Sexual Assault Knowledge among Deaf and Hard of Hearing College Students Dr. Gwendolyn Francavillo, PhD, MPH, CHES

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HOH) individuals were found to be at higher risk for sexual assault compared to their hearing peers

- 50 83% of Deaf individuals reported experiencing sexual assault in their lifetime
- Lack accurate sexual health knowledge
 - Sexual assault knowledge not previously measured among Deaf/HOH
- Accept rape myths at higher rates
- Disproportionate and insufficient access to sexuality education
- Informal sources of sexuality information have been shown to be primary resources
- Linguistic and cultural barriers to learning necessary skills

Definitions I

- Consent: when both partners want to and agree to the sexual activity that is occurring--saying "yes"
- Sexual Activity: consensual sexual activity
- Non-consent: saying "no," not saying "yes," use of alcohol, being convinced, coerced, threatened, or forced to participate in sexual activity
- Sexual Assault: a wide range of unwanted, pressured, coerced, or forced sexual acts without the consent of a person
- Rape: force or incapacitation, non-consent, and sexual penetration

Definitions II

- <u>Survivor</u>: a positive term used to empower victims of sexual assault or rape
- Offender (Perpetrator): a person who forced or coerced another to participate in sexual behaviors against their will
- <u>Date Rape</u> (Acquaintance rape): a rape committed by a person the survivor knew
- Sexual Assault Knowledge: sexual assault factual information
- Rape Myth Acceptance: attitudes and beliefs about rape, rape survivors, and rapists that are generally false yet widely and persistently held...creating a climate hostile to rape survivors

METHODS

Sampling Procedures / Data Collection

- Deaf and HOH undergraduate students at Gallaudet University
- Sample recruitment
 - Facebook announcements
 - Flyers in academic and residential buildings
 - Blackboard announcements
 - Booths set up with laptops
- Cross-sectional mixed methods (mainly quantitative) online survey via a nonprobability convenience sampling method

Procedures

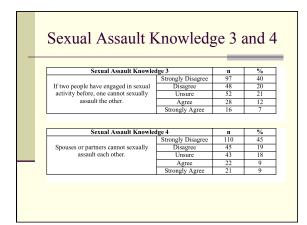
- Online survey through GoogleDocs
 - Completely anonymous
- Informed consent form
 - Required response to complete survey
- Readability of Instrument
 - Review by small group of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students to ensure comprehension
 - Revisions to instrument based on feedback from students

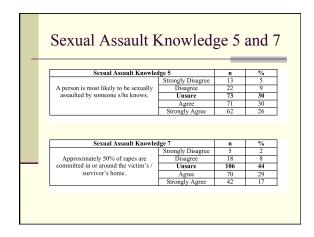
Scales

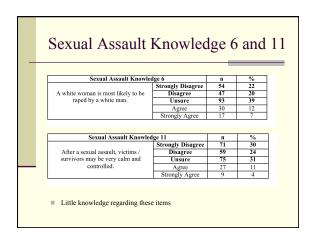
- Sexual Assault Knowledge Scale
 - Facts regarding sexual assault information (12 scale items)
- Rape Myth Acceptance Scale
 - Attitudes regarding rape myths (16 scale items)
- Sexual Assault Experience Scale
 - Experiences of unwanted sexual activity (12 scale items)
- Sexual Activity Scale
 - Experiences of consensual sexual activity (4 scale items)

