault. Each participant discussed initial coping activities that included themes of avoidance and isolation from others and social activities. Within these immediate strategies, many participants shared about the practice of cleansing their bodies, such as showering or intensely scrubbing. Other common initial coping practices included smoking, drinking, or using other substances. Many participants described coping within the context of learning how to be okay both in the immediate aftermath of the CSA as well as overtime. For instance, participants discussed a similar process of increased self-awareness, where they learned to recognize what was a harmful or supportive coping practice for their well-being. Participants also shared how learning to cope had unique facets specific to adapting to their campus environment, whether in the form of safety strategies or adjusting their daily routines on campus.

Learning How to be Okay

As participants reflected on the immediate moments and initial period after their assault, they identified the draw to avoidance and isolation. Participants actively sought ways to avoid social events, campus, loud environments, and even close friends and/or family members. Most participants expressed an initial desire to be alone, isolating themselves in their dorm room or apartment. Sarah described the common theme of social isolation as she said, “I definitely was very avoidant for a while. I avoided going to ballroom practice and I avoided going to those classes and I stopped going to friend get-togethers." Concerning avoiding campus in general, Dana reflected, "I've actually really hated being on campus. I don't want to be on campus. I usually avoid it and didn't realize it was affecting me and then I would pick more online classes or I would not go to class."

Several participants shared the physical activities that they engaged in with respect to wanting to wash away and forget what had happened to them. These activities commonly included taking long, hot showers or scrubbing their bodies so hard that their skin would react, as well as drinking or smoking more than usual. Rupi described,

> As soon as I got home, I literally got into a towel, put all my clothes in the wash and then washed them with lots of soap. And then I went to the bathroom with the dish soap bottle and I just scrubbed my whole body and my hair with dish soap.

Violet said, "I took really hot showers, lots of soap, I would scrub and scrub at my skin and it was so dry. And it was cracking in places because I wanted to scrub it off. And you can't scrub it off." These initial coping activities were common for participants as they tried to initially cope. A few participants also shared the connection to some of these activities as ways to self-harm or numb their feelings. Emi shared that they overdosed on Benadryl, not to actively die by suicide but to numb their pain. They said,

> The alcohol made it easier, I think. So that was my first coping mechanism. It didn't really work. I was hospitalized and so I overdosed. And I think that also wasn't intentional at first, but it was Benadryl. And I was looking for something that had a similar effect I think because just drinking wasn't working. And then I

> tried just not thinking about it and that also ended up not working and probably was worse when my brain was like, no, you have to deal with this.

Other participants shared how feelings and thoughts from previous mental health challenges, such as anxiety, negative body image, or an eating disorder, resurfaced following the CSA. Hannah reflected, “I’ve always had some anxiety, even before that happened, I’ve seen a therapist for it. And after that happened, it definitely increased a lot. I became more paranoid when I was walking around . . . startling really easily.”

However, the participants shared that they learned from these experiences and came to recognize what coping strategies did or did not support their well-being and relationships. Several participants described both the learning and the struggle that they experienced throughout their post-assault life in developing new coping tools. Rupi said, “Everything that happens to you is just kind of a learning experience and if you accept it, you’ll be able to move on a lot better.” Several participants described building a greater tolerance and increased flexibility as they increasingly learned how to cope. A few participants related this process to increased capacity building, as if they were filling up a gas tank from which they could draw fuel during their post-assault life. Emi reflected on noticing these changes, “The recovery period feels shorter . . . I’m maybe in that mode for an hour, but I am able to work that out . . . being more aware of it”. Violet shared how she used to, “Try and brush it aside as much as I can and keep going. And it obviously really impacted me. I think that was helpful and feeling like it wasn’t something that I had to ignore.” In turn, this increased capacity translated into a build-up of greater resilience. Participants described how they came to rely on moments from their past where they were resilient or even more recent moments post-assault. Hannah said, “I feel like resilience is using your past experiences and finding new ways to cope with them." These coping moments became examples of resilience from which they could rely on and build confidence in themselves. Hannah also gave the following example,

> I remember the first day that I got out and went to all of my classes. I don't know if I recognized it at the time, but I did have this feeling of like, wow I just did that . . . it definitely made me see some of the improvement or the changes that I've made that I didn't necessarily realize.

Sarah reflected,

> If you're able to adapt and change then I think you're capable of healing and getting through whatever it is. And I think it also promotes a lot of growth. To me, those things kind of go hand in hand. The process of being resilient means almost learning and adapting.

Participants described how learning to cope evolved over time, but, nonetheless, these moments of learning to cope influenced how they experienced resilience. Participants also varied in naming multiple different positive coping practices that ranged from music to poetry to exercise to dance to cooking.

Yet, again, participants were wary of painting post-assault life as anything perceived as grandiose or perfect in relation to experiences of resilience. Violet compared resilience to plants and said, "I feel, you know, like palm trees, during hurricanes, they'll bend over and shake and stuff will break off of them, but they're still there." Consequently, for many, it appeared important to make sure that I heard that the goal was never perfection or that resilience meant that they did not still experience stress, challenges, or hurt. Hannah said, "I really believe that with resilience, there's no one right way to be resilient. It's about what's finding what works for you and what's going to help you." Rather, over time, participants continued to learn and reflect more about coping, themselves, and, in turn, built a greater sense of resilience of how to be okay. Emi shared, "The more that I was able to feel okay and do things and get out, it was kind of like, I can do this. I am capable of this. And so using those positive experiences to build more positive experiences." Dana said,

> In terms of resilience, fostering my ability to cope, I think it helps me find new ways of coping. So I think it also, when I didn't have a lot of ways to cope even if it doesn't seem resilient and the things I used to go for that were self-destructive, it was still self-protective in ways. Just making those things less problematic.

Violet said, "I think coping is also a really big part of resilience. How you deal with those things in order to grow or not necessarily get past but acknowledge and learn."

Adapting to the Campus Environment

Integral to the context of coping for participants was the process of learning how to adapt, adjust, and problem-solve within their campus environment and culture. This process of adapting to the campus environment incorporated coping strategies that pertained to safety and moving on and around campus as well as adjusting to the impact of CSA on their grades, daily routines, and academic life. This process of learning to adapt and cope became further moments for participants to point to when they described how they navigated life post-assault on campus and experienced resilience. Dana said,

> I would avoid events on campus. I would also avoid meeting people on campus. In terms of walking, I don't like to go on campus for fun. So, I would find the

> shortest route from A to B and then try to lump all my classes together on the same day so I wouldn't have to be on campus more than X, Y times a week.

Hannah also reflected on the safety components and said, "I felt a lot more vulnerable in a lot of ways than I did before. Obviously, I knew that it [CSA] was something that could happen, but I don't think it's something that you really ever think is going to happen."

Some students shared how they adjusted their work or other daily outings, as Dana later said, "I worked overnights because I wouldn't have to interact with people. And I didn't go places or do anything. I went to work, went to class, went home, walked my dog, but not far because I didn't want to go." Each participant reflected on the negative impact of the CSA on their academic life, including frustration with the lack of support from professors or decrease in class attendance or grades. Emi specifically had to extend their graduation date due to class attendance and grades. Rupi reflected, "You have to feel a little bit comfortable and safe in order to learn properly." Rupi also discussed the challenges of explaining the drop in her GPA,

> It's impacted obviously my performance at school. So that came up during a few job interviews and that's something that's difficult just because you are overcoming this huge thing, but you cannot really, it's not addressed at all. And it takes so much work to overcome and it takes a lot out of your day to day life that sometimes your GPA might not be as high. And when you have to sit there and explain why, it's not okay, that was not okay for me to have that experience and I hope that doesn't happen to other people, but I know that that's a huge thing that does happen to a lot of people like your GPA.

In relation to coping within a campus environment, participants also shared about barriers they felt that hindered their resilience on campus. For instance, several participants shared and reflected about toxic areas of being a college student that included the culture of busyness, high expectations, partying and drinking, stress, dorm life, competition, or maintaining a job while being a full-time student, all of which they felt were amplified in navigating post-assault life. Emi reflected on the negative impact of partying and the drinking culture on campuses,

> What happened to me wasn't related to alcohol, but there have been a couple of pretty highly publicized sexual assault cases here that all involved drinking. That I think is a big factor on college campuses is that there's a lot of alcohol use and then it's really easy for things to get really muddled.

Dana gave the example of dorm life,

> Dorm environments can be pretty toxic. Because my whole experience was in a dorm environment and there's so many people that no one really keeps in mind who's who and what's going on. And they kind of just ignore you. Especially leaving in or coming in, they don't pay attention or they don't care.

Sarah discussed the impact of high expectations within academic life,

> At big institutions with high expectations, you feel, at least I felt that I was letting so many people down if I didn't succeed or if I came forward. I felt like it was a personal failure for a while. And so I would say that that's a major barrier. I cannot be the only person that feels this way. I looked at that and well this happened to you but you let your grades slip. You know, this happened to you, but you stopped going to class, that's on you.

Many participants felt that the impact of their CSA tended to make some of these challenges even harder to confront given their increased campus awareness and additional layers of stress. Participants emphasized that they were not "just" learning to cope with the CSA but still experiencing all the additional layers of being a college student that remain stressful and difficult. As participants learned how to increase or adjust their coping strategies, they applied these same strategies to other challenging areas that impacted their campus life. Participants' coping strategies reflected the uniqueness of navigating post-assault life within the college environment, systems, and culture that surround student life. Hannah summarized,

> Another thing about college campuses is that it's not just where you go to school, it's where you live in a lot of respects. It is kind of your world for four years and having that [CSA] happen can really change your experience of campus. I mean for me for a long time, it just made it feel like campus was no longer a safe place for me. And that's really hard because it's not for a lot of people. It's not like your job where you can go home. It's also where you, for a lot of people, where they live and where their whole social life is and everything.

Violet similarly added the reflection of naming the impact of the young adult age that students also navigate, "We are becoming an adult and you're learning to be independent. And I think in a lot of ways that can impact your experience of resilience. I think it could potentially both help or hinder it."

However, as participants shared their ability to apply these developing coping strategies to other stressful facets of being a college student, participants also shared the tendency to have a sense of resistance to their school. Dana said, "I've actually really hated being on campus. I don’t want to be on campus.” Many participants expressed their frustration with certain campus entities and systems, even after having become experts at navigating the “system” post-assault. Some participants described still feeling confused about the lack of clarity around the various CSA student supports in how they may relate, connect, and differ in purposes and goals. Hannah commented, “I found there were a lot of resources out there. There were a lot of people that were willing to help but putting them all together and coordinating things was a really difficult process.”

Campus entities that were named or used as a support included the AC, the EOAA, residential life, the DRC, campus health officials, among others (see Appendix L). The entity mentioned the most was the AC, with which the majority of students tended to have a positive experience. Most students also were either currently or recently in the past connected with a therapist, either on or off campus, and had found this process to be helpful throughout their post-assault life. Still, participants often shared a loss of affinity for their school, even as they tried to re-engage with their social life, friends, and campus organizations. Emi said, “I definitely lost a lot of school pride after that. I’m not necessarily proud to attend the University because I know that they didn’t support me when I needed it.” Violet further commented, “I feel like the administration, well, any big entity is not going to really give a shit about little people like me, you know?” As participants described their experiences of resilience, they identified the multiple layers of being a college student on this campus that they had had to learn how to cope with in order to be okay.

Post-Reflexions

Researchers have continued to demonstrate the impact of experiencing CSA on the well-being of student victim-survivors, including a decrease in GPA and grades (Jordan et al., 2014), increased substance use (Combs-Lane & Smith, 2002), as well as increased anxiety, depression, and fear (Eisenberg et al., 2016), among others. Because the impact of CSA is felt at multiple levels, some scholars have called for using socio-ecological perspectives to consider how different micro, mezzo, and macro systems affect individuals' post-assault lives (Campbell et al., 2009) as they navigate coping and help-seeking behavior. Consistent with what the participants in this study shared, few students report or seek official campus help following their CSA (Sabina & Ho, 2014) and, instead, use a variety of alternative coping strategies (Holland & Cortina, 2017).

Participants in this study shared how they had to consider the unique and multifaceted components of campus life as they navigated their post-assault life. The impact of their CSA was evident as participants shared their struggles with grades, professors, living and housing situations, mental health, transportation, safety, and other factors of campus culture and social life. In order to fully understand the phenomenon of CSA and student experiences of resilience following CSA, these different levels must be considered from a socio-ecological approach. Moylan and Javorka (2020) highlighted that in using such an approach, scholars may then be able to analyze campus-level variation, risk factors, and the broader impact of policies. Within a socio-ecological approach, campus-level variation would include looking at alcohol, athletics, Greek life, experiential learning, student demographics, policies, and other campus variables (Moylan & Javorka, 2020). As participants shared, they experienced an increase in self-awareness as they recognized what coping strategies did or did not support their resilience. In turn, this increased self-awareness created space for them to critically reflect on campus factors that supported or created barriers to experiencing resilience.

The coping strategies that the participants in this study described that they used immediately following the CSA, particularly around showering, sleep, and isolation, also have been supported by previous studies (Germain, 2016). In her study, Germain (2016) reported that participants described cleansing their bodies as both an immediate and long-term coping ritual. However, as Germain (2016) wrote, these immediate strategies, including showering and sleeping, are in direct conflict with institutional policies and protocols aimed to support victim-survivors, such as seeking medical treatment where it is strongly advised not to shower or change clothes following an assault. Germain (2016) wrote, “While these actions may seem like ‘natural responses’ to sexual assault, they are exercises of agency because they are actions motivated by physical and emotional needs and mediated by the culture of the campus that tells students *not* to do them” (p. 31). In other words, participants’ description of coping, following their CSA, directly connects to the first tentative manifestation of agency within the context of resilience.

The participants’ responses to coping within the context of experiencing resilience also reflected the previously mentioned conflicts with Bonanno’s (2012) definition of resilience, which included that individuals learned how to cope but that there were minimum negative symptoms with little to no impact on daily routines. The participants explicitly contradicted Bonanno’s (2012) definition as they described their journeys of learning and adapting their coping strategies and that this process was in response to their daily lives and routines on campus being significantly impacted by their CSA.

Participants also shared within the context of coping that although coping bolstered their sense of resilience, it did not take away or negate their ongoing challenges of how to navigate post-assault life. Participants shared that the goal of coping was learning how to be good enough, “okay”, and grow, instead of what Bonanno (2012) described as a return to previous normal functioning. Similarly, throughout the interviews, participants continued to highlight that there is no one way to cope, make these decisions, or experience resilience post-assault.

Instead, participants’ description of resilience, so far within the context of agency and coping, reflects aspects of Ungar (2004, 2007, 2012), Masten (2014), and Brown (2006, 2010). For instance, Ungar (2012) called for an “ecological expression of resilience” (p. 19), as well as the capacity of both the individual and their environment to find resources and cope (Ungar, 2007). Ungar (2004) described this as a negotiation between the environment and the individual. Masten (2014) also referenced an individual’s use of resources within their daily routines and environment in supporting and experiencing resilience. Finally, in her description of SRT, Brown (2006) identified the role of critical awareness for individuals as they build resilience. Similarly, among the five commonly found attributes of resilient individuals, Brown (2010) included that these individuals are resourceful and problem-solve, are able to learn how to cope, and practice critical awareness, all of which the participants shared and described within the context of coping and how it related to their experiences of resilience.

Tentative Manifestation: Resilience as Connection

Resilience as connection appeared in the data as participants described the importance of relationships in their life and the value of being seen and heard through positive and supportive relationships. Participants frequently discussed the role of friends and leaning on this support. Participants also discussed the challenges that arose post-assault in navigating relationships with family members, especially parents, and other shifts in boundaries or physical touch with romantic partners. However, participants shared about connection in the context of positive relationships, where they felt seen and heard through sharing their stories of CSA, naming what had happened, and receiving positive validation and acknowledgement. This process of sharing their stories and receiving positive responses tended to decrease their sense of shame as they engaged vulnerably with others.

Relationships

When I asked participants to describe and share examples of what supported, and continues to support, their resilience post-assault, all of the participants described the positive role of relationships in their lives, particularly with friends. They described the importance of building up and relying on the support of their community and network, which sometimes shifted and changed following the assault. Emi shared, “At the time I was like, I just can’t do this anymore. But I was lucky to have people around me that supported me.” Likewise, Hannah said, “My roommates . . . have been a huge source of support for me, not just with this, but in general. And I feel like if I needed to talk to them about this or anything else, I could.” Several of the other participants similarly commented on receiving positive support from their roommates throughout their years on campus. The uniqueness of college campuses can be seen throughout this tentative manifestation of connection, given the role of multiple varying relationships and roles students take on with friends, organizations, work, classrooms, faculty, etc. These varying relationships and the respective roles students take on in them, whether as member, peer, friend, roommate, etc., are all impacted by the CSA.

However, as shown in the theme of coping, participants did not initially rely on their friends as strongly as they appeared to at the time of the interview. Participants described the desire to be alone and isolate themselves initially from social events. Over time though, participants came to re-engage and lean on these close friends. For example, Sarah said, “I stopped going to friend get-togethers. We had weekly movie nights and I stopped going to those. This semester, I’ve said you need to have those interactions. And so I budgeted my work schedule, every Friday night I’d have off.” Hannah also reflected that she initially relied on only a few, close friends for support,

> It impacted my social life in a lot of ways. I just would want to stay home or in my room or be with a couple friends . . . and I started to go out again and stuff and having some of those [social] experiences was really helpful to feel normal again.

Participants also faced challenges within their social support network as they came to realize who was really there for them or not, whether friends, family, school, or work, and making choices to shift boundaries within these relationships as it felt appropriate. Dana said, “I found a new job and then met different people and realized that my friends were shitty and I’m not going to give them the time. It was a slow process but it kind of happened organically too.” At times, this process reflected an increased self-awareness of recognizing who was supportive or not in their post-assault journey. Violet said, “I definitely put more stock in trying to find people who I can call my friends as in like they care about me and I care about them. I put a lot more value on relationships now. Good relationships.” As seen with the other tentative manifestations, participants describe how multiple domains of their post-assault campus life were affected by the CSA.

Participants also described their hesitation, fear, or anxiety of being touched or re-engaging romantically again, along with the struggle of wanting a relationship at times but also not knowing if they were ready. Many participants created boundaries with physical touch and intimacy immediately following the CSA. Sarah said, "I stopped the whole like seeing anybody process and I most recently just have now entered a relationship...like for a while I didn't like it when people crowded me or touched me." However, overtime, some participants shared how they re-engaged romantically with new partners. Rupi shared about the positive impact of her current romantic relationship, "He asked me for consent and that was the first time that had ever happened to me and made sure that I was alright at all times and gives me a voice and, yeah, it makes me feel empowered." Hannah also shared. "I didn't date or do anything for a really long time after that happened . . . and then the second time [second date] I was able to kiss him and go and be alone with him and for me that was huge." Participants reflected positively on their on-going journey to adapt and navigate their connections post-assault and how they advocated for their needs and desires.

Finally, another component of relationships that appeared common for participants was the struggle and challenges of navigating relationships with family members, particularly parents, post-assault. Some participants already struggled in their relationships with parents but their post-assault experiences brought new challenges to navigate within these relationships. The tension that appeared in these relationships sometimes came across as a push and pull of both wanting support from parents but knowing that this does not exist or recalling moments when they did not receive the support they had hoped for. Hannah stated,

> I'm just not super close with my parents . . . I don't talk to them about this kind of stuff because they're not super receptive to it. Which has been a struggle in and of itself, but it's one that I've come to terms with I guess. I just know that they're not somewhere that I rely on for support.

