USVSV - Partner Training Evaluation Report - University of York

Introduction

This report summarises the design, implementation and associated research findings of a *Universities Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence* training programme, developed locally at the University of York. The training programme comprised two sessions of three hours each, with the Part One providing theoretical background on cultures of sexual violence and their relevance to higher education and Part Two equipping participants with practical skills for responding to disclosures of sexual violence empathetically. 70 members of student-supporting staff were trained at the University of York, and a further 60 staff from various student-facing roles were trained. 40 are to be trained at each of the Associate Partner institutions the University of Lancaster and York St John University - making a prospective total of 210 participants. All participants received Part One facilitated by trainers with significant expertise in the field of sexual violence disclosure. Though all participants also received Part Two, some received this facilitated by their Department managers to enable tailoring of practical skills to their role in the university.

Prior to the development of the training programme, interviews with stakeholders at the institution were used to develop and understanding of the existing culture surrounding sexual violence. A steering group (made up of stakeholders and Department managers) met to approve the training's development prior to dissemination. Before and after the programme delivery, all participants were asked to complete a questionnaire asking them to rate their knowledge - on support services and theories of sexual violence and disclosure - using a Likert scale. Further, some training sessions were observed with the consent of participants. Interviews were also conducted following the training with both facilitators and participants. Utilising these data, recommendations have been put forward for the continuation of this training, and alterations have been made to the programme where necessary.

2. Context

National Context
The legal context in the UK involves sexually violent behaviours criminalised in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (Legislation.gov.uk, 2016) which was altered to include assault by penetration and Section 75 explicitly explains that consent for sexual acts requires having the freedom and capacity to grant consent. In spite of the strict legal definition of sexual violence, conviction rates for rape - for example - are incredibly low; according to (Kelly, Lovett, & Regan, 2005) only 5.7% of reported rapes end in conviction. The UK is currently governed by the Conservative party, the political ideologies of which rest on neoliberalism. In this political climate of economic austerity and individualism, the welfare of survivors of sexual violence is not prioritised. A policy clause which exemplifies this approach is the so-called 'rape clause' of Working Tax Credits (WTCs) benefit claims,

where women who have more than 2 children (the cap for claiming WTCs) must *prove* that they have been raped.

According to the *Office for National Statistics* "there were 106,098 police recorded sexual offences in the year ending March 2016... the number of offences of rape increased by 22% to 35,699 offences, and the number of other sexual offences increased by 19% to 70,399 offences". The national charity *Rape Crisis* estimate that only 15% of those affected by sexual violence report this to the police. They estimate that "Approximately 85,000 women and 12,000 men are raped in England and Wales alone every year; that's roughly 11 rapes (of adults alone) every hour. These figures include assaults by penetration and attempts. Nearly half a million adults are sexually assaulted in England and Wales each year." A recent *TUC* survey estimated that over half of women surveyed had experienced harassment in the workplace. The most recent survey of university students (carried out by the *National Union for Students*, NUS) showed that over a quarter of students experience unwanted sexual advances (National Union of Students, 2014).

Institutional context

The University of York is a plate-glass institution in the North of England with >17,000 students enrolled in > 30 departments. The campus is on the outskirts of York with the original buildings having been built on Heslington West in 1963. The institution is a member of the Russell Group and regularly features highly in national league tables. The campus is socially structured around 9 colleges, which work independently and each have their own identity and specialised welfare teams. There is a centralised Student Hub through which students can access appointments with advisors on financial, welfare and immigration matters (from here they can be referred to the Open Door Team - the mental wellbeing practice on campus). Thirdly, students are able to seek welfare support from their Students' Unions[1] which act independently from the university and can appeal institutional decisions.

Prior to our training, semi-structured interviews with eight members of staff were conducted. These members of staff were chosen as managers of the services and departments that we planned to deliver our training to. The participants were approached directly and included staff from the Security Services, College Heads and Assistant Heads, Commercial Services and the Student Union. Interviews lasted between 30 – 50 minutes and explored a number of themes including their perceptions of sexual violence at the university, their experience (and that of departmental colleagues) of handling disclosures of sexual violence, existing protocol and training for handling disclosures of sexual violence and their beliefs and attitudes towards sexual and gendered violence as a problem. The aims were to understand current levels of knowledge and experience and to explore whether any misconceptions or knowledge gaps existed that we should address in our training.