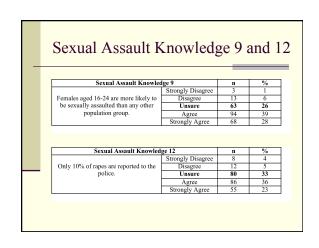
RESULTS

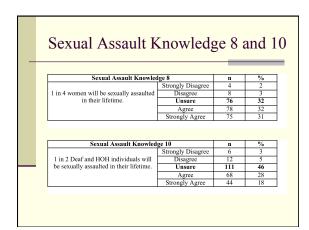
		Knowled	50 1	and	1 4
			-		
	Sexual Assault Knowle	dge 1	n	%	1
		Strongly Disagree	104	43	1
	A person who is drunk or under the influence of drugs can still give	Disagree	20	- 8	1
		Unsure	43	18	
	effective consent to any sexual activity		47	20	n = 7
		Strongly Agree	27	111	017
		_			_
	Sexual Assault Knowled		n	%	4
	The best way to determine whether someone wants you to touch him or her is to touch the person, and then assess his or her reactions to your touch.	Strongly Disagree	50	21	_
		Disagree	49	20	_
		Unsure	74	31	
		Agree	51	21	n =
		Strongly Agree	17	7	28%



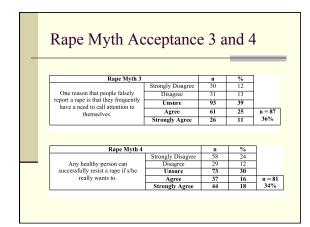


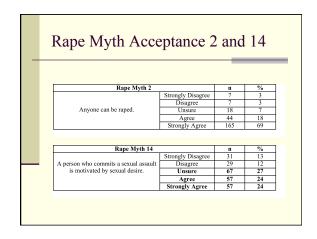


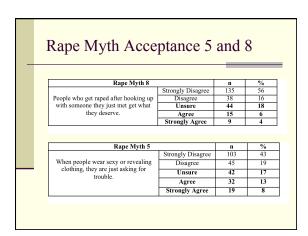


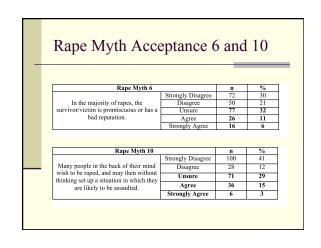


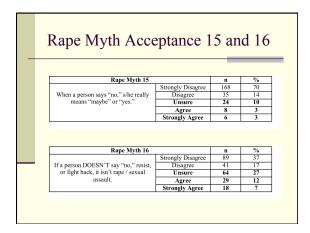
Rape Myth Acce	ptance i	and	/
1	•		
Rape Myth 1		n	%
Kape Myth 1	Strongly Disagree	73	30
A person who goes to the home or	Disagree	51	21
partment of someone on their first date implies that s/he is willing to have sex.	Unsure	63	26
	Agree	34	14
	Strongly Agree	20	9
Rape Myth 7	Rane Myth 7		%
1 1	Strongly Disagree	101	42
If a person engages in making-out and	Disagree	48	20
s/he lets things get out of hand, it is	Unsure	58	24
her/his own fault if her/his partner forces sex on her/him	Agree	17	7
forces sex on ner/nim.	Strongly Agree	17	7