Some participants expressed feeling rejected and not supported by their parents. Within these conversations of discussing the challenges of relationships with parents, participants reflected more broadly on the stigma within society of talking about sexuality, relationships, or consent. Emi said, "I didn't tell my parents, we weren't close. I didn't feel supported . . . they have really negative attitudes towards sex and me having it." Rupi also shared, "I still don't have support from my mother who blames me for that [CSA] happening. I wasn't able to go home over the summer . . . she was just like, 'I can't believe you would put us through so much stress. Why would you ever do that?'" Consequently, participants reflected on how broader societal messages related to rape myths, sexuality, or romantic relationships affected how they sought out or did not receive support from their parents. The participants described how the impact of CSA and what shapes it broadly at the societal level extends to their family relationships and they reflected on how they were raised and taught about these topics growing up.

Being Seen and Heard

Participants described the immense value of being seen and heard within their connections through various relationships, communities, and environments. It was within the context of connection that participants reflected on the process of sharing and disclosing their experience of CSA and, in turn, the positive and negative responses that they received. For some participants, it was through an initial connection with a campus member, such as a CA, who was their first level of support and connection to other campus resources. A few participants even shared that it was through this connection of being seen and heard by a CA that what had happened to them was initially named as a CSA. Emi said, "I was very much like not viewing what happened as an assault until I ended up telling my CA who was like, 'I hate to break it to you but this is assault and I have to report it.'" Hannah also said that immediately following the CSA when she got back to her dorm,

> Another person in my dorm heard me and got a CA to go check on me. And fortunately she was great and I started telling her what happened and she was like it sounds like that was an assault. And I wasn't sure at first that that was what it was. And she was like I think you should go to the hospital even if you're not sure. And so she ended up taking me to the hospital to get an exam done.

Some of the participants came to recognize the importance of feeling seen and heard in their disclosure of the CSA and the power of naming what had happened to them as CSA. Participants discussed reactions they had received that were supportive, where they felt seen and heard, and unsupportive, which gave participants pause to reflect on that particular relationship. Supportive reactions were ones that included responses of acknowledgement and validation that the CSA was not their fault or recognition of the participant's resilience in moving through post-assault life. Emi said, "Resilience is being able to acknowledge it [CSA] but also share it with the people around. But also to be able to say this happened and like describe it as in reality." Hannah also said, "Talking about it with someone [who was supportive] was hugely powerful for me. Because it felt like it wasn't this big secret thing that had happened." This tentative manifestation of connection shows resilience as an experience that can happen in, and be impacted by, relationships.

Reactions that were not supportive included when someone brought the focus to their own processing of the CSA instead of the participant. Participants described individuals who cried, became angry, or did not really respond at all, which felt like a lack of recognition of being vulnerable and sharing a deeply personal experience. Instead, these types of reactions to disclosing the CSA felt like a focus on that individual instead of the participant, who was the one looking for support. Negative reactions initially deterred Dana from naming or talking about the CSA at all, "I just avoided all of that entirely. To be honest, cause I never really talked about it." However, Dana eventually realized that, "I can't keep it [the impact of the CSA] all on my own", and that being able to recognize what had happened as a CSA and share that with her positive connections supported her experience of resilience. Rupi also shared, "People sometimes will compare their struggles with your own, which is awful . . . people sometimes . . . say, 'I don't know how you could have gone through that' . . . or, 'that's so much worse than what happened to me'. That does not help." For both Dana and Rupi, avoiding the term of CSA, not naming what had happened as a CSA, and not sharing their experience with their support systems almost protected them from not having to experience potential negative reactions from others as well as face their own healing journey of how the CSA had impacted their life.

Still, in moments of connection where positive support was received, participants frequently shared the positive feelings that resulted from these experiences, which included feeling a decreased sense of shame, guilt, or blame, and further support to lean on as they navigated their post-assault life. Violet shared, “I’ve been getting a lot more self-confidence from my amazing friends and my support group.” Emi also said,

> Telling my partner and telling my friends, every single one of them was really supportive . . . their responses were really important to me because I think part of me was like I can’t tell them this because they’ll think that I’m broken or they’ll like not want to spend time with me because, who wants to spend time with somebody’s who’s experienced a trauma? And the fact that I didn’t get those responses was really helpful. I think I probably wouldn’t be able to be where I am if I didn’t have that support from my peers.

Sarah also reflected, “It’s just been a release cause before I tried to keep it contained but I have no shame in it anymore. It happened, it sucked. It was not a great experience.” Through connection to friends, family, work, classes, organizations, and the campus environment, participants described multiple moments of experiencing resilience through positive connections as well as ongoing challenges to experiencing resilience that they had to learn to navigate.

Post-Reflexions

Social support and the impact of positive relationships is frequently cited within the resilience scholarship (Brown, 2006; Masten, 2009; Ungar, 2007). In her SRT, Brown (2006) specifically connected the concepts of vulnerability, speaking shame, and social support. Brown (2006) argued that through relationships individuals practice vulnerability in disclosing their stories and seeking support. Throughout her scholarship, Masten (2009) also highlighted the significance of positive relationships within environments as a key factor to supporting resilience. These relationships may be with friends, family, or different community members and coincide with attachment theory that acknowledges the positive impact of, in general, receiving and maintaining supportive relationships across the lifespan and human development. Similarly, Ungar (2007) argued that relationships become critical to understanding how individuals seek out resources and cope within the context of their capacity for resilience. Consequently, I was not surprised to hear from the participants within this study about the significance of social support, relationships, disclosure, and connection.

The role of connection within the contexts of relationships and being seen and heard has also been discussed within the CSA scholarship. Scholars have specifically focused on the impact not only of positive or negative relationships but also the impact of positive or negative reactions to disclosing a CSA (Ahrens et al., 2010; DeCou et al., 2017; Germain, 2016; Relyea & Ullman, 2015). As discussed by the participants in the interviews, some victim-survivors feel a sense of empowerment, relief, and a decrease in shame, secrecy, or silence when sharing their experience of CSA (DeCou et al., 2017; Germain, 2016). Researchers have found that victim-survivors tend to be very specific about whom they initially select to share their story with and what and how they share their story (Germain, 2016). The majority of victim-survivors tend to disclose their assault with a peer instead of a campus authority (Fisher et al., 2003). Researchers also have found a relationship between victim-survivors receiving negative social reactions when disclosing their CSA and experiencing increased feelings of distress, blame, or shame (Campbell et al., 2009; Orchowski & Gidycz, 2015; Orchowski et al., 2013; Ullman & Filipas, 2001; Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2014). However, scholars also have found that when victim-survivors receive positive reactions and support, this also positively influences their ability to cope and engage more with their supportive relationships (Relyea & Ullman, 2015).

Each of the participants in this study at some point discussed the challenges of their relationship, or lack of, with their parents. Participants discussed gender or cultural norms that they felt affected their parents' inability to provide support in the ways that they wanted it to. For instance, Rupi described her father as the "ethnic" father and she was very surprised when her father provided support, while her mother held on to what Rupi described as conservative views around sexuality, gender, and relationships. Emi shared similar views in discussing how she wants more specific types of student support groups on campus, such as support groups specific to Asian American students that acknowledge the context of stigma, silence, and shame around how parents may have reinforced certain gender or cultural norms growing up. These students demonstrate the need for further intersectional feminist perspectives within the CSA literature. As Hirsch and Khan (2020) wrote, CSA must be examined through the lens of how victim-survivors experience their multiple identities in experiencing CSA and navigating post-assault life. These differences across victim-survivor experiences may then inform how to best support students' resilience and incorporate the acknowledgement of multiple, intersecting identities across gender, race, and culture.

As I analyzed the interview transcripts for tentative manifestations of resilience, I started to listen to Brené Brown's (2020) *Unlocking Us* podcast to gain further insight into her work and scholarship. During one of my runs where I usually processed my analysis, I listened to her conversation with Tarana Burke, who founded the Me Too movement in 2006 in order to support and bring awareness specifically to young BIPOC girls who were victim-survivors of sexual assault. Burke and Brown discussed intersectionality within the context of sexual assault and the lack of awareness around the oppressive messages of blame, shame, or guilt that victim-survivors navigate, and even more so when they identified as a BIPOC. Burke discussed that for BIPOC victim-survivors, they do not see themselves in the advocacy messages or feel heard, and how, so often, rape myths are socio-culturally driven and experienced differently depending on these multiple, intersecting identities. Within this context she said, “If you can’t hear me, you can’t see me.” Burke described that, in order to move through healing and move past the culture of silence and shame surrounding sexual violence, society needs to hear and listen to victim-survivor stories, especially BIPOC victim-survivors, in order to fully see and support them. It was in listening to this conversation that I began to listen more intentionally to participants naming this same desire to be seen and heard by friends, family, and society at large. Participants described that in connection with positive relationships, where they could share their story of CSA, they felt seen and heard in ways that supported their resilience.

Tentative Manifestation: Resilience as Hope

Resilience as hope included participants’ belief in both their individual self and belief in change, specifically in terms of both society and college campuses, working towards preventing and responding to CSA. In terms of having a belief in their individual self, participants shared their personal strength, determination, and perseverance in moving through their post-assault life on campus. Participants often tended to use words and phrases that resonated with “moving forward”, “moving through it”, and not giving up. Participants were firm in their belief that there was no turning back to life before the CSA and that the only way to move forward was to make the choice to move through their post-assault life. Participants shared their decisions to remain in school, complete their degree, and believe in their futures. Within this sense of hope, participants identified many ways that they would want their institution, society, friends, or self to change, because of what they had been through, learned, and witnessed. Participants also broadly discussed their belief in change, which included their personal investment or decisions to be involved in activism and social change on campus. Belief in change included their refusal to accept CSA as a normal part of campus culture and, instead, reflected on the ways in which society and campuses can change.

Belief in Self

As participants reflected on resilience, they shared how they continued to cultivate a belief in their individual self that continues to develop as they learn to recognize their capacity, strength, and pride for being where they are now post-assault. Participants reflected on what it means to survive, to be strong, and not give up. For instance, Violet said, “I’m still here. So I guess that means I’m resilient.” Emi also reflected, “I chose to keep going. I think that definitely makes me feel resilient. Like that’s something I can point to is a thing that I did and like lived and worked through.” In discussing this belief in their individual self, participants also described relying more on what they have learned throughout their post-assault journey, to trust themselves, and recognize their resilience in being where they are now and where they may continue to go. In referencing her developing resilience, Sarah reflected on her personal self-talk of, “You’re doing the best that you can and you’re going to do better.” Rupi shared, “Resilience . . . I think in a way it means strength, but it means that when met with something difficult . . . you’re not knocked down by it.”

Participants provided imagery around this connection between belief in self and resilience. These images and metaphors symbolized recognition of individual strength and power. Violet frequently referred to plant imagery, “When I hear of resilience, I think of plants, like perennial plants, they die in the winter or whatever. Then they grow back in the spring.” Or, similarly, she said, “Palm trees, during hurricanes, they’ll bend over and shake and the stuff will break off of them, but they’re still there.” Dana also gave the metaphor of resilience as an armored bear and said, “Strength. Like the ability to continue because bears are like, you could really beat up a bear and it’s like fine.” These pieces of imagery demonstrated how participants began to reflect and be able to notice their resilience over time and how these experiences of resilience have shifted over time since the CSA.

Language around movement and action also frequently came up during these conversations as participants discussed resilience in relation to moving through “it”. “It” encompassed their CSA, their post-assault life, and the challenges they have had to navigate and move through. Rupi said,

> Resilience and sexual assault, I think it just means the ability to like wake-up the next day. I think that every survivor has a bit of resilience because they’re able to just wake up . . . resilience is making it through to the other side basically in any way that you need to.

Violet also said that, “resilience isn’t something that just happens one day. It’s something that you have to go through for a long time in order to grow.”

Within these conversations, participants discussed their rejection of ideas related to recovery, getting over it, or going back. Sarah shared, “I have never used the word recovery because I think what happened changed me.” This rejection relates back to the ongoing theme, as shown in previous tentative manifestations, that resilience is somehow the absence of struggle. Participants continued to share that, even in the midst of believing in their future life and self, challenges will inevitably be part of their post-assault life and experience of resilience. This push and pull, sense of tension, or feeling of resistance could be sensed throughout the other tentative manifestations in relation to resilience, as previously noted. In reflecting on resilience in this way, Hannah said,

> There are still times where I really struggle and I don’t know how I’m going to be able to get through this . . . it’s not like a person is or is not resilient. It’s something that we kind of learn and that we are able to become resilient when we need to.

Participants shared their disagreement in ideas that they could just go back to a time before the assault. Instead, participants tended to discuss that life exists both before and after the CSA, but there is no return. Sarah said, “Well it [CSA] did happen. You can’t go back. It’s not going to fix itself. You have to find a way to work with it, moving forward.” Although their experience of the CSA does not have to define their entire life or future, participants described how their lives will still always be impacted by this experience. Emi shared,

> The word resilience means to me that you can experience trauma and at some point be able to recognize it as trauma and not necessarily move on but move forward knowing that it will be a part of you, but that it doesn't need to define you and it doesn't mean that your life is fundamentally changed for the worse because of it.

Belief in Change

Besides their ability to have hope within the context of their belief of self, participants also demonstrated hope through their belief in change more broadly in relation to CSA. Participants frequently shared their decisions, thoughts, and actions that they engaged in that reflected their refusal to accept CSA as a "norm" on college campuses. Participants provided examples of the decisions they made to support themselves and their future by remaining in school, finishing their degree, and planning for life after school. Hannah shared that after the CSA, "I ended up shifting my major . . . I wanted to do something that was more helping other people . . . and I'm thinking and planning to go to school for my MSW." Dana also said that although she "hates being on campus", she still plans to apply to the University for graduate school and pursue psychology. Rupi also shared that her father reminded her that she did not have to stay at the University post-assault and that he would never think any less of her if she chose that. She reflected,

> I want to stay in school. I want to see this out. I don't want my perpetrator to have affected my life or have affected my path in life in that way . . . if he [my father] believes in me like that . . . there's no way I'm not going to get through this.

Participants reflected a strong sense of maintaining a future-oriented perspective that recognized how life extends beyond their temporary campus experience. During these conversations, participants almost described a strong desire to not let their experience of CSA to prevent them from either doing activities that they had hoped for originally, such as attending graduate school, or refusing to let the CSA have complete control in defining their lives and future. Through engaging in activities related to CSA activism, for instance, students expressed their investment and belief in a future that could be different for other students.

This rejection inspired participants to become more involved in certain campus groups, organizations, and activism, or even switch majors. In relation to belief in change, participants shared how they were making meaning of their experiences and what they were doing with “it”. All of the participants related this idea back to why they were initially interested in being interviewed, with the hope of having their experience be a positive impact for future students. Dana said, “It [participation in the interview] might be able to help other people who are in a similar situation.” Sarah also said, “I read through everything [pertaining to interview participation] and said, ‘You know, why not turn this experience into something positive for somebody else?’” As a dancer, Sarah decided to publish an article and share about her experience in a dance magazine. She commented, “When I wrote the article, I kind of put that behind me, the idea I don’t want anyone knowing about it . . . I’m not ashamed. It happened. And this does happen to a lot of people.” Other participants became more involved with campus activism and student organizations, such as the AC, support groups for LGBTQIA+ students, certain political causes and organizations, local domestic or sexual violence centers, and BIPOC student organizations.

Within this context of belief in change, participants continued to share their reflections of campus culture and society, more broadly, and the changes needed to shift the CSA narrative. Although they were still navigating their own post-assault journey, participants had many recommendations for those in power to make change. These recommendations included calls for college campuses to have more support groups specific for queer students, BIPOC students, or students from immigrant families. There were also recommendations for stronger support and accountability around consent policies, stricter guidelines among Greek life and athletics with respect to hook-up culture, drinking, and partying, and broader education and training for all members of the campus community, including professors, of how to support victim-survivors navigating their campus experience post-assault. In supporting the need to hold campus authority and leadership accountable, Emi said,

> I want them to know that . . . people who have experienced these things are pretty loud and they're not afraid to continue advocating. When they get to the stage of I'm a survivor and I care about this and I don't want this to happen to other people. And the way I can ensure that is by doing this [advocacy] kind of work.

Participants also called for broader societal changes that need to shift the narrative around sexuality, relationships, gender norms, and toxic masculinity stereotypes. Dana expressed a need for change with respect to "some of the cultural beliefs around campus and to educate people around the fact of gender differences in how we're socialized and how that impacts us . . . and put more education to what consent is." These recommendations will be discussed further in Chapter 5, among implications for future policy, practice, and research.

Post-Reflexions

Brown (2010) wrote, “Hope is a combination of setting goals, having the tenacity and perseverance to pursue them, and believing in our own abilities”, and, “Hopeful self-talk sounds more like, *This is tough, but I can do it*” (p. 66). Participants described both hope for their individual self and future as well as hope in the belief of change more broadly in relation to CSA. Participants reflected future-oriented determination, tolerance, and a “movement through” type of language when discussing their resilience. Within these conversations, participants demonstrated a critical awareness of the impact of CSA on their life and future. Participants then applied this critical awareness to thinking about CSA from socio-ecological and intersectional feminist perspectives. Participants named and recognized the multiple policies, cultures, identities, and systems that exist within their lives that became challenges to navigate post-assault.

For some participants, the practice of hope was evident as they shifted their majors, invested in advocacy work, and made plans for future work. Participants shared that they wanted their experience to contribute to something positive, meaningful, or bigger than themselves, such as participation in this study. Participants were incredibly aware of the connection between CSA and the power dynamics across campus that could support or create barriers to their resilience. As has been seen throughout the interviews, participants did not discuss resilience as the absence of challenges. Even with finding hope, participants still recognized and named the challenges, barriers, and stressors that they continued to face. Resilience was demonstrated through hope as participants reclaimed their power and agency both on and off-campus.

Hope and activism within the context of resilience post-assault life has been previously seen by other victim-survivors activists across campuses. Historically, activism has played an integral role in the creation of sexual violence centers on college campuses, the creation of CSA policies, demonstrations including Take Back the Night, and calls for greater accountability from the USDOE towards IHEs (Driessen, 2020a, 2020b). Sexual violence activists, including Tarana Burke who was previously discussed, have continued to shift the broader societal narratives surrounding rape myths and calling for macro change. Other recent examples of student activism have included Chanel Miller's (2019) advocacy through her book, "Know My Name", which detailed her experience as Emily Doe in the much publicized 2015 CSA case at Stanford involving Brock Turner. Emma Sulkowicz (2014), whose 2014 CSA case occurred at Columbia University, where her activism involved carrying around a mattress her senior year to raise a heightened visible awareness of CSA's prevalence and lack of IHEs' responses.

Krause et al. (2017) wrote that students are too often seen as the "object" of CSA scholarship instead of as "students who act as agents of change, mobilizing to alter campus norms around consent, prevention, survivor support, and institutional response" (p. 211). Krause et al. (2017) argued that shifting research to focus on student victim-survivors also connects and supports feminist based principles in research. Although history has demonstrated the impact of student activists on college campuses in addressing CSA, a lack of literature still exists among peer-reviewed journals in studying student victim-survivors activists as participants (Krause et al., 2017; Linder & Meyers, 2018).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the key tentative manifestations of resilience that appeared throughout my interviews with the participants. In applying the PIP methods of analysis and immersing myself in the data for a significant period of time, it became clear that the four major findings of resilience included resilience in the context of agency, coping, connection, and hope. After each of these presentations, I post-reflexed on pieces of literature, research, or other ideas that resonated or connected back to what the participants shared. At times, these post-reflexions included my personal thoughts; and, at other times, I post-reflexed directly on an idea that was presented in the data. In Chapter 5, I will continue to reflect and discuss these findings, specifically in critically thinking about the implications of these resilience manifestations for future research, policy, and practice. I will also further elaborate on the specific recommendations that participants shared about recommendations for IHEs to strengthen their responses, education efforts, prevention, and student support services and policies with respect to CSA.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation study was to conduct an exploratory, qualitative study using PIP methods to address the research question, “How might resilience take shape for undergraduate student victim-survivors of CSA as they navigate their post-assault life on campus?” As presented in Chapters 1 and 2, the CSA literature is limited in its inclusion of in-depth, qualitative studies examining resilience and how students navigate their post-assault life within the context of their college campus. The phenomenon of this study was the resilience that CSA victim-survivors displayed as they navigated their post-assault lives. This research study took place at the UMN-TC, where eligible participants had to be currently enrolled undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24 and who had experienced CSA while being an actively enrolled undergraduate student at the University.