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[1] York University Students' Union (YUSU) caters to all students at the university, but there is also is a specific Graduate Students' Association (GSA) which caters to the needs of postgraduate students.

Sexual Violence

i) Prevalence

The university has a range of student support services which each store data on disclosures of sexual violence separately (Colleges, Security, Student Hub, Departments). There has not been, until this year, a central system for the receiving and collating of disclosures of sexual violence at the institution. This may be rectified by the development of an online form for making formal reports- which has been accessible to students since June 2017- and a form for all staff to record student disclosures (even anonymously). Independently, a student society *York Student Think Tank* investigated the issue of sexual harassment in their 2013 consultation of 200 students. They found that over half of students and 37% of staff experienced sexual harassment, which affected females at a ratio of 3:1. Additionally a Student Health Needs Assessment carried out carried out by the City of York Council over the academic year 2016/17 found that 10% of University of York students surveyed had experienced sexual assault, which was more than twice the proportion of any other Further/Higher Education institution in the city.

ii) Policy and Procedure

There has not been an explicit sexual violence policy or procedure at the University of York, until this year, though the Equality and Diversity Office has developed a Code of Practice on Harassment. Harassment is defined in this policy as 'behaviour that has the purpose or the effect of offending, hurting, degrading or intimidating a person or persons or violating dignity[2]'. This definition could be relevant to sexual harassment, however, the types of harassment described in the policy are 'verbal, non-verbal and physical' with no mention of sexual harassment or gender. The policy is primarily focussed on general bullying and the procedures have not been written with sexual harassment or gender related bullying in mind.

Pre-training interviews with staff from the universities Colleges indicated that a policy and guidance around how to investigate and handle reports of sexual violence is very much needed and that this is the area where staff feel most unsure of how to act. Neither investigation nor care pathways have been centralised and are carried out on a case-by-case basis by each support service as felt appropriate. It appears to be the case that some kind of investigation is made including talking with the alleged perpetrator, regardless of whether the victim wishes to report to the police.

Access to each support service is detailed on a webpage as part of the 'Health and Wellbeing' section of the university's *Current Students* area of the website. The pages describe the primary avenue by which students can get immediate support from the university during the day (through the College system) and at night (by calling Security) as well as information about the longer term support the university can provide. The page also contains information and contact details for the city of York's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) and information about how to preserve evidence if the student thinks they may wish to report the issue to the police. The Student Support team

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[2] https://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/Harassment/StudentProcedure.htm

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were responsible for putting this procedure together. The longer-term support detailed is equally relevant to sexual assault on or off campus, however, the immediate support services are only relevant to students on campus. There is no equivalent page directed at staff providing guidance on how to respond to students who may make a disclosure and procedures in relation to this seem primarily to be left to individual departments/services. Current procedure for accessing exceptional circumstances for academic allowances is unclear. It seems that most incidents of student misconduct at the institution are dealt with on a case by case basis and that this information is not captured centrally.

More could be done to raise awareness of these sources of support amongst students. Although the SARC is referred to, there are two other local charities which support survivors of sexual violence -Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS) and Survive - which the university are aware of (there are resources from both in each Students' Union offices and in welfare provision from Colleges). Yet these are not advertised to other staff, nor are they linked to on the Sexual Assault webpage. Additionally, some feedback indicates that the level of support provided at night is still patchy as it is reliant heavily on the availability of one College Duty Officer.