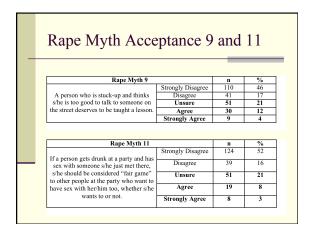


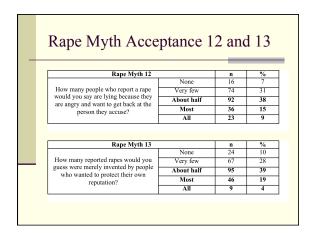


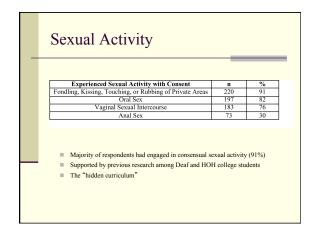


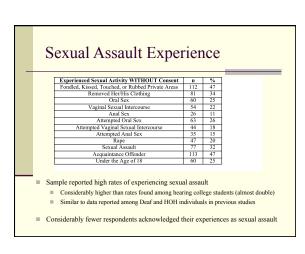


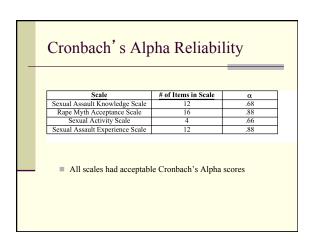


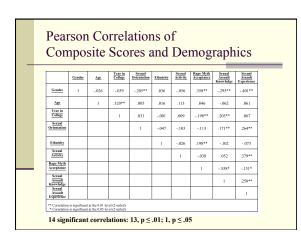


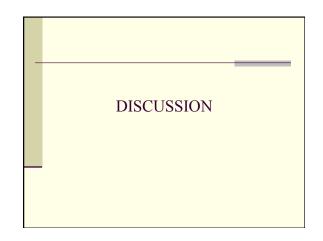












Sexual Assault Experience

- Deaf and Hard of Hearing female students were found to experience sexual assault at higher rates than Deaf and Hard of Hearing male students $(r = -.40, p \le .01)$
- Students who had engaged in more consensual sexual activity had experienced sexual assault at higher rates $(r = .38, p \le .01)$
- Gay and lesbian individuals experienced sexual assault at higher rates than straight individuals (r = .26, p ≤ .01)

Sexual Assault Knowledge

- Deaf and HOH females had higher sexual assault knowledge than Deaf and HOH males (r = -.30, $p \le .01$)
- Gay and lesbian individuals had more sexual assault knowledge than straight individuals $(r = .17, p \le .01)$
- Deaf and HOH students who had completed more years of college had more sexual assault knowledge (r = .20, $p \le .01$)
- Students who had experienced sexual assault at higher rates had more sexual assault knowledge (r = .26, $p \le .01$)

Rape Myth Acceptance

- Respondents who had more sexual assault knowledge were less accepting of rape myths (r = -.56, $p \le .01$)
- Deaf and HOH male students were found to be more accepting of rape myths than Deaf and HOH female students $(r = .36, p \le .01)$
- White / Caucasian individuals were less accepting of rape myths than other ethnicities $(r = .20, p \le .01)$
- Students who had completed fewer years of college were more accepting of rape myths (r = -.20, $p \le .01$)
- Deaf and HOH individuals who had experienced sexual assault at higher rates were less accepting of rape myths (r = -.13, p ≤ .05)

Practical Implications I

- Implement sexual assault prevention programs and rape educational tools in all sexuality education programs on all school levels:
- Specific to sexual violence primary prevention programs, include: sexual assault attitudes, healthy relationships, consent, respect of personal boundaries, conflict resolution, and skills building;
- Ensure sexual assault information is age, language, and cultureappropriate:
- Develop clear definitions of sexual assault and rape to ensure that individuals will be able to acknowledge a sexual assault experience;
- Update sexual assault visual resources, materials, and sexuality curricula to include: videos, books, brochures, training and educational materials, computer programs, and learning tools;

Practical Implications II

- Promote healthy behaviors and cultural norms;
- Change social environments concerning gender roles and expectations, rape myth acceptance, and perceptions of sexual violence;
- Target males, straight individuals, and all ethnicities with sexual assault and rape myth information;
- Utilize credible role-models for students to emulate:
- Refer to others' experiences of sexual assault, including speakers who are survivors of sexual assault—someone "just like them;"
- Make use of the "Deaf Grapevine" and credible Deaf leaders to circulate sexual assault and rape information within the community.

Recommendations for Future Research

- Investigate sexuality education specific to rape and sexual assault on all school levels
 - Needs assessment: quality and content of sexual assault education
- Explore positive association between higher sexual assault knowledge and lower rape myth acceptance among those who reported experiencing sexual assault at higher rates
- Further examination of consensual sexual activity with sexual assault experience
- Replicate the study with hearing college students and compare the results

Thank You!

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