After interviewing six student victim-survivors and analyzing the interview transcripts according to PIP methodology, four key tentative manifestations of resilience were found to include resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope. Within the presentation of findings in Chapter 4, I also included my post-reflexions that occurred throughout the study as I critically thought about resilience in the context of theory and CSA scholarship. Resilience as agency included the participants’ discussion of consent, including broader discussions of the importance of choices and self-identities, including with respect to victim and/or survivor labels. Resilience as coping appeared as participants shared their various coping practices in learning how to be okay and adapting to their campus environment post-assault. Resilience as connection included participants’ descriptions of relationships and connections, including challenges and strengths, and being seen and heard through positive relationships when they disclosed their CSA. Finally, resilience as hope was identified as participants reflected on their belief in their individual self and in change as they moved forward post-assault and thought about broader recommendations for their University and society. In this Chapter, I begin by revisiting the phenomenon, specifically within the context key resilience definitions, theoretical perspectives, and related concepts that were previously discussed in the Chapter 2 literature review. I then discuss the participants' recommendations across practice, policy, and future research. Next, I identify the study's limitations and how to potentially address these limitations in future work. In conclusion, I briefly situate the significance of this study within the social work profession.

Revisiting the Phenomenon

Given the lack of clarity in the conceptualization of resilience as a phenomenon and the lack of research on the lived experiences of CSA, researchers have called for increased qualitative research to meet these gaps (Moylan & Javorka, 2020; Perkins & Warner, 2017; Ungar, 2004; Voth Schrag, 2017). Through my dissertation study, my goal was to expand the CSA literature to include the understanding of the lived experiences of victim-survivors in their post-assault healing process, specifically by exploring the phenomenon of resilience.

Resilience Definitions and Descriptions

After reviewing and analyzing the literature presented in Chapter 2, I identified an initial conceptualization of resilience to be an individual's capacity to move through trauma in their environment in ways that promote healing. I specifically drew upon Ungar (2004), Brown (2010), and Masten (2011) in crafting this initial definition. These scholars also emphasized within their work of resilience the importance of recognizing the different contexts, systems, environments, culture, and identities that impact and are impacted by an individual’s experience of resilience. Consequently, I believed that it was important to explore the phenomenon of resilience within the context of students’ unique campus environment. As demonstrated in the literature review, the conceptualization, application, and definition of resilience remains ambiguous and is interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the scholar, study context, and population. As previously presented in Chapter 4, some key definitions and descriptions of resilience from the participants included the following.

Emi said,

> I think the word resilience means to me that you can experience trauma and at some point be able to recognize it as trauma and not necessarily move on but move forward knowing that it will be a part of you, but that it doesn’t need to define you and it doesn’t mean that your life is fundamentally changed for the worse because of that. Like that acknowledging that that doesn’t need to be your narrative. If it is for a while or however long it needs to be, that’s okay. But recognizing that it doesn’t always have to be that way.

Hannah shared,

> It [resilience] promotes healing, I would say. If you’re able to adapt and change then I think you’re capable of healing and getting through whatever it is. And I think it promotes like a lot of growth. To me, those things kind of go hand in hand. The process of being resilient means almost learning and taking, adapting. So I think it’s almost impossible to do that without growing in some way.

Dana reflected on the image that came to mind when thinking about resilience, "An armored bear . . . the ability to continue because bears are . . . you could really beat up a bear and it's fine." Rupi said, "it [resilience] means that when met with something difficult, you are able to overcome it in a way that you're able to come back to yourself. And you don't, you're not knocked down by it . . . resilience is just making it to the other side basically in any way that you need to." Violet also discussed the imagery of plants and trees that came to mind when describing resilience, "Palm trees, like during hurricanes, they'll bend over and shake and the stuff will break off of them, but they're still here." Sarah described resilience in reflecting,

> We're all kind of forced to cope with some hard, hard things no matter what they are. And we can choose to let those hard things defeat us or we can work towards either accepting those hard things or just saying, 'Hey, you know what, they're there, but this is what we're going to do despite their presence'. I feel like resilience is kind of synonymous with being driven.

Throughout the interviews, it became clear that this ambiguity of resilience appeared for the participants in their personal definitions, understandings, and descriptions of resilience. Sometimes this ambiguity came through participants discussing their resistance to the word and its potential meaning. Nonetheless, participants still identified similarities in how they navigated their post-assault life on campus within the context of describing resilience. After engaging with the data at length and applying PIP methodology, I was able to connect and synthesize what appeared to me to be the four tentative manifestations of resilience across the participants' interviews. Resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope contribute to and speak to components of what has previously been discussed in the scholarship as well as help to address some of the gaps and limitations identified, including the lack of qualitative research on the lived experiences of student victim-survivors within the context of their campus environment.

Resilience and Theoretical Perspectives

In this section, I will briefly revisit the theoretical perspectives that I used to frame and think through my study with in congruence with PIP methodology. As previously noted in Chapter 4, I post-reflexed with these theoretical perspectives to further discuss and analyze my findings of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope. However, I want to further acknowledge the importance of applying socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspectives to this study as I engaged with the phenomenon and for future research.

A Socio-Ecological Theoretical Perspective

As other scholars (Hirsch & Khan, 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Moylan & Javorka, 2020) have increasingly emphasized, the findings of this study demonstrated how critical it is to include a socio-ecological approach when studying or supporting student victim-survivors of CSA. As noted in the literature review (Chapter 2), thinking with a socio-ecological theoretical perspective (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) allowed me to examine the phenomenon within the multiple contexts and systems that it engages with and is impacted by, spanning the micro to macro levels within the campus context. Within the campus environment, this approach situates the phenomenon within student lives, classes, daily routines, work, social engagements, volunteer and advocacy work, transportation routes, as well as the cultures both on campus and off that influence them, such as athletics, rape myths, victim-blaming, hook-up culture, etc. Participants in this study shared numerous examples of how immediately after the CSA they had to adjust and learn how to adapt to the impact of what they had experienced.

For many of the participants, how they simply walked across campus to classes or events was significantly impacted by their CSA experience. Rupi, along with others, also shared the negative impact of having to try and describe on applications or resumes, whether for graduate school or employment, why their GPA might have dropped or their degree was delayed, as a result of what they were going through. As seen in the findings of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope, participants had to make multiple, sometimes very quick, decisions on who to tell, report to, or even change their place of residence in order to better support their well-being.

Based on their experiences participants also critically reflected not only on their individual experiences of resilience but also broader cultural factors present at the University that created barriers. Common factors that participants mentioned included lack of care and accountability from key University officials, Greek life, the drinking and hook-up culture, and mandatory reporting. Participants who also had already felt unsafe or unsupported on campus, particularly students who identified as LGBTQIA+ or as a BIPOC, also described the additional and nuanced layers of feeling even more unsafe or unsupported following the CSA. Participants discussed how being a college student and transitioning to this phase of life is already stressful enough, let alone adding to it the impact of navigating campus life following an experience of CSA.

Hirsch and Khan (2020) wrote that CSA scholars should adapt and incorporate socio-ecological approaches into their work not only to better contextualize student experiences but to increasingly think about and work towards better prevention efforts.

Hirsch and Khan (2020) argued that in order to address CSA scholars must understand and include the factors central to student life. For instance, they argued that scholars should explore not only how diverse social identities and campus life impact student experiences but also how these factors affect students' sexual lives and experiences. They wrote,

> While many insist that rape and sex are fundamentally different things, we maintain that understanding what young people are trying to accomplish with sex, why, and the contexts within which sex happens are all essential for a comprehensive analysis of sexual assault. (Hirsch & Khan, 2020, p. xii)

Across the findings, participants frequently reflected on the social impact of relationships with friends and romantic partners within the context of their assault. Participants shared their desire to initially socially isolate themselves following the CSA and the time it took to re-engage socially. Participants described the shifts and boundaries that occurred in certain friendships following the CSA. Each participant also discussed how they eventually made efforts to re-engage in dating and physical touch. Furthermore, each participant knew their perpetrator to some degree before the CSA. The experiences of CSA and resilience for the participants in this study reflect the need to contextualize and increase our understandings of the diverse campus factors that influence student life, including sexuality. Participants similarly called for changes that reflect acknowledgement of situating CSA within these multiple systems and contexts. In describing their recommendations, whether at the cultural or administrative levels or daily routines on campus, participants demonstrated a strong awareness of the impact of the systems at play on campus life that need to be considered to fully understand and address CSA.

An Intersectional Feminist Theoretical Perspective

Participants consistently shared their struggles of the multiple identities that they were navigating within their post-assault lives and through resilience. They demonstrated the intersectionality that they struggled with not only between being a victim and/or survivor but also being a victim-survivor and a college student, and the multiple identities present within their lives based on race, age, class, culture, gender, or sexuality. Puar (2017) wrote,

> The theory of intersectionality argues that all identities are lived and experienced as intersectional – in such a way that identity categories themselves are cut through and unstable – and that all subjects are intersectional whether or not they recognize themselves as such (p. 596).

Consequently, when describing resilience, participants shared the significance of agency, individual choice, and frequently reiterated that there should be no set time, expectation, or experience of what resilience should look like for students post-assault. This resistance to describing a universal experience of resilience post-assault was embedded throughout the findings of agency, coping, connection to campus and others, and hope in their futures and for society at large. Within these contexts of describing resilience and post-assault life, participants struggled with how to make sense and meaning of their experiences and how to identify and/or label their experiences. An intersectional feminist approach acknowledges the multiple complexities of meanings that can be associated with identities and experiences, specifically in thinking about and applying the roles of power, gender, and oppression (Puar, 2017).

In their discussion of intersectional feminist perspectives, McCann and Kim (2017) wrote,

> There is no singular discourse of gender or sexuality. There are multiple and competing discourses. Thus, identity becomes a site of continual contest among discourse for allegiance of its subjects. What it means to be a specifically gendered person is the site of continual struggle over the meanings of femininity and masculinity. The construction of the meanings of femininity, of subject positions, of womanhood is not just a language game . . . power operates within these discourses to set the limits of what women can be, and the playing field is not level (p. 360).

Participants reflected a strong sense of self-awareness in how they shared and discussed both their personal struggles with how they identified with the CSA and resilience along with how they viewed others, whether friends, family, or society at large, imposing identities onto their experiences. Participants were aware of the power dynamic differences embedded within gender and sexuality and how these affected the experience of CSA itself and after the CSA. Some participants discussed the presence of power dynamics within the context of consent and how their firm declaration of "no" was ignored or not respected. Participants discussed the struggle of knowing that although certain processes or policies were in place on campus to support them, these were not always decisions they wanted to make or entities with which they wanted to engage. As noted in Chapter 4, the conflict between knowing who the "perfect victim" looks like in contrast to their own individual choices became a point of struggle for participants as they described their experience of resilience.

Feminist phenomenologists also have called for intersectional approaches when studying sexual violence and topics that speak to concepts pertaining to gender and power differences (Burke, 2019; Gardiner, 2018; Oksala, 2011). Gardiner (2018) wrote, "feminist phenomenology offers a theoretical approach to help us understand how gender hierarchies and power imbalances operate on micro and macro levels" (p. 12), which, in turn, connects to the importance of also applying socio-ecological theoretical perspectives when examining this study's phenomenon. As participants described the phenomenon of resilience through agency, coping, connection, and hope, they reflected their individual choices to engage with and in response to power differences and action within various power domains across campus life.

Resistance, Power, and Resilience

Harms (2015) wrote,

> Resilience . . . can be seen both in our capacity to exercise our rights and in our active resistance when we encounter the abuse of power from others . . . from an anti-oppressive perspective, therefore, resilience can be seen as the capacity to exercise freedom, equality, and agency in the face of adversity (pp. 146-147).

Prior to beginning this study, I struggled with what and how to name the phenomenon for which I was searching. Resilience is a term frequently associated with a variety of ambiguous meanings not only in the academic scholarship but throughout public discourse. Consequently, I was not surprised when participants also described their struggle and resistance to the word, "resilience", at times, as well as other related words like growth, healing, or recovery. These similar but sometimes different words, frequently appeared in the literature that I reviewed in preparation for, during, and after the study's completion. However, it was not until I revisited the literature following analysis that I began to think of resistance as part of resilience throughout the tentative findings of agency, coping, connection, and hope.

As participants described resilience and identified as being resilient, participants also consistently told me that resilience is an individual experience depending on a variety of factors unique to that victim-survivor. Consequently, participants frequently revisited the themes of agency and individual choice. The freedom to make these individual choices was evident in participants' description of how they learned what coping activities supported their well-being and how the goal of coping was learning how to be okay instead of perfectly healed. Similarly, the experience of CSA led participants to reflect on and adjust their relationships with others and their campus community. Participants felt supported by others when they felt seen and heard in their disclosure of the CSA and unsupported when they received reactions of resistance to what they had shared. Finally, in their expressions of hope for their individual future and change at the macro level, participants became increasingly involved in activism, student organizations, or shifted majors and work. These choices and activism became an act of resistance to the CSA. Harms (2015) wrote, "resistance as resilience is seen as a constructive and creative expression of power" (p. 148).

Several recent studies of CSA also have focused on the topics of agency and power in the post-assault life for student victim-survivors, included a qualitative study (Germain, 2016) and a large, mixed methods study (Hirsch & Khan, 2020). In her qualitative study of undergraduate victim-survivors of CSA, Germain (2016) identified among her findings a sense of empowerment that students experienced as increasingly supported their individual well-being along with supporting other students' healing or raising awareness of CSA. Germain (2016) described this type of agency that she saw as "empowerment and defined as participation in independent or collective actions that demonstrate or amplify social, political, or spiritual power" (p. 89).

This sense of wanting to use what had happened to them to support others or raise awareness was seen for participants in this study through the very act of choosing to be part of this study. Participants frequently discussed how they hoped that others, whether students in similar positions or campus administrators, could learn from their experiences. For instance, Rupi said,

> I feel super empowered to be able to do this [the interview] and I feel super, I feel really privileged to do this as well because I know that I've reached a point where I can look back instead of trying to live through. I can look back and see how far I came. And that's really, that's a big thing for me. I also want and I feel privileged to be heard, to be listened to by you. So thank you so much for this opportunity because I think that something needs to be done and I feel like a lot of, I've put a lot of time on this whole path.

Participation in this study was part of their resilience and resistance to the impact of the CSA on their lives. Participants appeared to look for opportunities where they could reclaim themselves and have active control and power in their decisions and activities. As result of realizing the significance of student power and control in post-assault life, Hirsch and Khan (2020) similarly called for the concept of sexual citizenship to be further explored in research. They argued that students will inevitably pursue relationships and be active sexual beings on campuses. However, they are products of a society that does not necessarily support positive and healthy sexual behavior where consent is upheld, rape myths do exist, and gender hierarchies are embedded in systems of IHEs. Therefore, Hirsch and Khan’s (2020) research questions focused on, “why they [students] pursued sex, what they wanted from it, how it fit into their lives, and what their sexual experiences were actually like” (p. xxviii). They argued that in order to understand, address, prevent, and support victim-survivors and all students, researchers must further explore the power dynamics that create and uphold CSA as well as the power dynamics that victim-survivors engage with and are challenged by post-assault.

Participants in this study recognized where they fit into various power dynamics across society and specifically at the University. Their experiences of resilience across enactments of agency, coping, connection, and hope were affected by the multidimensionality of power. Hirsch and Khan (2020) argued that the multidimensionality of power, particularly with respect to CSA, is gendered and reflects dimensions of social inequality, whether power is seen as a possession, privilege, or practice. Violet commented on her frustration of lack of power when she said, “And I feel like the administration, well, any big like entity, is not going to really give a shit about little people like me, you know?” Yet, as participants shared with me their experiences of resilience, they demonstrated how they engaged with power and resistance to increasingly support their individual journeys on campus post-assault.

Recovery and Growth

Although participants expressed their struggle at times with the word resilience, they preferred resilience over recovery. As Dana said, “recovery would be, I don’t know, I don’t like that term because it’s like saying that you’re going back to normal, which isn’t really true because it’s just like a different way of living.” As Chapter 2 demonstrated in the literature review, recovery was another concept that frequently appeared in the resilience scholarship that also varied in meaning and conceptualization. Along with recovery, other commonly found concepts included meaning-making and growth. Some scholars wrote that following stress or trauma individuals may experience meaning-making as they return back to their baseline functioning (McAdams & Jones, 2017; Park, 2010). Similar to Herman’s (2015) three phases of recovery, scholars posited that following an experience of trauma individuals work to establish safety, process their trauma and build a trauma narrative, and begin to reconnect with others and their environments. Throughout these stages, individuals engage with various coping practices and meaning-making to support their well-being and capacity to move through their trauma (Herman, 2015; McAdams & Jones, 2017; Park, 2010).

Participants were wary not only of the concept of recovery but also of overly emphasizing the role of meaning-making on their experiences. Participants did not want their entire lives to focus or be defined based on their experience of CSA. Participants also did not necessarily see how it was possible to return to a “pre-CSA” life. Consequently, participants tended to use language like, “move forward”, “moving through it”, or “becoming” instead of a going back or return to life as it was before the CSA. These descriptions continue to contradict Bonanno’s (2004) definition of resilience as a return to baseline functioning, a definition which continues to be upheld in the resilience scholarship. Still the concept of meaning-making appeared most prevalent for participants within their reflections of the labels victim and survivor and the meanings that they chose to associate or struggle with them. Therefore, even if participants struggled with the concept of recovery, they still portrayed concepts and themes from the scholarship broadly related to recovery are resilience, including meaning-making.

PTG is another key concept in the resilience scholarship. Tedeschi et al. (2018) defined PTG as, "positive psychological changes experienced as a result of the struggle with traumatic or highly challenging life circumstances" (p. 3). Some of the areas that individuals may experience resulting positive changes may include individual attributes or strengths, relationships with others, new possibilities, appreciation for life, and spiritual or existential change (Tedeschi et al., 2018). Although Tedeschi et al. (2018) viewed resilience similar to Bonanno's (2004) definition of a bounce back to baseline functioning, other PTG scholars differed in their conceptualizations. For example, Lepore and Revenson (2006) defined resilience as, "dynamic processes that lead to adaptive outcomes in the face of adversity" (p. 29), and that PTG is one form of resilience.

Sarah discussed the difference between preferring the concept of growth as opposed to recovery when she said,

> I have never used the word recovery because I think what happened changed me . . . I definitely would use the word growth because I think you can, like, I could have chosen to let it [the CSA] just stunt me and be, you know, sad and angry and just be that person. But instead, I decided, okay, well that was really shitty. Oh,

> well, now what? And so I definitely, I personally will never use the word recovery.