iii) Training Initiatives

In 2014, Anais Duong-Pedica, a PhD student and college tutor, took the initiative to organise a one-day training on being a 'first responder' for college welfare teams and student union sabbatical officers. This was organised and delivered in collaboration with Survive, a local charity supporting survivors of sexual violence. In the same year she also wrote a sexual consent talk which was delivered to students from two colleges and the following year she delivered training on sexual consent to second and third year students (STYCs) who were working as contacts for first years during Freshers' week. Based on her efforts, sexual consent talks have been provided for all students. These ran for the first time during Freshers' week 2016 and were organised and delivered by the YUSU Women's Officers after a compulsory fire training but students had the option of leaving prior to the consent talk. Approximately 5000 students stayed until the end and several hundred students chose to leave. One student protested against the talks by handing out flyers encouraging other students to boycott them. The consent talks aimed to provide gender neutral information on sexual consent for all first year students including an understanding of what sexual consent is, what it looks like in practice and how students can get support if they need it. The 'tea video'[3] was shown as part of the talks.

For the last two years the Colleges have run 'Inclusive Communities' training for students who are on the committees of college societies. The training covers a wide range of issues relating to inclusion, diversity and equality including cross-cultural awareness and understanding unconscious bias and assumptions. Within the training there is a session focussing on lad culture and sexual harassment. Feedback from staff suggests that students found the session on lad culture and sexual harassment informative and that they had previously conceptualised some types of sexual harassment as 'normal'. By training committee members who are considered to be

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[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8

student leaders within the Colleges, the training aims to filter the messages down to all students to create more inclusive and safer student communities.

In addition, all incoming staff are required to complete online Equality and Diversity training and there is optional Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for staff, which might enable better support for survivors of sexual violence.

Associate Partners' Institutional Context

The University of Lancaster shares a lot of similarities with the University of York, also a collegiate plate-glass institution in the North of England. There are more than 13,000 students enrolled in 9 colleges. The university was opened in the 1960s and exists on a large campus several miles outside of the city of Lancaster. In 2009, Lancaster was proclaimed the safest university city in the United Kingdom by the Complete University Guide. In 2017, a student newspaper at Lancaster put out a call for anonymous disclosures of sexual violence, via their Facebook group. This poll received 50 responses within the first 3 days. Though this is not a formal measure of the rate of sexual violence at the university, 73.5% respondents to this survey said that they had not reported the incidents to the institution or police. Both the students' union and the university have made steps to tackle rape culture on campus, through consent talks and recent introduction of Bystander Intervention training for students.

The second Associate Partner institution was York St John University, which has a small campus with several locations in the city centre of York. Approximately 7,000 students are enrolled in the current academic year. The university has a history as a former theological college and gained the ability to confer taught degrees in 2005. The institution recently won funding from HEFCE - in conjunction with a local sixth form college and specialist sexual violence charities - to run a 'Building Healthy Relationships' project, aiming to tackle sexual and domestic violence. This project involves consulting with the student body, then developing training materials (based on the Intervention Initiative) for staff and students.

3. Training

Training Design

The below materials and exercises were developed to address the misconceptions and knowledge gaps identified from our pre-training interviews with stakeholders:

1. *How many disclosures does it take to make a big problem?* The interviews revealed that participants did not see sexual violence as a big problem at the university due to the number of disclosures they had personally responded to. We thus incorporated an exercise to get participants to think about what a 'big problem' would actually look like in relation to disclosures of sexual violence with the aim of enabling participants to see that receiving a small number of disclosures is evidence of a significant problem.
2. *Consent and sexual violence*: We looked at the legal definition of rape and then did an activity that involved reflecting on quotes from young people to explore the complexity of sexual consent. This was within a framework that emphasized that all sex that takes place without consent is rape, something that some participants struggled to fully accept.

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3. *Laddism, gender and sexual violence*: As only a minority of participants pointed to gendered norms as relating to sexual violence we started the training by situating sexual violence within an analysis of lad culture within universities.

4. *Sources of support*: We ensured that the information we gave about sources of support/referral pathways was sufficiently specific. This was because many participants had indicated that whilst they aware of different services they lacked information about what they could expect from each one.

Training principles and theory

The training is underpinned by several key beliefs and concepts. Firstly, the training is shaped by the belief that to respond appropriately to a disclosure participants need knowledge and understanding of sexual violence as well as practical skills. This is because disclosures can be handled poorly as a result of both lack of practical skills and erroneous beliefs about sexual violence i.e. belief in 'rape myths'. For this reason, the training is divided into Part One, which focuses on knowledge and understanding of sexual violence and Part Two, which focuses more practically on the skills and knowledge required to respond to a disclosure.