For participants, growth appeared throughout the four manifestations of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope. Participants frequently used words like *learning*, *change*, *movement*, or *becoming* to reflect how they adapted to life post-assault and how all of these changes impacted their lives and experiences of resilience. However, the participants did not necessarily say that all of these changes were positive, as PTG posits. For instance, participants shared their various struggles with learning how to cope and engage in negative coping patterns that were harmful. Likewise, as previously discussed, participants did not want to put a positive meaning onto the assault or impact of it, even though they could recognize and name various changes and areas of growth or resilience that occurred following the CSA. Some participants even expressed their fear of overly using the term of resilience and what this might mean for them in the future or for others who may or may not always feel resilient. Emi shared, "I worry about that sometimes because there are times when I can't do that and I don't want the feeling of pride that I get when I am able to do it [be resilient] to turn into like shame or anger when I can't." Dana also said,

> Sometimes I realize like I'm capable of more than I think I am, but then sometimes I move opposite where I'm like, I thought I was capable of a lot, but I'm actually not capable much because it's so hard to survive, which I think both could be true. It's hard trying to figure out what's an accurate self-perception of how resilient I am . . . my being resilient is what looks like someone's normal.

Limitations

Although various steps were taken to address the study’s trustworthiness and increase its overall rigor, several key limitations exist. First, a limitation exists within the initial screening tool, specifically the measurement of CSA. This limitation reflects the ongoing debate surrounding the validity and methodological concerns pertaining to how to measure sexual assault, including both on college campuses as well as other populations. For instance, although the Sexual Experiences Scale (SES) is frequently used as the quantitative measurement of sexual assault, it does not have the same definitions as other formal surveys, such as the National Crime Survey or National Crime Victimization Survey, which collect official statistics on the prevalence of sexual assault (Davis et al., 2014; Fisher, 2009; Kruttschnitt et al., 2014). Researchers have continued to revise the measurement of sexual assault in order to address these concerns (Fisher, 2009).

Researchers have also questioned whether standardized instruments measuring sexual assault are the best way to measure sexual assault and have expressed concern with how to conduct measurement (Fisher, 2009; Hamby & Koss, 2003; Palmer & Perrotti, 2016). Participants vary in how they identify with and define sexual assault, which has led researchers to develop survey questions based on behavioral wording (Fisher et al., 2003; Hamby & Koss, 2003; Palmer & Perrotti, 2016). Even with sufficiently reliable and valid measurements, there may not yet be a measure that can fully capture how participants define sexual assault. Some qualitative scholars of CSA have also cautioned researchers to be wary of imposing labels onto participants’ experiences and instead to describe the event as an unwanted sexual experience without consent, either attempted or actual (Germain, 2016; Ullman & Peter-Hagene, 2014). Regardless of the approach used, shortcomings inevitably still exist in measuring CSA.

Second, there is a potential limitation similar to the measurement of CSA as there is with the phenomenon of resilience. Although the interview questions were developed from the resilience literature, I noted the various ambiguities and limitations of how scholars have measured and analyzed resilience (see Chapter 2). Initially, I had planned to use the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25; Connor & Davidson, 2003) as a tool to help participants begin to think about individual experiences of resilience as a way to guide the interview, even though the scale does not capture all the nuances and facets of resilience. Although the CD-RISC 25 is a reliable and valid scale, its use is limited among CSA populations. However, as previously noted, it has been used in several studies as a measurement of resilience among women who have experienced IPV (Anderson et al., 2012; Renner et al., 2019; Renner & Hartley, 2018). Still, resilience scholars agree that no one singular measurement of resilience exists (Liu et al., 2017). The ambiguity in definitions and theoretical frameworks reflects the lack of standardized measurements. In the end, given the desire to more explicitly align with qualitative PIP methodology, I did not use the CD-RISC-25 in the context of the interviews or for analysis purposes.

Another limitation related to both the measurements of resilience and CSA includes the element of time. Researchers have debated when to measure various outcomes and behaviors given how potentially recent the trauma may be for participants (Bonanno & Mancini, 2010; Steenkamp et al., 2012). Some scholars (Bonanno, 2004;

Bonanno & Mancini, 2010) have argued that resilience can occur quickly (e.g., in the matter of a few weeks or months), whereas other scholars believe it may be developed over the course of a lifetime (Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2004, 2008). Participants in this study varied in their discussion of when they experienced resilience or experienced changes in their behavior over time post-assault. In future studies, this element of time should be explored within the context of resilience and post-assault life.

Finally, due to the qualitative nature of this study, the results of the study are not generalizable to the broader population. Also, as noted previously, the sample size for this study was less than what I had hoped for. Early on, I collaborated with key University partners, including the sexual violence resource center on campus, along with key student leaders at the University. Prior to beginning this study, I also met with various other campus student leaders, such as the Panhellic sorority President and student government members, and administrative staff, including the Title IX Coordinator, all of whom engage with issues around CSA. These meetings were not only important for relationship building and recruitment efforts but also for increasing my understanding of the University's policies and practices. During each recruitment effort, campus partners remained supportive and shared the study's recruitment flyer with their student listservs and on social media. I also had several meetings with these partners throughout the study's recruitment efforts, in order to check-in, discuss the study, and get feedback for how to best connect with more students. However, several key factors impacted the smaller sample size for this study, including the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in student leadership from the spring 2020 to fall 2021 semester. Although research is still being conducted on the impact of COVID-19 for undergraduate students and IHEs, students and entire campuses experienced significant stress and challenges across their personal, work, and academic lives.

The interviews with participants also were collected at only one site and reflected the experiences of students as they navigated life on their specific campus that has its own cultural norms and context surrounding CSA. Consequently, I am unable to make claims that the findings translate across all college campuses and populations of undergraduate students. However, I still believe the study's findings include insightful information from students and have the potential to create safer and more resilient campus communities.

Participant Recommendations

The following practice, policy, and research recommendations directly appeared throughout the interviews with participants. Participants critically reflected and had a substantive amount of recommendations to share for how to better address, prevent, and respond to CSA, along with how to better support student victim-survivors. These conversations ranged from specific recommendations for their University to consider, including specific campus entities and staff needs or resources, and reflections about how societal narratives shape college campuses and student behaviors that may contribute to CSA. Although there is no one proven solution in ending CSA, these participants nonetheless provided thorough recommendations that practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers should listen and learn from.

Practice

Participants provided numerous practice recommendations for the University to consider in order to better support students and prevent and respond to CSA. First, several participants expressed a desire for the University to diversify their student support groups for victim-survivors of CSA and to be explicitly focused and centered for students who identify as BIPOC or LGBTQIA+. Some participants described that their experience of the CSA and post-assault life were impacted by specific dynamics that related to their intersectional identities of race, gender, sexuality, class, or culture. Although the majority of students were very supportive of the campus sexual violence resource center's efforts to provide student groups for victim-survivors of CSA across some dynamics of race and gender, some participants still wanted these groups to be more diverse.

Related, participants called for other campus support groups and entities, from health and mental health practitioners to faculty and staff, to increasingly recognize and consider the diversity of students and, thus, student experiences of CSA when engaging with students. Although participants tended to speak positively about the resources and student support offered by the campus sexual violence resource center, some remained frustrated with the broader University mental health and health services. Students mentioned how certain therapists on campus appeared to have a reputation for not being fully supportive of victim-survivors. Some participants felt dismissed by the mental health support and expected more of these practitioners not only in their individual sessions but also in navigating other aspects of campus life.

Participants expressed frustration with the lack of connection between the various campus resources that are meant to support them as they navigate post-assault life on campus. Also, participants who did connect initially with a mental health therapist on campus named the challenge of having only a limited number of sessions per semester as a student. A high demand for resources pertaining to supporting life after CSA exists for students, but the campus ecology demonstrates a lack of connection between the various resources. Consequently, some participants connected with mental health therapists off campus to better support their well-being and had greater availability. A couple participants also mentioned negative stereotypes or stories they have heard from other students in relation to the health services on campus. One participant described hearing several stories where a student completed a sexual assault nurse examination (SANE) at a local hospital and was left without transportation support to return to campus. However, this same participant received services from the University health system to treat her STI and described her experience with the staff as very positive and supportive.

In general, participants were perhaps most fervent in their recommendations for increased training and education for all individuals across the University systems. Overall, students expressed a lack of clarity and understanding in how the different campus entities either collaborate or do not connect or work together in supporting students following a CSA. Also, students were not clear as to what extent these entities or faculty and staff initiate a report to the Title IX Office, when the Title IX Office follows through on these reports, and what other processes might begin when a student connects with a certain entity. Even participants who felt like they had a decent understanding of these different services and providers across campus still did not always have clarity on how they were all specifically connected. As Hannah said, “I didn’t feel like I couldn’t reach out. It just felt like I was having all of these things thrown at me and I didn’t know what to go to for what.”

Most participants called for increased training specifically for professors and instructors, the DRC staff, and law enforcement. The majority of the participants felt unsupported by instructors in class. Some of the incidents described were specifically connected to immediately after the CSA had happened or other experiences following the assault when they were struggling in class. Many of the participants expressed that the majority of their instructors did not seem to care or were unsupportive of their mental health when they asked for extensions or attempted to explain what they were navigating following the CSA. Some of these participants struggled with knowing if they should trust their instructors to explain why their class attendance or participation was affected following the CSA. Participants shared that it would be helpful for instructors to be more knowledgeable about CSA policies and support services on campus to connect students to and be more transparent about these in classes.

A couple of participants shared their frustration specifically with the DRC and certain DRC staff as they connected with them and attempted to obtain support. One participant expressed feeling belittled and treated like a “baby”. In addition, these feelings of lack of respect, frustration, or feeling belittled were further increased by already having had their personal agency violated with the CSA. This sense of not feeling heard, seen, or respected was expressed by participants towards other campus staff. For instance, some participants reflected a similar attitude towards campus law enforcement. Although it was not always clear from participants what exactly they would want these entities to do differently, participants shared a general call for more positive, student and victim-survivor centered attitudes and practices that made efforts to decrease the stigma around CSA and rape myths. Participants felt like some campus staff members failed to consider or take into account all the systems, policies, and processes students had to navigate after having their campus life be significantly impacted by a CSA, let alone trying to “just” be a student. Participants felt like campus staff did not understand what it meant to be a University undergraduate student juggling multiple responsibilities with work, internships, organization involvement, friends and family, health, mental health, and being a student trying to attend class, maintain a GPA, and obtain their degree.

It also is important to note the significant role that CAs played for many of the participants. As previously noted, CAs were often the first individual to name what had happened to the participant as a CSA, report it, or assist with initial connection to campus resources for the participant. Even though at the University these CAs were mandatory reporters of CSA, participants who did interact with their CA tended to have positive experiences. Participants shared similar stories of having a CA listen to their story and respond by their belief that the incident appeared to be an assault. Participants then described the CA as informing the participant of their role as a mandatory reporter of CSA, even though the participant may not want to move forward with the report. Although participants tended to reflect on these CA interactions as positive, they still expressed a degree of frustration in not clearly knowing beforehand what the CA’s role was in reporting and connecting the student to campus supports.

Policy

Throughout their interviews, participants shared their recommendations for how campuses should consider responding to CSA and supporting students through a policy lens. Key topics that students discussed included issues around consent, mandatory reporting and reporting processes in general for victim-survivors, increased accountability and responsibility from the University and students committing CSA, and clearer pathways of resources and policies specific to CSA.

In their discussion of policy recommendations, participants spent a significant amount of time reflecting on the topic of consent. Participants discussed their individual experiences of consent specific to the CSA and the broader cultural and societal narratives that impact students' attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs that do not align with the University's affirmative consent policy. Participants noted that they believed most students on campus know that a consent policy exists but that this policy still does not translate into students having a clear idea of what consent is or how it looks in practice. A common theme among the participants was how they described clearly saying no during the CSA and how their no was not listened to. It is important to note the intersection of policies that exist on campus are still shaped by societal narratives around sexual violence that do not reflect clear consent during sexual interactions. Again, participants reflected that although the University has a consent policy, the lack of it being upheld, they believed, reflects broader societal and cultural challenges surrounding clear and positive communication during sexual interactions.

The second policy component that the participants focused on included mandatory reporting and reporting policies that exist for victim-survivors immediately after a CSA occurs. As previously discussed in Chapter 4 with the finding of resilience as agency, a conflict appears between the reporting processes available, a victim-survivor's agency, and the perfect victim narrative. On the one hand, participants shared the positive role of CAs, who are mandatory reporters, in helping them in the immediacy of the CSA, whether in the form of naming what had happened to them as a CSA, sharing resources, or obtaining a SANE medical exam. Yet, the majority of participants felt uncomfortable with the mandatory reporting policy. As students discussed this, they described their sense of fear and hesitancy of not knowing or understanding how mandatory reporting looks in practice and the potential chain of contact that may or may not exist between various entities on campus. It was unclear to participants when a mandatory report would involve the Title IX Office, and some participants, including some who had reported to a CA, could not remember if they had been later contacted by the Title IX Office. Future research should explore student experiences with different mandatory reporting members on campus to determine not only student perspectives of various members' roles in relation to mandatory reporting but also what makes an experience with one campus entity more positive than another.

In regard to the conflict between the perfect victim narrative and reporting processes and policies on campuses, researchers have identified that reporting processes do not align with how victim-survivors tend to behave post-assault (Germain, 2016). Instead, reporting processes appear to support the perfect victim narrative that includes victim-survivors who know and could name immediately after what had happened to them as a CSA, find and report to the appropriate entity, complete a SANE medical exam, be interviewed by law enforcement or other campus staff, and then potentially return to their dormitory or place of residency hours later (Germain, 2016). As participants in this study reflected, students struggle to name what had happened to them as a CSA, not because they did not necessarily want to name it as such but because of a genuine lack of knowledge of what *it* was. Participants described being in a daze immediately after the CSA and engaging in behaviors of isolation or showering to wash away what had happened and try to forget. Yet, these common behaviors contradict the immediate recommended medical processes (including the UMN-TC's Victim Rights

Policy), which often include a SANE examine at a local emergency department, that encourage victim-survivors to not immediately shower, change clothes, eat, or use the bathroom following an assault in order for stronger evidence collection (Germain, 2016, University of Minnesota, 2021). Consequently, campus stakeholders should consider how their policies may better align with not only what research has demonstrated to be common victim-survivor behavior post-assault but also policies that support student resilience, particularly resilience as agency.

Overall, participants from this study called for policies that were more victim-survivor centered that increased the accountability and responsibility of both the University and offenders. Participants expressed frustration that the responsibility of the CSA felt unequally placed on the victim-survivor instead of students who committed the assault. The impact of feeling overly burdened in these policies was embedded in participants' descriptions of resilience and navigating campus post-assault. Participants described feeling like they had more to struggle with and navigate than the other student involved in the CSA. Participants wanted policies that recognized what they were navigating post-assault in trying to be a student, maintain work, take care of their health, and make sense of what had happened to them. Given the extent of what victim-survivors navigate as students, IHEs need to be explicitly clear in what their policies related to CSA state, make these policies readily available across campus, and communicate frequently to the entire campus community.

The policy contexts surrounding campuses and their responses to CSA are also ever evolving and in flux, being significantly impacted by cultural norms and campus climate, as well as political factors, as seen in the role the ED has played from the Obama to Trump to Biden Administration leadership. As changes become proposed or threats to strong policies arise, advocates, researchers, practitioners, and students have the opportunity to have their voices heard in ways that may significantly influence responses and efforts to CSA across macro, mezzo, and micro systems. Determining how resilience is produced and provoked among undergraduate students who experience CSA may provide powerful insight for these diverse stakeholders across developing, implementing, and evaluating policies to strengthen their approaches in alleviating CSA and supporting all students.

Research

The findings of this study have the potential to continue to inform several future research recommendations and implications in the areas of CSA and resilience. First, researchers should continue to consider the multiple roles that student victim-survivors take up in their post-assault campus journeys. Participants demonstrated the importance of agency, coping, connection, and hope in the context of resilience in navigating their lives following the CSA. Other researchers have stressed the importance of identifying the ways in which students take up power, agency, and resistance as they navigate campus life (Germain, 2016; Hirsch & Khan, 2020). The findings of this study support this area of research in exploring how students use their individual choices, motivation, and resilience to support their well-being, hold their University accountability and demand more for students, and for stronger and more positive responses to CSA from the entire campus community, particularly as IHEs increasingly use virtual learning spaces. As previously stated, increasingly students have turned to using social media platforms, such as Instagram, in order to voice their concerns, frustrations, activism, and stories of

CSA, and other related, student issues, to their IHE (Alaggia & Wang, 2020; Armstrong & Mahone, 2017; Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017).

Although researching the use of technology platforms for victim-survivors is not new, it remains limited (Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017). Furthermore, as COVID-19 has demonstrated, student life, whether socially or in the form of academics, continues to be translated onto virtual platforms where students interact and learn. Consequently, opportunities for research exist in exploring these online, virtual platforms and how students interact on them. Research will be needed not only on how all students, under the multiple stressors impacted by and resulting from COVID-19, interact, engage, and use these platforms but also, specifically, victim-survivors of CSA. For instance, how have campus supports, policies, and practices translated to being available online for student victim-survivors? Are there unique trends during COVID-19 that are specific to CSA and student experiences of resilience within these virtual spaces? How are students using virtual spaces to support their resilience, and how have these spaces hindered or challenged student experiences of resilience?

Participants also described, in-depth, their experiences of resilience within the context of specific campus supports, roles, and entities. Applying socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspectives to these specific contexts and campus members will also provide a more nuanced and full understanding of student experiences. Participants described the findings of resilience within the classroom, social life, extracurriculars, student government, athletics, Greek life, dormitories, mental health, and physical health, among others. As a methodology, qualitative research can continue to provide the tools to understand the lived experiences of resilience as it relates specifically to victim-survivors as they navigate these different roles, contexts, and settings. PIP, as a specific qualitative methodology, also provides a strong alignment with studying and exploring phenomenon that are ambiguous, ever-changing, and depending on culture, context, and time. Participants in this study frequently emphasized how they juggled multiple responsibilities across their domains as a student. Future qualitative research may focus on one of these contexts, such as dormitory life, and complete a more in-depth analysis about the lives of student victim-survivors and the challenges and strengths within this context to experiences of resilience. Similarly, participants named the positive impact of several campus entities and members, including CAs, who are still limited in the CSA and resilience scholarship. Future research on the role of CAs and how their interactions with students support or hinder experiences of resilience following CSA may be used to then inform other campus members in their roles.

As scholars continue to listen and learn from students about their experiences of what resources supported or hindered their resilience, research may better inform developing and evaluating other interventions to support student well-being. Future research should consider the findings of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope to inform CSA mental health interventions that are specific to the context of the campus environment. In researching and evaluating interventions, scholars should include and address some of the recommendations from this study's participants in wanting more diverse types of student-centered support groups to meet their multiple, intersecting identities that affect their campus experiences of resilience. In doing so, researchers will meet the need of continuing to diversify the inclusion of various student populations across race, gender, sexuality, class, and culture. Although qualitative methodology provides researchers with the tools to understand in-depth the lived experiences of students, other methods, such as mixed methods studies, can also provide rigorous and nuanced understandings of student experiences of certain interventions or student support groups aimed to support resilience. These types of methodologies will be critical to evaluate the impact of interventions for student resilience and well-being.

Overwhelmingly, participants in this study identified the need for the prevention of CSA to begin prior to students coming to campus. Participants reflected on the societal messages related to rape myths, stigmas around CSA, and the negative messages of sexuality that they felt contribute to condoning CSA. In their reflections of resilience, participants described how they were raised and the lack of conversations had within their families, parents, teachers, or peers concerning healthy, positive sexuality and relationships. As Hirsch and Khan (2020) also argued, research on the prevention and response to CSA must begin earlier than when students attend IHEs. Consequently, CSA and resilience scholars should consider conducting research that specifically focuses on societal messages related to the silencing and condoning of CSA along with how children and youth are raised to believe and support these messages that contribute to broader rape culture and myths versus positive sexuality and relationships. As both participants in this study and other scholars have noted, undergraduate students will continue to seek out ways to act on their sexuality, whether in the form of hooking up, exploring individual sexuality, or romantic relationships. Participants reflected on how they actively and explicitly said no but that their no and agency was not respected, heard, or supported. Sarah reflected on how she believed the culture surrounding consent and CSA still carriers a message of how an initial no just means “convince me”. Therefore, future researchers should consider how to conduct studies that rigorously explore these topics with younger populations, potentially including parents, schools, and other stakeholders in developing positive sexual health education.

Finally, scholars studying CSA, or other types of violence or trauma impacting student life, such as suicidality, interpersonal violence, or domestic violence, should also consider how to use their studies and research to inform, educate, and train IRBs at IHEs. For instance, in preparing for this dissertation's IRB approval, I submitted six different submissions of this study's proposal that underwent several committee reviews before the final documents and study were approved. Factors that were the main elements of concern included interviewing and specifically asking students about their CSA experiences and concern that students would not be able to make the voluntary decision to participate in this study for themselves. Yet, the University asks students, almost immediately following the CSA, to make multiple decisions pertaining to reporting, obtaining a SANE exam, etc. The IRB committee also was concerned whether or not it was against the University's policy for researchers who study CSA to be exempt from mandatory reporting of CSA, even though the University's policy stated that researchers were exempt.

With the assistance of my adviser, Dr. Renner, I demonstrated to the IRB committee how researchers have documented that including individuals in studies focused on violence, abuse, and trauma, including sexual assault, violence against women, and suicide, places minimal risk on participants (Legerski & Bunnell, 2010; Newman & Loupek, 2009; Robinson et al., 2011). There is evidence to indicate that being asked about experiences related to trauma and violence does not increase a respondent’s level of distress or retraumatization (Cromer & Newman, 2011; Newman & Kaloupek, 2004). In fact, some participants who share their experiences of sexual violence and trauma, including victim-survivors of sexual assault, within a research context, have reported benefits such as feeling empowered, contributing to their healing experience, and being therapeutic (Campbell et al., 2004; Campbell et al., 2010; Germain, 2016; Griffin et al., 2003; Johnson & Benight, 2003; McClinton et al, 2015; Rosoff, 2018; Shorey et al., 2011).

The authors of a systematic review of victimization studies that examined the risks and benefits for participants who had experienced trauma indicated that the benefits experienced by participants, including reflecting on their experiences contributing to research that may help future response and victim-survivors, were greater than their experiences of distress (Newman & Kaloupek, 2004). In Campbell et al.’s (2010) study, participants, who were victim-survivors of sexual violence, explicitly expressed that the interview process was a positive experience in creating space to process and discuss their experiences. In another study specifically asking victim-survivors of sexual violence to identify why they chose to participate in a community-based research study with face-to-face interviews, participants identified four main reasons, “(a) to help other survivors, (b) to help themselves, (c) to support research on rape/sexual assault, and (d) to receive financial compensation” (Campbell & Adams, 2009, p. 395). Some researchers also have argued that, although intended to protect and safeguard participants, IRB standards may pose challenges to conducting qualitative research on victim-survivors of violence (Clark & Walker, 2011; Olesen, 2011) and that these challenges “reinforce participants’ disempowerment; thus, replicating the very problems these safeguards seek to remedy”

(Burgess-Proctor, 2014, p. 125). Therefore, if researchers have demonstrated the positive impact of interviewing victim-survivors of sexual violence, whom is the IRB trying to “protect”?

Consequently, the last question I asked during each interview was for participants to describe their experience of participating in this study. Each student described the positive impact of participating not only in the specific interview but also feeling hopeful about an opportunity to participate in research that could share their experiences, challenges, and recommendations to address CSA and potentially positively influence other students. Although the IRB concerns are intended to protect potential participants from harm, these concerns unfortunately also contribute to the broader narratives that do not support student agency and their capacity to make decisions that support their best interests and well-being. In fact, these are concerns that participants continuously expressed frustration with and had experienced similar feelings and interactions from multiple campus entities. If IHEs want to continue to make efforts to prevent CSA and support scholarship that examines student well-being, IHEs and IRBs should also recognize the resilience of their students.

Role of Social Workers

Through this dissertation study, I have contributed to the call for increased social work efforts across research, practice, and policy pertaining to the prevention and response to CSA (see McMahon & Schwartz, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2015; Voth Schrag, 2017). Social work values play an integral role when analyzing and contextualizing CSA, particularly through the critical social justice lens that recognizes the dignity and worth of the individual, the importance of human relationships, and the person in their environment (NASW, 2017; Swigonski & Raheim, 2011). In advocating for social justice, social workers also have further called for the application of socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspectives to study issues around sexual violence (Kanenberg, 2013; McMahon & Schwartz, 2011; McPhail, 2003; Swigonski & Raheim, 2011). Swigonski and Raheim (2011) wrote, “Both feminisms and social work are historically constituted and embody both emancipatory purpose and normative content . . . [and] are multifaceted, nuanced, complex, and often contentious” (p. 11).

Given the diversity and breadth of their roles, social workers likely will encounter and engage with victim-survivors of CSA across different micro, mezzo, and macro systems, whether in hospitals, law enforcement, mental health, the classroom, advocacy work, campus administration, or leadership roles. The findings of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope may help to inform how social workers see and support victim-survivors in their post-assault healing. Participants referenced the importance and integration of key social work values as they called for wanting to be treated with dignity and respect in their practice of agency and the importance of relationships in the practice of connection. I also view social work as a profession of hope in its belief of change across the individual and systems-based levels, similar to how participants named the tentative manifestation of hope. Social workers have the ability to apply these values in their work with victim-survivors as they support experiences of resilience and recognize them within their unique campus environment that they have to navigate. Results from my study have the potential to meaningfully contribute to the broad field of social work practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers working to prevent, respond to, and support students and entire campuses healing from sexual assault.

Conclusion

The purpose of this PIP study was to explore the research question, “How might resilience take shape for undergraduate victim-survivors of CSA as they navigate their post-assault life?” PIP methodology provided the analysis tools to pay attention and listen to the six student participants I had the opportunity to speak with, in-depth, about their experiences of CSA and resilience. Analysis of the interviews revealed the four tentative manifestations of resilience as agency, coping, connection, and hope. Participants shared their recommendations for diverse campus stakeholders to strengthen their practices, policies, and research in response to CSA. These implications were discussed in relation to various researchers in the CSA and resilience scholarship. Key limitations were identified, particularly the impact of COVID-19 on sample size and recruitment, along with other measurement considerations. Finally, this study was situated within the social work field. In obtaining a doctoral degree in social work, it was important to me to specifically think about the unique contributions that social workers can play in addressing the phenomenon of this study across their diverse contexts and systems.

I am incredibly grateful to the participants in this study for their rich descriptions, stories, and vulnerability in discussing resilience across the contexts of agency, coping, connection, and hope. I began this study hoping that I would come to a clearer understanding of how to define, describe, and contextualize resilience within the CSA context for student victim-survivors. Although participants provided rich descriptions of their experiences, I still have questions, uncertainty, and, similar to the participants, resistance, at times, to the word. As I move forward in my scholarship, I will develop and conduct research studies that further explore each of these tentative manifestations to inform how to best support student well-being and create more resilient campus communities. As a result of the interviews with students, I also want to focus some critical factors that participants mentioned in relation to resilience, including student resistance, power, and activism. I also want to reflect more deeply on participants' call for having these conversations not only of resilience but also of sexuality, relationships, and agency before students attend college.

As demonstrated throughout the interviews, student experiences of resilience as they navigated post-assault life on campus depended on and were shaped by diverse social and cultural dimensions on and off-campus. These factors of what systems, environments, and contexts students engage with must be considered in future scholarship to more fully understand the opportunities that allow for CSA to occur. Applying socio-ecological and intersectional feminist theoretical perspectives to future studies will hopefully continue to create opportunities to understand and include more multifaceted experiences of both CSA itself and life after CSA. However, as other researchers have argued (Hirsch & Khan, 2020), these perspectives must be applied to the broader societal narratives that shape and impact CSA prior to students attending college. Hirsch and Khan (2020) wrote,

> Our analysis of the social dimensions of campus sexual assault suggests that in addition to focusing on predators, we need also to focus on ourselves. Until we look at how our society raises children, organizes our schools, and structures the transition to adulthood, we're not going to make much headway. But if we are part of the problem, we can also be part of the solution (p. xxvi).

Participants shared similar reflections that align with the above quote from Hirsch and Khan (2020). Participants connected their experiences of CSA and resilience to the broader contexts of how they were raised, socialized, and educated to view their bodies, sexuality, relationships, and college life and culture. In order to prevent and respond to CSA, we need to have critical conversations about our roles as educators, parents, and members of society that shape and engage with these narratives that affect students and IHEs that create and implement policies and practices. When I reflect on the various descriptions, metaphors, and stories that participants shared in relation to resilience, I continue to admire the hope of each participant. Even though participants shared with me perhaps their most challenging experience that they have endured, they were also determined to share and critically reflect on how they survived their CSA and continue to move through their lives post-assault. Participants hoped that their experiences could help inform research and shape practice, policies, and other student experiences of resilience. IHEs, policy makers, practitioners, and researchers need to continue to listen and learn from student victim-survivors in order to shift the CSA narratives. As Emi said,

> I want them [the University] to know that I think that a lot of the times people who have experienced these things are pretty loud and they're not afraid to continue advocating. When they get to the stage of like, 'I'm a survivor and I care about this and I don't want this to happen to other people and the way I can ensure that is by doing this kind of work'.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Letters of Support

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

The Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education
Office for Student Affairs

Appleby Hall, Suite 117
128 Pleasant Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Office: 612.626.2929
24hr Helpline: 612-626-9111
Fax: 612-626-9933
E-mail:aurora@umn.edu
Web: aurora.umn.edu

January 2, 2020

Dear To Whom It May Concern:

I have met in person with Molly Driessen and discussed with her the research she plans for her dissertation, which will explore student experiences of campus sexual assault (CSA) and resilience through a qualitative study. We understand that this research will entail questions about the ways CSA impacts student experiences of resilience and navigating campus life.

We understand the methods by which Ms. Driessen will gather her data, which will include providing recruitment flyers that will include a Qualtrics link to learn more information about the study. Interested participants will complete this link to determine eligibility of experiencing CSA while being an undergraduate student and currently being an enrolled undergraduate student. Eligible participants will be asked if they are willing to participate in an interview to explore their experience of CSA, resilience, and navigating campus life post-assault. We are willing to assist in distributing and posting recruitment flyers to assist with this process.

The focus of Ms. Driessen's research is of immediate relevance to our work through The Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education, where we are deeply engaged in ongoing dialogues and work about CSA, including how to best prevent, respond to, and support students who experience CSA. We also believe in the stories of resilience that these students have to share. Student voices are powerful mechanisms through which to create change across entire campus systems. We expect that her research will shed light on our work, helping to improve our programs and campus response efforts.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have further questions, please contact me at eiche035@umn.edu or 612.626.9977.

Sincerely,

Katie H. Eichele

Katie H. Eichele, M.S.
Director
The Aurora Center
Office for Student Affairs
University of Minnesota-TC

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus ***Minnesota Student Association*** *Suite 202 Coffman Memorial*
Union

300 Washington Avenue S.E
Undergraduate Student Government *Minneapolis, MN 55455*

msa@umn.edu

January 6th, 2020

Dear To Whom It May Concern:

I have met in person with Molly Driessen and discussed with her the research she plans for her dissertation, which will explore student experiences of campus sexual assault (CSA) and resilience through a qualitative study. We understand that this research will entail questions about the ways CSA impacts student experiences of resilience and navigating campus life.

We understand the methods by which Ms. Driessen will gather her data, which will include providing recruitment flyers that will include a Qualtrics link to learn more information about the study. Interested participants will complete this link to determine eligibility of experiencing CSA while being an undergraduate student and currently being an enrolled undergraduate student. Eligible participants will be asked if they are willing to participate in an interview to explore their experience of CSA, resilience, and navigating campus life post-assault. We are willing to assist in distributing and posting recruitment flyers to assist with this process.

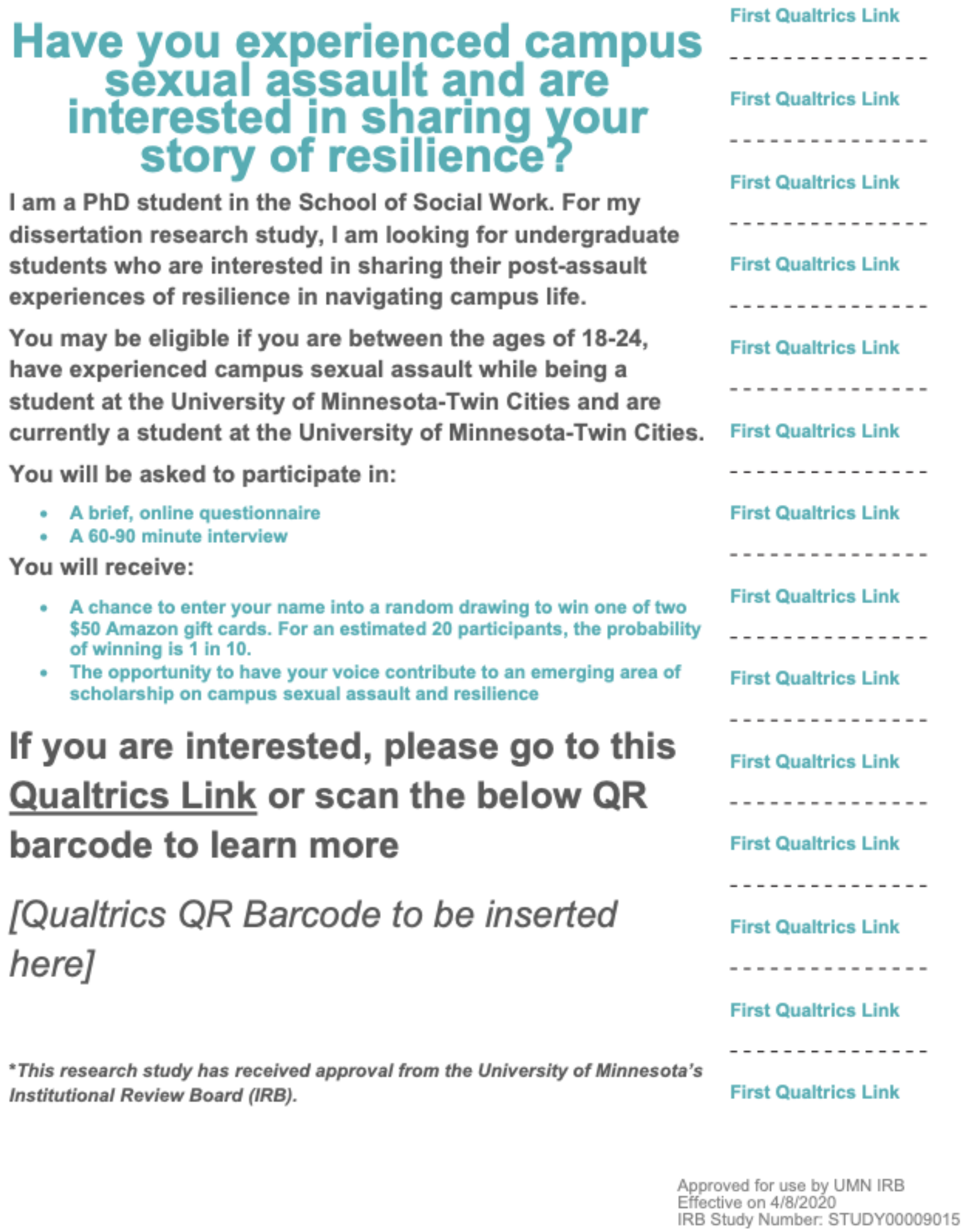
The focus of Ms. Driessen's research is of immediate relevance to our work through the Minnesota Student Association, where we are deeply engaged in ongoing dialogues and work about CSA, including how to best prevent, respond to, and support students who experience CSA. We also believe in the stories of resilience that these students have to share. Student voices are powerful mechanisms through which to create change across entire campus systems. We expect that her research will shed light on our work, helping to improve our programs and campus response efforts.

Sincerely,

Gurtaran Johal, Sexual Assault Task Force Chair, Minnesota Student Association, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Appendix B

Recruitment Flyer



Have you experienced campus sexual assault and are interested in sharing your story of resilience?

I am a PhD student in the School of Social Work. For my dissertation research study, I am looking for undergraduate students who are interested in sharing their post-assault experiences of resilience in navigating campus life.

You may be eligible if you are between the ages of 18-24, have experienced campus sexual assault while being a student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and are currently a student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

You will be asked to participate in:

- **A brief, online questionnaire**
- **A 60-90 minute interview**

You will receive:

- **A chance to enter your name into a random drawing to win one of two $50 Amazon gift cards. For an estimated 20 participants, the probability of winning is 1 in 10.**
- **The opportunity to have your voice contribute to an emerging area of scholarship on campus sexual assault and resilience**

If you are interested, please go to this Qualtrics Link or scan the below QR barcode to learn more

[Qualtrics QR Barcode to be inserted here]

This research study has received approval from the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

First Qualtrics Link

First Qualtrics Link

First Qualtrics Link

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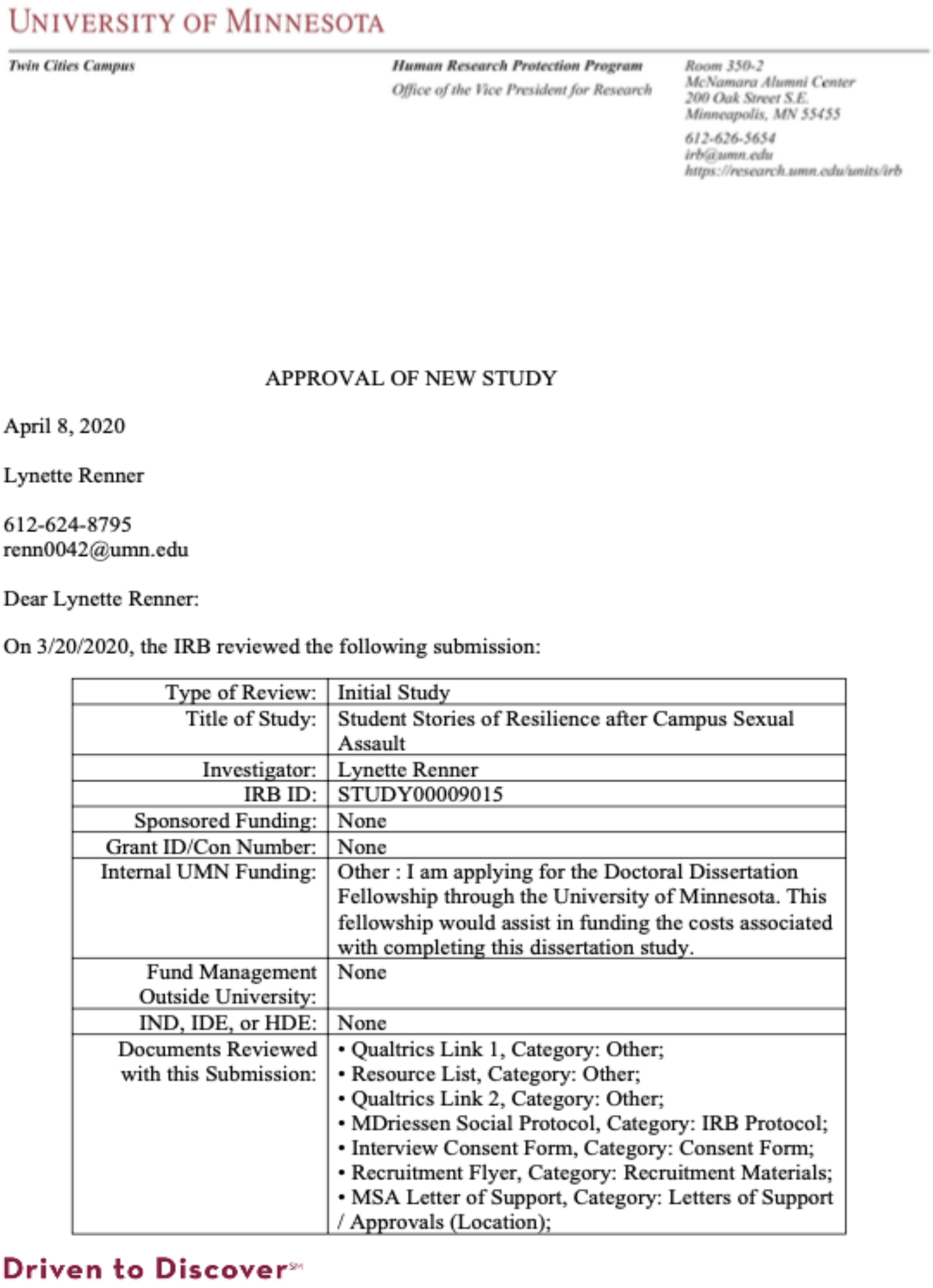
Approved for use by UMN IRB
Effective on 4/8/2020
IRB Study Number: STUDY00009015

Appendix C

IRB Approval



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Human Research Protection Program
Office of the Vice President for Research

Room 350-2
McNamara Alumni Center
200 Oak Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

612-626-5654
irb@umn.edu
https://research.umn.edu/units/irb

APPROVAL OF NEW STUDY

April 8, 2020

Lynette Renner

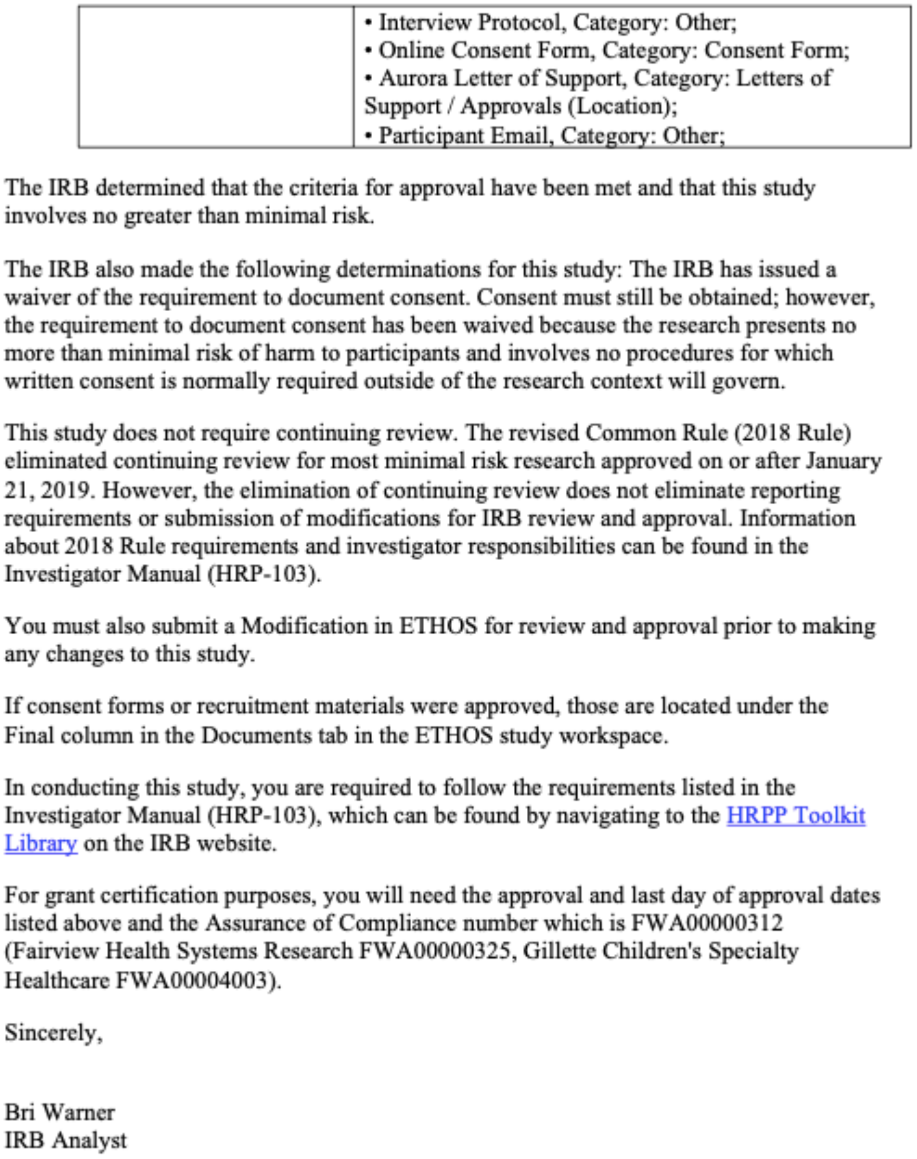
612-624-8795
renn0042@umn.edu

Dear Lynette Renner:

On 3/20/2020, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Student Stories of Resilience after Campus Sexual Assault
Investigator:	Lynette Renner
IRB ID:	STUDY00009015
Sponsored Funding:	None
Grant ID/Con Number:	None
Internal UMN Funding:	Other : I am applying for the Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship through the University of Minnesota. This fellowship would assist in funding the costs associated with completing this dissertation study.
Fund Management Outside University:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed with this Submission:	• Qualtrics Link 1, Category: Other; • Resource List, Category: Other; • Qualtrics Link 2, Category: Other; • MDriessen Social Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Interview Consent Form, Category: Consent Form; • Recruitment Flyer, Category: Recruitment Materials; • MSA Letter of Support, Category: Letters of Support / Approvals (Location);

Driven to Discover℠



	• Interview Protocol, Category: Other; • Online Consent Form, Category: Consent Form; • Aurora Letter of Support, Category: Letters of Support / Approvals (Location); • Participant Email, Category: Other;

The IRB determined that the criteria for approval have been met and that this study involves no greater than minimal risk.

The IRB also made the following determinations for this study: The IRB has issued a waiver of the requirement to document consent. Consent must still be obtained; however, the requirement to document consent has been waived because the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to participants and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context will govern.

This study does not require continuing review. The revised Common Rule (2018 Rule) eliminated continuing review for most minimal risk research approved on or after January 21, 2019. However, the elimination of continuing review does not eliminate reporting requirements or submission of modifications for IRB review and approval. Information about 2018 Rule requirements and investigator responsibilities can be found in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

You must also submit a Modification in ETHOS for review and approval prior to making any changes to this study.

If consent forms or recruitment materials were approved, those are located under the Final column in the Documents tab in the ETHOS study workspace.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the HRPP Toolkit Library on the IRB website.

For grant certification purposes, you will need the approval and last day of approval dates listed above and the Assurance of Compliance number which is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003).

Sincerely,

Bri Warner
IRB Analyst

Appendix D

Initial Screener Tool (to be formatted into the first Qualtrics Link)

Thank you for your interest to participate in this study exploring undergraduate student experiences of campus sexual assault and resilience. The University of Minnesota IRB approved this study (#STUDY00009015). Please take this initial survey, which should take no more than a few minutes, to determine your eligibility to participate. After completing the survey and meeting the eligibility requirements, you will be emailed by the researcher to complete a second, brief survey and to schedule a 60 to 90 minute interview to further explore and learn about your experiences of campus sexual assault and resilience.

Examples of interview questions and prompts include:

- Tell me about your experience(s) of sexual assault that occurred while being a college student.
- How has your life on campus changed or been impacted by this experience?
- What does the word resilience mean to you?
- How would you describe and/or define resilience?

If you consent to take this survey, please indicate below. Doing so will take you to the eligibility survey.

If you do not consent to take this survey, you may either (a) close your browser or (b) indicate that you are not interested below.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below. Clicking on “Agree” button indicates that:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate
- You are 18 years of age or older

[link for “yes, I consent to participate’]
[link for “no, I do not consent to participate”]

Eligibility Survey

Please indicate your response to the question by checking the appropriate box and writing your answer in the blank spaces provided.

1. Do you identify as having experienced any attempted or actual sexual contact, without your consent, while being enrolled as an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Are you currently between the ages of 18 and 24?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Are you willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview, at a time and location convenient to you, to further elaborate on your experiences related to campus sexual assault and resilience?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please provide your first name, best email address to contact you at, and a safe phone number that I may call and leave a voicemail identifying who I am in the case of an emergency or if our online video connection is dropped and/or disconnected. Participants who do not agree to provide a phone number may not continue in this study.

First Name: _____________
Email Address: ____________
Phone Number: _____________

Appendix E

Participant Demographics and Case Details

Total number of undergraduate participants *N*=6

Table D.1 Participants' Academic Year at Time of Interview

Academic Year	***n***
Sophomore	1
Junior	2
Senior	2
Fifth-year Senior	1

Table D.2 Participants' Academic Year at Time of Experience with CSA

Academic Year	***n***
Freshman	3
Sophomore	3

Table D.3 Location of CSA

Location	***n***
On Campus (Dorm)	4
Off Campus (Near-by)	2

Table D.4 Participants' Described Knowledge of Perpetrator

Described Knowledge of Perpetrator	***n***
Friend (student who attended same University)	1
Former Romantic Partner (student who attended same University)	1
Former Romantic Partner (student at different university)	2
Acquaintance (student who attended same University)	1
Acquaintance (other; non-student)	1

Table D.5 Participants' Living Location at Time of Interview

Location	***n***
On Campus (Dorm)	3
Off Campus (Near-by)	3

Table D.6 Participants' Racial Identity

Race	***n***
Asian American	3
White	3

Table D.7 Participants' Gender Identity

Gender	***n***
Nonbinary	1
Female	5

Table D.8 Participants' Sexual Orientation Identity

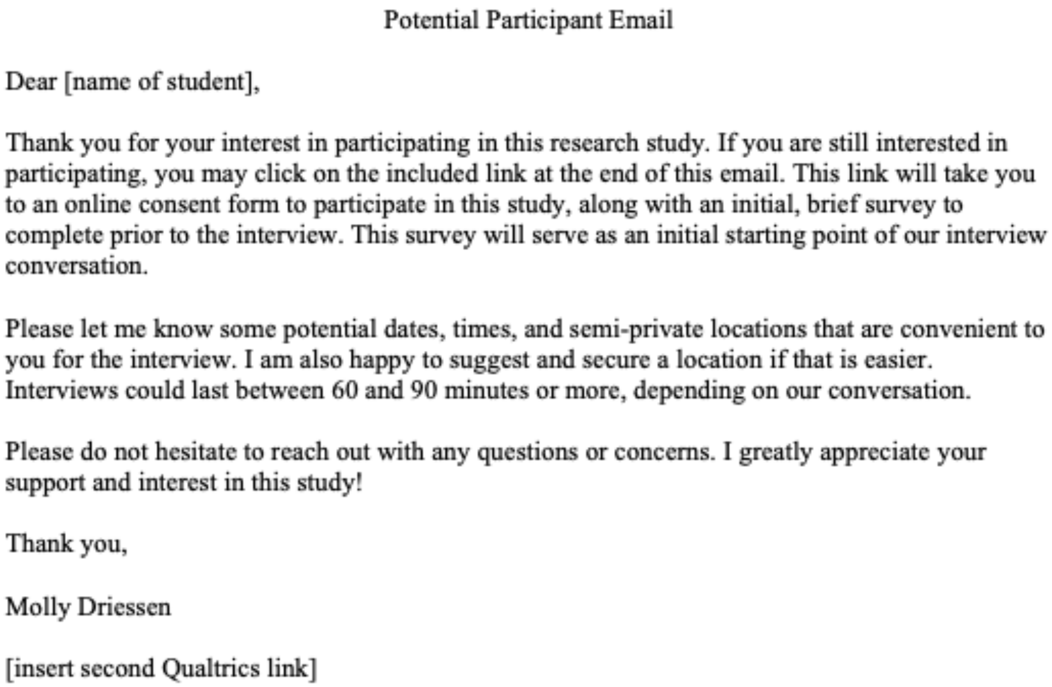
Sexual Orientation	***n***
Queer	1
Bisexual	4
Heterosexual	1

Table D.9 Participants' Age at Time of Interview

Age	***n***
20	3
21	1
22	2

Appendix F

Participant Email



Potential Participant Email

Dear [name of student],

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study. If you are still interested in participating, you may click on the included link at the end of this email. This link will take you to an online consent form to participate in this study, along with an initial, brief survey to complete prior to the interview. This survey will serve as an initial starting point of our interview conversation.

Please let me know some potential dates, times, and semi-private locations that are convenient to you for the interview. I am also happy to suggest and secure a location if that is easier. Interviews could last between 60 and 90 minutes or more, depending on our conversation.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. I greatly appreciate your support and interest in this study!

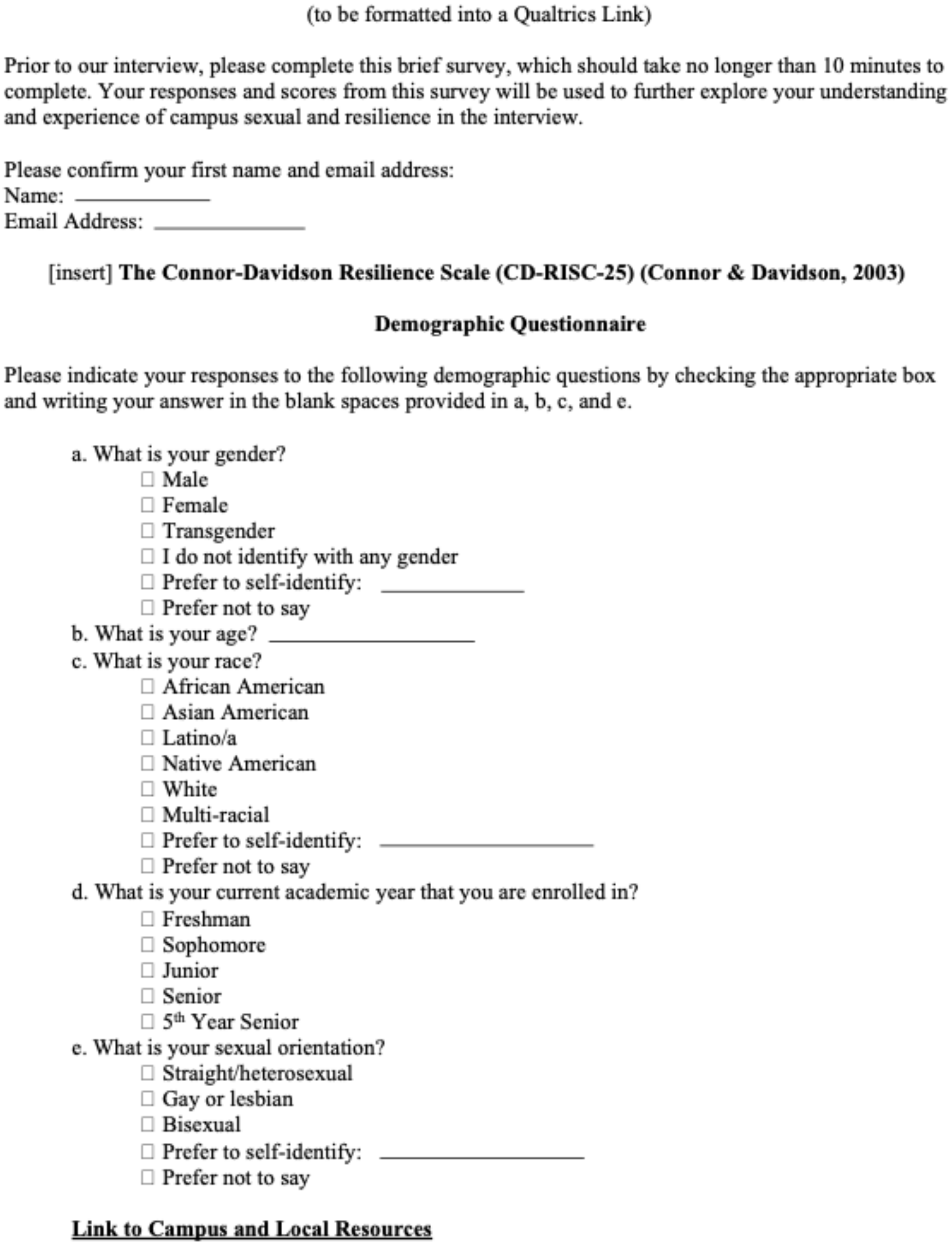
Thank you,

Molly Driessen

[insert second Qualtrics link]

Appendix G

Second Qualtrics Link



(to be formatted into a Qualtrics Link)

Prior to our interview, please complete this brief survey, which should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Your responses and scores from this survey will be used to further explore your understanding and experience of campus sexual and resilience in the interview.

Please confirm your first name and email address:
Name: ____________
Email Address: ______________

[insert] **The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25) (Connor & Davidson, 2003)**

Demographic Questionnaire

Please indicate your responses to the following demographic questions by checking the appropriate box and writing your answer in the blank spaces provided in a, b, c, and e.

a. What is your gender?
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female
   - ☐ Transgender
   - ☐ I do not identify with any gender
   - ☐ Prefer to self-identify: _____________
   - ☐ Prefer not to say

b. What is your age? ___________________

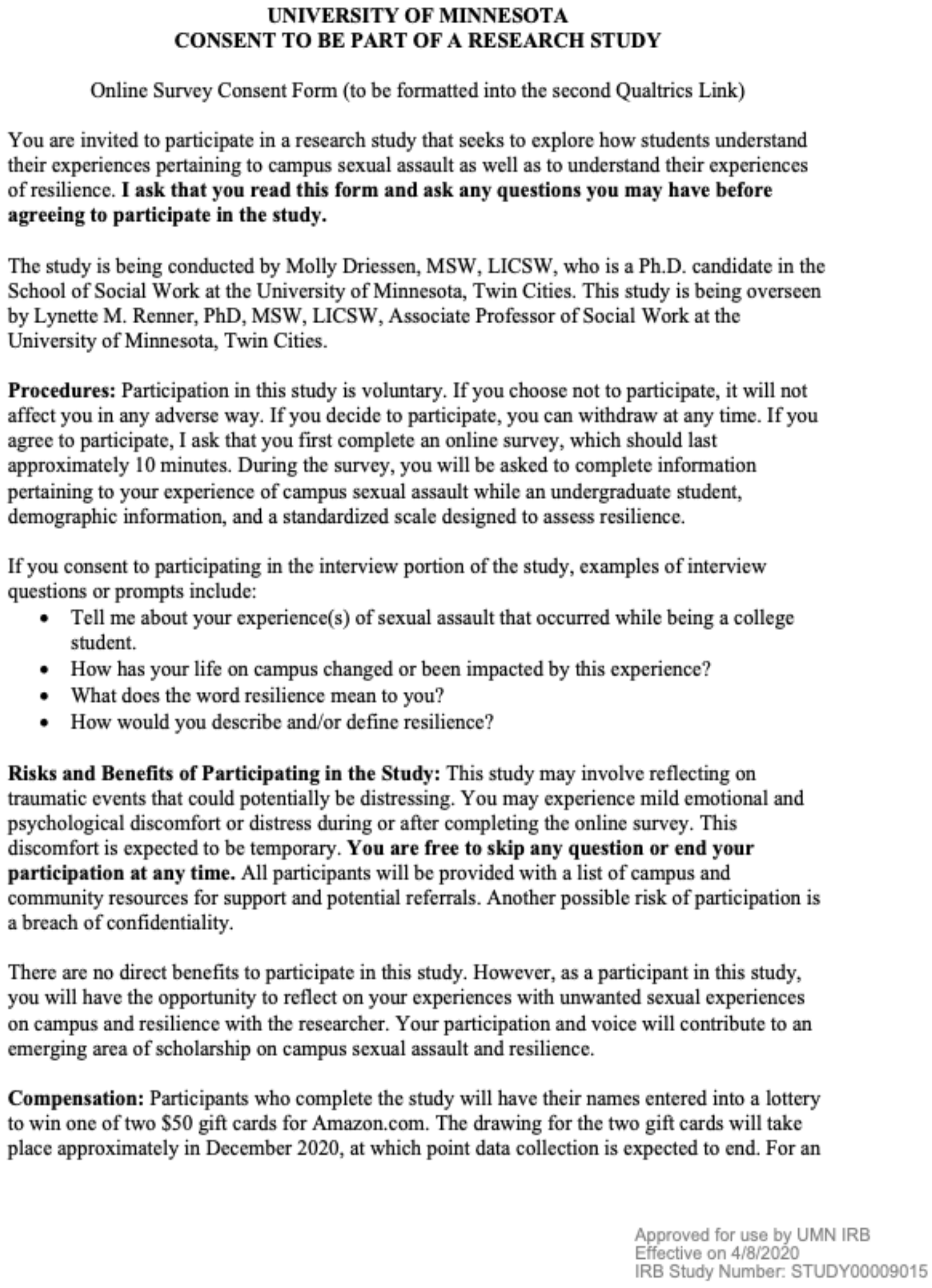
c. What is your race?
   - ☐ African American
   - ☐ Asian American
   - ☐ Latino/a
   - ☐ Native American
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Multi-racial
   - ☐ Prefer to self-identify: ____________________
   - ☐ Prefer not to say

d. What is your current academic year that you are enrolled in?
   - ☐ Freshman
   - ☐ Sophomore
   - ☐ Junior
   - ☐ Senior
   - ☐ 5th Year Senior

e. What is your sexual orientation?
   - ☐ Straight/heterosexual
   - ☐ Gay or lesbian
   - ☐ Bisexual
   - ☐ Prefer to self-identify: ___________________
   - ☐ Prefer not to say

Link to Campus and Local Resources

Appendix H



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
CONSENT TO BE PART OF A RESEARCH STUDY

Online Survey Consent Form (to be formatted into the second Qualtrics Link)

You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to explore how students understand their experiences pertaining to campus sexual assault as well as to understand their experiences of resilience. **I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.**

The study is being conducted by Molly Driessen, MSW, LICSW, who is a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. This study is being overseen by Lynette M. Renner, PhD, MSW, LICSW, Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Procedures: Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect you in any adverse way. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time. If you agree to participate, I ask that you first complete an online survey, which should last approximately 10 minutes. During the survey, you will be asked to complete information pertaining to your experience of campus sexual assault while an undergraduate student, demographic information, and a standardized scale designed to assess resilience.

If you consent to participating in the interview portion of the study, examples of interview questions or prompts include:

- Tell me about your experience(s) of sexual assault that occurred while being a college student.
- How has your life on campus changed or been impacted by this experience?
- What does the word resilience mean to you?
- How would you describe and/or define resilience?

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study: This study may involve reflecting on traumatic events that could potentially be distressing. You may experience mild emotional and psychological discomfort or distress during or after completing the online survey. This discomfort is expected to be temporary. **You are free to skip any question or end your participation at any time.** All participants will be provided with a list of campus and community resources for support and potential referrals. Another possible risk of participation is a breach of confidentiality.

There are no direct benefits to participate in this study. However, as a participant in this study, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your experiences with unwanted sexual experiences on campus and resilience with the researcher. Your participation and voice will contribute to an emerging area of scholarship on campus sexual assault and resilience.

Compensation: Participants who complete the study will have their names entered into a lottery to win one of two $50 gift cards for Amazon.com. The drawing for the two gift cards will take place approximately in December 2020, at which point data collection is expected to end. For an estimated total of 20 participants, the probability of winning is approximately 1 in 10. I will notify the winners by email.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. In my role as a researcher, I am not a mandated reporter of campus sexual assault. Research records and data will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. Voice recordings from the interviews will be destroyed within 3 months of the completion of the study.

By law, privilege of confidentiality does not extend to all data collected. The following information is not limited by confidentiality and may be released as governed by law: 1) information about a child being maltreated or neglected, 2) information about an individual's plan to seriously harm him/herself, 3) information about an individual's plan to seriously harm another person. If members of the research staff have or are given such information, they are required to report it to the authorities.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: This study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect you in any adverse way. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time. You can withdraw by contacting Molly Driessen or Lynette Renner, PhD, at (renn0042@umn.edu or 612-624-8795).

Contacts and Questions: If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please ask me at any time. I may be reached at dries032@umn.edu or 952-297-7346. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the University of Minnesota's Human Research Protection Program via the Research Participants' Advocate Line (612-625-1650; toll free: 1-888-224-8636) or mail (HRPP, 250-2 McNamara, 200 Oak St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414).

Electronic Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and I wish to participate in this study.

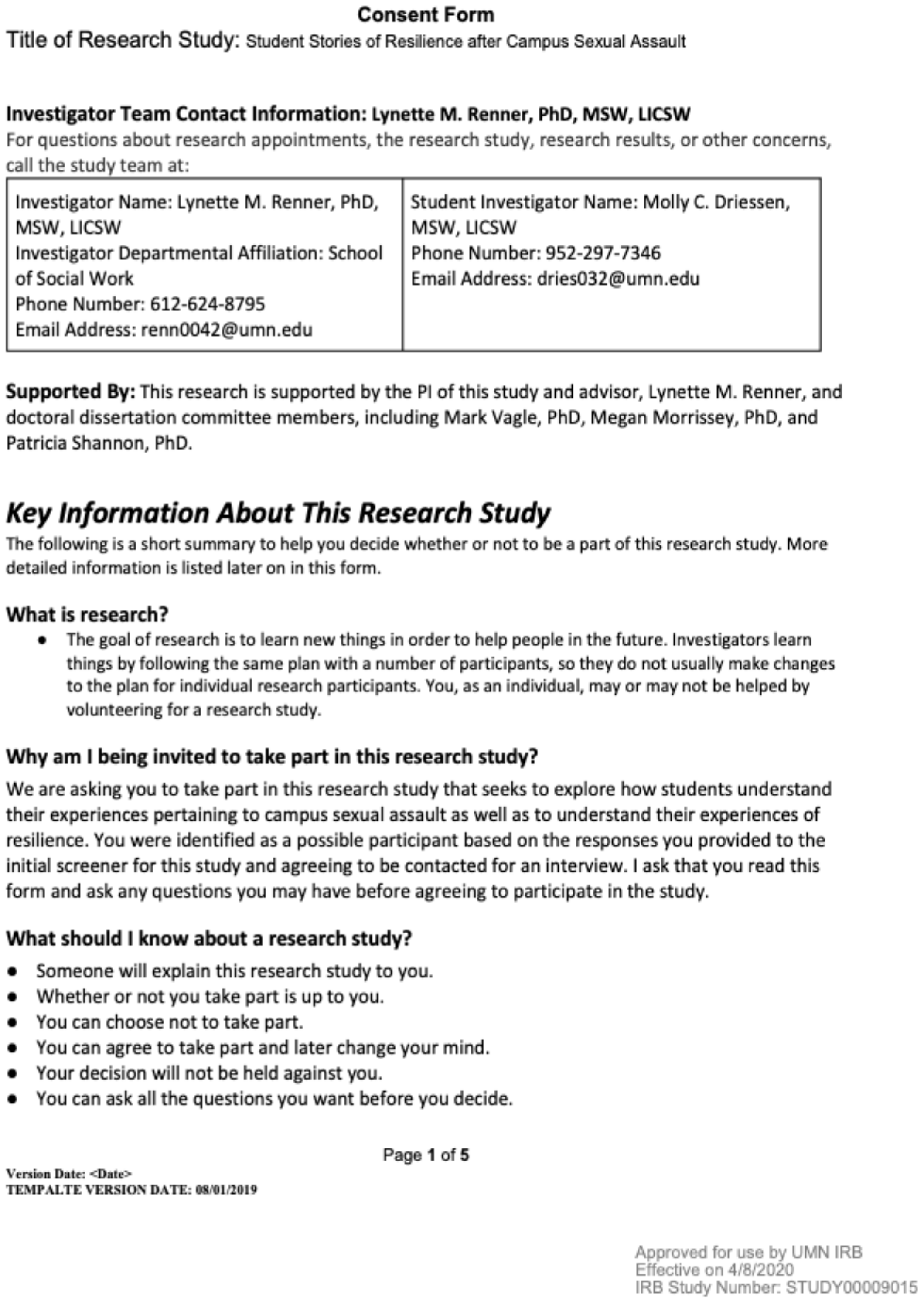
Select 'yes' if you have read the above information and wish to participate in this study.
Select 'no' if you have not read the above information or do not wish to participate in this study.

○ Yes
○ No

If you agree with the terms of this study, please keep a copy of this Consent Form for your records.

Approved for use by UMN IRB
Effective on 4/8/2020
IRB Study Number: STUDY00009015

Appendix I



Consent Form

Title of Research Study: Student Stories of Resilience after Campus Sexual Assault

Investigator Team Contact Information: Lynette M. Renner, PhD, MSW, LICSW

For questions about research appointments, the research study, research results, or other concerns, call the study team at:

Investigator Name: Lynette M. Renner, PhD, MSW, LICSW Investigator Departmental Affiliation: School of Social Work Phone Number: 612-624-8795 Email Address: renn0042@umn.edu	Student Investigator Name: Molly C. Driessen, MSW, LICSW Phone Number: 952-297-7346 Email Address: dries032@umn.edu

Supported By: This research is supported by the PI of this study and advisor, Lynette M. Renner, and doctoral dissertation committee members, including Mark Vagle, PhD, Megan Morrissey, PhD, and Patricia Shannon, PhD.

Key Information About This Research Study

The following is a short summary to help you decide whether or not to be a part of this research study. More detailed information is listed later on in this form.

What is research?

- The goal of research is to learn new things in order to help people in the future. Investigators learn things by following the same plan with a number of participants, so they do not usually make changes to the plan for individual research participants. You, as an individual, may or may not be helped by volunteering for a research study.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research study?

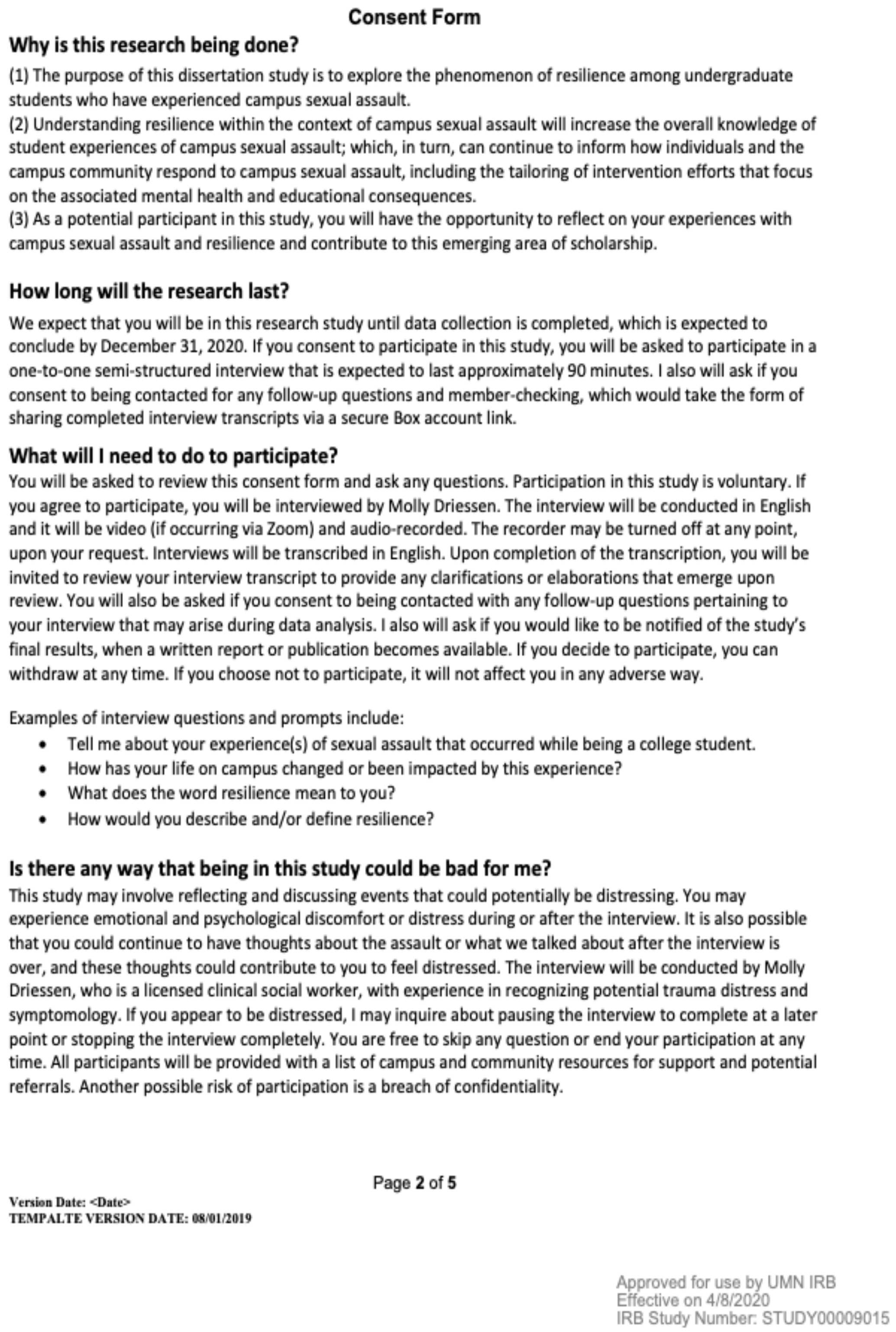
We are asking you to take part in this research study that seeks to explore how students understand their experiences pertaining to campus sexual assault as well as to understand their experiences of resilience. You were identified as a possible participant based on the responses you provided to the initial screener for this study and agreeing to be contacted for an interview. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Version Date: <Date>
TEMPALTE VERSION DATE: 08/01/2019

Approved for use by UMN IRB
Effective on 4/8/2020
IRB Study Number: STUDY00009015



Consent Form

Why is this research being done?

(1) The purpose of this dissertation study is to explore the phenomenon of resilience among undergraduate students who have experienced campus sexual assault.
(2) Understanding resilience within the context of campus sexual assault will increase the overall knowledge of student experiences of campus sexual assault; which, in turn, can continue to inform how individuals and the campus community respond to campus sexual assault, including the tailoring of intervention efforts that focus on the associated mental health and educational consequences.
(3) As a potential participant in this study, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your experiences with campus sexual assault and resilience and contribute to this emerging area of scholarship.

How long will the research last?

We expect that you will be in this research study until data collection is completed, which is expected to conclude by December 31, 2020. If you consent to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-to-one semi-structured interview that is expected to last approximately 90 minutes. I also will ask if you consent to being contacted for any follow-up questions and member-checking, which would take the form of sharing completed interview transcripts via a secure Box account link.

What will I need to do to participate?

You will be asked to review this consent form and ask any questions. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed by Molly Driessen. The interview will be conducted in English and it will be video (if occurring via Zoom) and audio-recorded. The recorder may be turned off at any point, upon your request. Interviews will be transcribed in English. Upon completion of the transcription, you will be invited to review your interview transcript to provide any clarifications or elaborations that emerge upon review. You will also be asked if you consent to being contacted with any follow-up questions pertaining to your interview that may arise during data analysis. I also will ask if you would like to be notified of the study's final results, when a written report or publication becomes available. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect you in any adverse way.

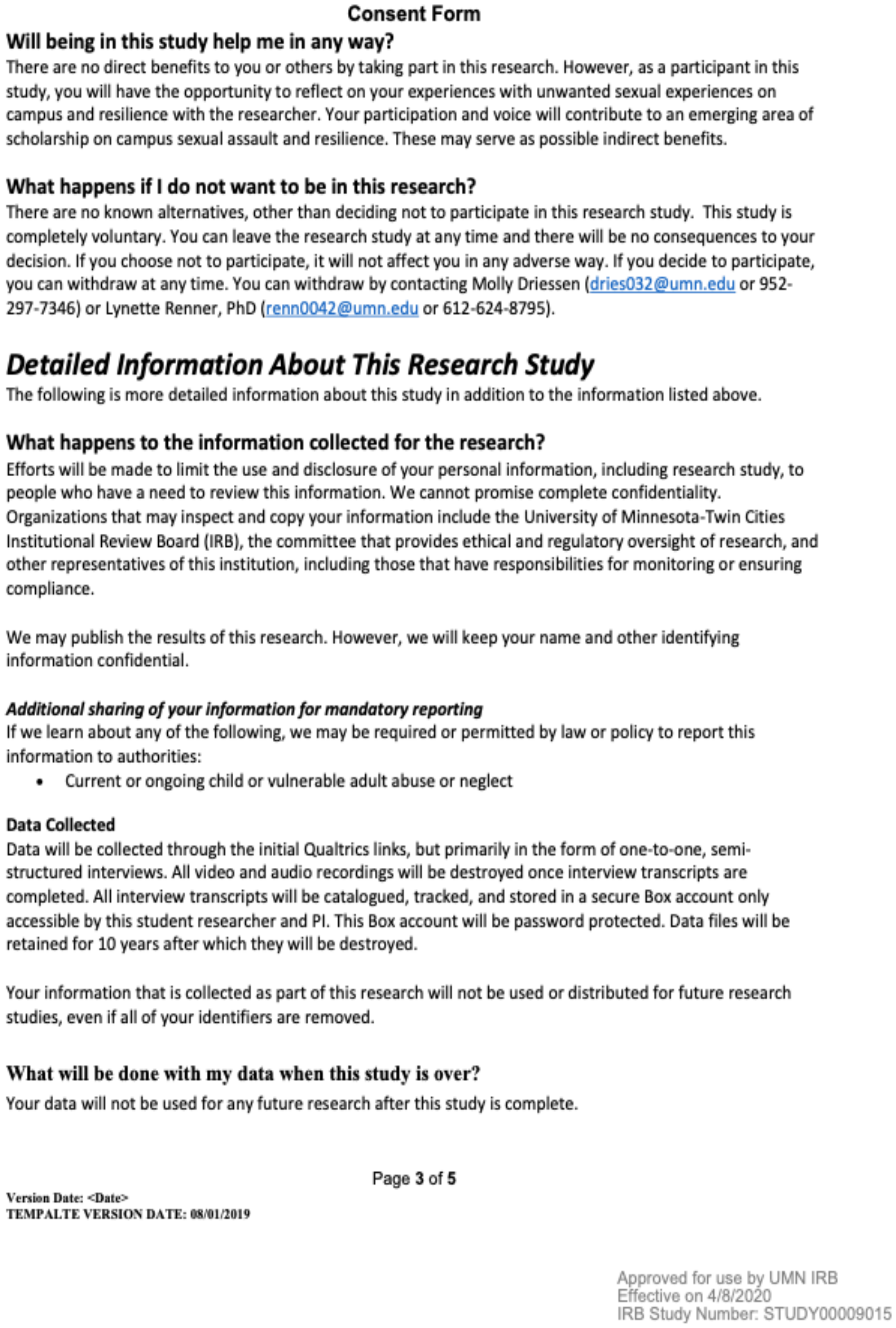
Examples of interview questions and prompts include:

- Tell me about your experience(s) of sexual assault that occurred while being a college student.
- How has your life on campus changed or been impacted by this experience?
- What does the word resilience mean to you?
- How would you describe and/or define resilience?

Is there any way that being in this study could be bad for me?

This study may involve reflecting and discussing events that could potentially be distressing. You may experience emotional and psychological discomfort or distress during or after the interview. It is also possible that you could continue to have thoughts about the assault or what we talked about after the interview is over, and these thoughts could contribute to you to feel distressed. The interview will be conducted by Molly Driessen, who is a licensed clinical social worker, with experience in recognizing potential trauma distress and symptomology. If you appear to be distressed, I may inquire about pausing the interview to complete at a later point or stopping the interview completely. You are free to skip any question or end your participation at any time. All participants will be provided with a list of campus and community resources for support and potential referrals. Another possible risk of participation is a breach of confidentiality.

Approved for use by UMN IRB
Effective on 4/8/2020
IRB Study Number: STUDY00009015



Consent Form

Will being in this study help me in any way?

There are no direct benefits to you or others by taking part in this research. However, as a participant in this study, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your experiences with unwanted sexual experiences on campus and resilience with the researcher. Your participation and voice will contribute to an emerging area of scholarship on campus sexual assault and resilience. These may serve as possible indirect benefits.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

There are no known alternatives, other than deciding not to participate in this research study. This study is completely voluntary. You can leave the research study at any time and there will be no consequences to your decision. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect you in any adverse way. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time. You can withdraw by contacting Molly Driessen (dries032@umn.edu or 952-297-7346) or Lynette Renner, PhD (renn0042@umn.edu or 612-624-8795).

Detailed Information About This Research Study

The following is more detailed information about this study in addition to the information listed above.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete confidentiality. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Institutional Review Board (IRB), the committee that provides ethical and regulatory oversight of research, and other representatives of this institution, including those that have responsibilities for monitoring or ensuring compliance.

We may publish the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

Additional sharing of your information for mandatory reporting

If we learn about any of the following, we may be required or permitted by law or policy to report this information to authorities:

- Current or ongoing child or vulnerable adult abuse or neglect

Data Collected

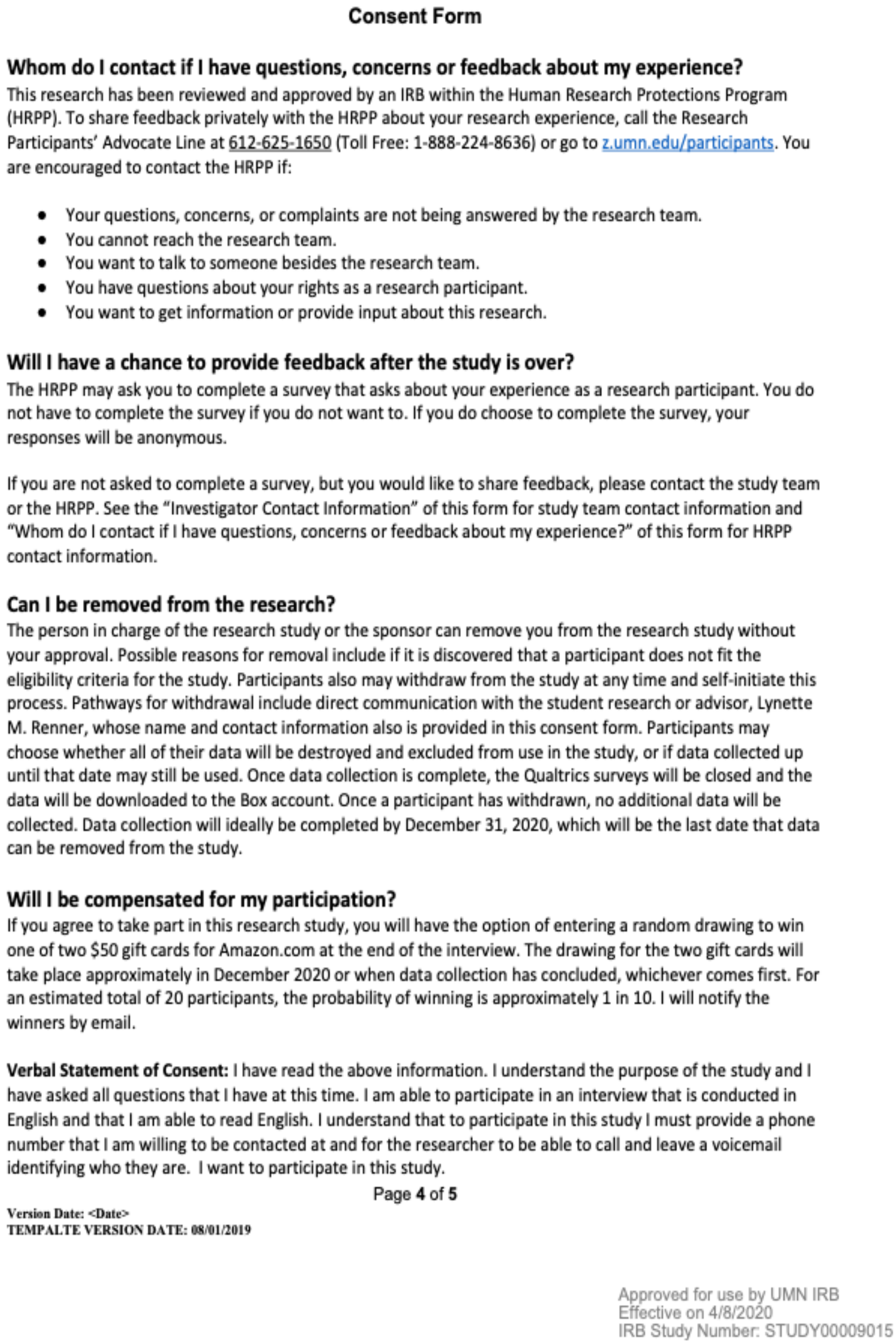
Data will be collected through the initial Qualtrics links, but primarily in the form of one-to-one, semi-structured interviews. All video and audio recordings will be destroyed once interview transcripts are completed. All interview transcripts will be catalogued, tracked, and stored in a secure Box account only accessible by this student researcher and PI. This Box account will be password protected. Data files will be retained for 10 years after which they will be destroyed.

Your information that is collected as part of this research will not be used or distributed for future research studies, even if all of your identifiers are removed.

What will be done with my data when this study is over?

Your data will not be used for any future research after this study is complete.

Approved for use by UMN IRB
Effective on 4/8/2020
IRB Study Number: STUDY00009015



Consent Form

Whom do I contact if I have questions, concerns or feedback about my experience?

This research has been reviewed and approved by an IRB within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 (Toll Free: 1-888-224-8636) or go to z.umn.edu/participants. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Will I have a chance to provide feedback after the study is over?

The HRPP may ask you to complete a survey that asks about your experience as a research participant. You do not have to complete the survey if you do not want to. If you do choose to complete the survey, your responses will be anonymous.

If you are not asked to complete a survey, but you would like to share feedback, please contact the study team or the HRPP. See the "Investigator Contact Information" of this form for study team contact information and "Whom do I contact if I have questions, concerns or feedback about my experience?" of this form for HRPP contact information.

Can I be removed from the research?

The person in charge of the research study or the sponsor can remove you from the research study without your approval. Possible reasons for removal include if it is discovered that a participant does not fit the eligibility criteria for the study. Participants also may withdraw from the study at any time and self-initiate this process. Pathways for withdrawal include direct communication with the student research or advisor, Lynette M. Renner, whose name and contact information also is provided in this consent form. Participants may choose whether all of their data will be destroyed and excluded from use in the study, or if data collected up until that date may still be used. Once data collection is complete, the Qualtrics surveys will be closed and the data will be downloaded to the Box account. Once a participant has withdrawn, no additional data will be collected. Data collection will ideally be completed by December 31, 2020, which will be the last date that data can be removed from the study.

Will I be compensated for my participation?

If you agree to take part in this research study, you will have the option of entering a random drawing to win one of two $50 gift cards for Amazon.com at the end of the interview. The drawing for the two gift cards will take place approximately in December 2020 or when data collection has concluded, whichever comes first. For an estimated total of 20 participants, the probability of winning is approximately 1 in 10. I will notify the winners by email.

Verbal Statement of Consent: I have read the above information. I understand the purpose of the study and I have asked all questions that I have at this time. I am able to participate in an interview that is conducted in English and that I am able to read English. I understand that to participate in this study I must provide a phone number that I am willing to be contacted at and for the researcher to be able to call and leave a voicemail identifying who they are. I want to participate in this study.

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IRB Study Number: STUDY00009015

Consent Form

If you consent to participate in this study, please verbally state, "Yes".

If you agree with the terms of this study, please keep a copy of this Consent Form for your records.

Do you consent to being contacted by this researcher with any potential follow-up questions pertaining to this interview?

☐ **Yes** ☐**No**

Do you consent to being contacted by this researcher for member checking (e.g., reviewing the transcript, initial findings, etc.)?

☐ **Yes** ☐**No**

[If occurring via Zoom] In the event of the call being disconnected due to you appearing distressed, do you consent to this researcher calling you via the phone number previously provided and leaving a voicemail that identifies who I am?

☐ **Yes** ☐**No**

Would you like to be notified by email of the study's final results, when a written report or publication becomes available?

☐ **Yes** ☐**No**

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IRB Study Number: STUDY00009015

Appendix J

Interview Protocol

Opening Script

I am interviewing you today to explore how students describe and understand their experiences of resilience in the context of navigating their life on campus after experiencing sexual assault while attending college. This research is being conducted for my doctoral dissertation at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities.

This study is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect you in any adverse way. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you.

At this point, I invite you to read the Interview Consent Form and ask any questions about my research study before consenting. [To any person completing the interview via Zoom: I ask you to verify that you have the resource list that was provided in the prior two Qualtrics' links available to you during this interview].

[After answering questions or if no questions] I invite you to verbally consent to the Interview Consent Form if you choose to move forward with this interview.

During the interview, please let me know if you want me to repeat or restate a question. If you do not wish to answer a question, you can just say, "I want to pass on the question." Also, the recorder may be turned off at any point, upon your request. Do you have any additional questions before we begin the interview? [After answering questions or if no questions] I'm going to turn on the recorder now so that we can begin the interview.

If this interview is occurring via Zoom and the online link or call is disconnected, I will resend a second link via email immediately to reconnect. In the event that the link or call is dropped and the second link does not work, I will provide my phone number via a secure email through my University of Minnesota Gmail account via encryption for you to call and troubleshoot. This may lead to conducting the interview in video via Zoom but maintaining audio via the phone call. Also, if the call appears to be dropped due to experiencing distress, I may call the phone number that you previously provided as being a safe number at which to contact you and leave a message. This phone number will remain confidential and only be used for the purposes of contacting you during a time of distress and/or if the link or call is dropped. Any record of phone numbers will destroyed after completion of this research study, which is expected to be in May 2021.

Interview Questions or Prompts

- Tell me a little bit about yourself and how you became interested in this study.
- Tell me about your experience(s) of sexual assault that occurred while being a college student.
    - At the time of this incident, what was your age and academic year?

  - To the best of your knowledge, where was the location of the incident (on campus, off campus, adjacent to campus, various locations)?
  - How would you describe your knowledge of the individual acting against your consent (fellow student, friend, acquaintance, former romantic partner, stranger)?

- How has your life on campus changed or been impacted by this experience? If it hasn't, why not?

- How do you consider yourself navigating life on campus post the assault?
  - Has your participation in activities (academic course work, clubs, organizations, etc.) been impacted or changed by your experience?
  - Does your physical presence feel different (walking around campus, attending events, meeting friends, etc.)?
  - Have any of your other interactions or engagement with the campus been changed or impacted by your experience?
  - Other probes: If so, could you provide an example? Could you tell me more about this experience?

- Describe how you move through and cope with your experience. What has worked or not worked?

- What does the word resilience mean to you? How would you describe and/or define it? How would you describe a resilient person?

- Would you identify or describe yourself as being resilient?
  - Why or why not?
  - Were you always resilient or have you developed throughout your life?

- Tell me about moments in your life when you experienced resilience. Tell me about moments following your experience of campus sexual assault when you felt resilience.
  - What did this feel like?
  - What thoughts did you have during these moments?
  - What actions did you take?
  - Were there others involved in this experience? How?
  - How has your experience of resilience changed before and after the assault?

- What experiences, supports, behaviors, or others helped you become resilient? Why have these been important to helping you become resilient? What does resilience promote for you?

- What experiences, supports, behaviors, or others have not contributed to your resilience?

- What supports, policies, entities, beliefs, or attitudes on college campus have hindered your resilience?

- What supports, policies, entities, beliefs, or attitudes on college campus have supported your resilience?

- What are the challenges or barriers to experiencing resilience? Are these specific to the context of college campuses? How so?

- What are the unique factors to experiencing resilience in the context of sexual assault on college campuses?

- What are the relationships, whether with friends, family, teachers, etc., that have influenced your experience of resilience?

- What are the campus policies, culture, norms, beliefs, or values that have influenced your experience of resilience?

- How has your experience of resilience impacted your life post assault? Has it impacted your beliefs, attitudes, relationships, or other activity on campus?

- If you could tell the President of the University or others in power about your experiences related to campus sexual assault, what would you say?

- If you had a magic wand, how would you change your campus response to sexual assault?

- If you had a magic wand, how would your experience of resilience change?

- Could you describe how the process of participating in this interview made you feel? Did you experience significant distress or any other potential negative or positive emotions in participating in this interview and study?

Helpful probes:

- Would you explain further?
- Would you give me an example of what you mean?
- Would you say more?

Appendix K

Resource List

Thank you for your participation in this study. I am providing the following list of resources and information to all participants. These are resources I want students who have experienced campus sexual assault to know are available to them.

Resources for Safety and Support
There are several resources available to you on and off campus. The Aurora Center is an excellent on-campus resource that provides confidential support to individuals who may have experienced sexual assault. Aurora Center representatives also can accompany you to meetings with EOAA or the police. You can contact Bronte Stewart (stewa718@umn.edu, 612-624-0630) or Chloe Vraney (vran0020@umn.edu, 612-626-6404) at the Aurora Center. Boynton Mental Health and Student Counseling Services also can provide confidential personal support. Please see the Resources listed on the following page for additional confidential resources. You can also contact the police if you feel unsafe. If you live in University housing, you also can consult with your Residence Director about possible safety measures.

Accommodations
The University can help you with accommodations you might need because of your experience, even if you do not want an investigation. If you need modifications to your housing, academic courses, employment or other campus programs or activities, please contact the Aurora Center or the office that can make accommodation (e.g., Housing and Residential Life, academic department program, or activity leadership).

EOAA Process
The University prohibits sexual misconduct, and the EOAA is available to investigate allegations of such conduct to determine whether University policies, including the Student Conduct Code, have been violated. Please keep in mind that EOAA's ability to investigate may be limited when the accused person is not or is no longer affiliated with the University.

Police Process
You can also contact the police to report your experience. The police investigate whether any laws have been violated. A police process is separate from EOAA's process and these processes can occur at the same time.

Retaliation is Prohibited
The University prohibits retaliation against individuals for reporting concerns of sexual misconduct, even if EOAA does not investigate. Please let the EOAA or Aurora Center know if you experience any negative consequences as a result of telling anyone at the University about your experience.

Resources for Reporting	Confidential & Private Resources	Additional Campus Resources	Community Resources
Emergency Police, Fire, Ambulance: Call 9-1-1 **Reporting Crimes to Police**	The Aurora Center (612) 626-2929 24hr line: (612) 626-9111 117 Appleby Hall http://aurora.umn.edu/	Disability Resource Center (612) 626-1333 (V/TTY) 180 McNamara Alumni Center https://diversity.umn.edu/disability	Tubman Crisis: (612) 825-0000 Business: (612) 825-3333 Multiple Metro Locations www.tubman.org
UMN Police 9-1-1 or (612) 624 COPS (2677) 100 Transportation and Safety Building www.police.umn.edu	Boynton Women's Clinic (612) 625-4607 Boynton Health Services, 2nd floor https://boynton.umn.edu/clinics/womens-health	Gender and Sexuality Center for Queer and Trans Life (612) 625-0537 46 Appleby Hall https://diversity.umn.edu/gsc/	Sexual Violence Center Crisis: (612) 871-5111 Business: (952) 448-5425 2021 East Hennepin Avenue Suite 148, Minneapolis www.sexualviolencecenter.org
Minneapolis Police Dept. Emergencies: 9-1-1 Non-Emergencies: 3-1-1 350 South 5th St., Room 130 www.Minneapolismn.gov/police	Boynton Mental Health Clinic (Students Only) (612) 625-8475 Boynton Health Service, 4th Floor www.bhs.umn.edu	Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (Students Only) (612) 624-6386 46 Appleby Hall https://mcae.umn.edu/	Domestic Abuse Project (612) 874-7063 Multiple Metro Locations www.domesticabuseproject.org
St. Paul Police Dept. Emergencies: 9-1-1 Non-Emergencies: (651) 291-1111 15 Kellogg Blvd. West, St. Paul http://www.stpaul.gov/departments/police	Student Counseling Services (Students Only) (612) 624-3323 340 Appleby Hall & 199 Coffey Hall https://counseling.umn.edu/	University Student Legal Services (Students Only) (612) 624-1001 160 West Bank Skyway www.umn.edu/usls	Sexual Assault Services of Ramsey County (651) 266-1000 555 Cedar St., St. Paul https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/health-medical/clinics-services/sos-sexual-violence-services
Falcon Heights Police Dept. Emergencies: 9-1-1	Employee Assistance Program (Employees Only) (612) 625-2820	Security Monitor Escort Services (612) 624-WALK (9255) B2 Coffman Memorial Union	MN Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA) (651) 209-9993

Non-Emergencies: (612) 728-3350 3301 Silver Lake Rd., Saint Anthony **Filing A University Report** Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA) (612) 624-9547 274 McNamara Alumni Center https://diversity.umn.edu/eoaa/	220 Donhowe Building www.umn.edu/ohr/welness/eap	www.police.umn.edu/home/escort Clinic for Sexual Health (612) 625-1500 1300 S. 2nd Ave., Minneapolis https://www.sexualhealth.umn.edu/clinic-center-sexual-health The Women's Center (612) 625-9837 https://womenscenter.umn.edu/	161 St. Anthony Ave., Ste. 1001, St. Paul www.mncasa.org

Appendix L

On and Off Campus Resources and Processes used and/or explored by Participants

Table X.1 Campus Resources & Processes

On-Campus	***N***
Title IX Office	2
EOAA*	1
Academic Counseling	3
Sexual Assault Resource Center	6
Medical	1
Therapy	5
Legal Services	1
Professors	5
Residential Life/Housing	5
Center for LGBTQ Students	1

* Only one participant reported and completed the process to receive a decision

Table X.2 Off-Campus Resources & Supports

Off-Campus	***N***
Therapy	3
Medical*	3
Housing	2

* This includes one participant who completed a SANE exam at a hospital