Part One, on understanding sexual violence, is theoretically informed by Liz Kelly's (1988) conceptualization of sexual violence as a continuum. This theory highlights the existence of multiple and overlapping forms of violence and the continuum ranges from sexist jokes to assault and rape and helps to illuminate the connections between everyday sexism and normalized forms of violence such as sexual harassment with rape and assault. The intended learning outcomes are for participants to: Understand sexual violence and the complexity of it; Relate sexual violence to intersecting cultural and social norms; Understand the impact of sexual violence on survivors and different ways in which disclosure might occur. Also important, is a belief in the importance of building emotional engagement and empathy in order to instigate transformational learning. Therefore, as well as giving facts and theory, Part One involves a number of experiential and reflective activities designed to help participants connect emotionally to the experiences of survivors.

Part Two, focuses on practical skills, and is informed by the concept of 'active listening' as a way of 'being alongside' someone making a disclosure. The session is also underpinned by a belief in the importance of survivor autonomy within the disclosure process. Consequently, instead of producing a 'care pathway' to be followed for all survivors, we produced a basket of 'sources of support' which survivors can be given information about according to their specific needs and wishes. The intended learning outcomes are for participants to: Develop the skills to respond to disclosures in an empathetic and supportive manner; Gain the knowledge to refer students to options for further help if they wish; Have knowledge about how to care for oneself and maintain appropriate boundaries whilst handling a disclosure.

Whilst planning the content of the training we consulted with experts from the Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS) based in York. Two staff members provided initial advice and then feedback on a draft version of the training. We also

received input from the university counseling service on the more practical Part Two of the training including suggestions of activities and topic areas.

Mode of delivery
The training is organised as two sessions of three hours each. Some groups of staff have chosen to attend the sessions as two separate half-day sessions, whilst others have chosen to attend as a full day six hour session.

Table One: Topics and instruments of delivery

Time	Topic	Instruments of delivery
Part One		
15 mins	Introduction	Information presented by trainers on aims of training and the wider project.
25 mins	Laddism and sexual violence higher education	Presentation involving discussion of images of lad culture and findings from research on lad culture.
20 mins	Understanding sexual violence	Theoretical information and vignettes used for small group discussion.
20 mins	Myths	Participants invited to discuss True/False statements in small groups. Trainers than lead discussion in the whole group.
30 mins	Impact of sexual violence	Experiential empathy exercise, reflection on a letter from a survivor of sexual violence, research findings on impact of sexual violence presented by trainers.
30 mins	Barriers to disclosure	Participants invited to brainstorm barriers to disclosure working in small groups and drawing on learning from the day. Ideas fed back to the big group and any missing points filled in by trainers.
Part Two		
15 mins	Introduction to disclosures	Concept of disclosures explained by trainers.
30 mins	Active listening	Presentation of active listening techniques and role-play giving participants the chance to practice the techniques.
20 mins	Sources of support	Information presented regarding sources of support in the university and community.
30 mins	Responding to a disclosure	Participants reflect on a letter from a survivor of sexual violence and use this to think about how to respond appropriately. Trainers present key 'dos and don'ts' of first response.
20 mins	Self-care and boundaries	Practical information presented by trainers.

Trainers' expertise
Angie Bell and Sarah Simpson are employed as counselors in the university counseling service and as such they are highly experienced in providing emotional support to students and have specific experience supporting student survivors of sexual violence. Annis Stead and Catherine Atkinson are PhD students in the Department of Education with expertise relevant to the training. Annis is conducting her doctoral research on lad culture in higher education and has also provided support to students as a college tutor and Catherine is conducting doctoral research on children's gendered and sexual identities. As permanent staff members, it is anticipated that Angie and Sarah will take on the role of delivering further training after the end of the research project. Additionally, managers from some departments have been involved in delivering the Part Two session to their own staff after having first attended the training as participants. This is part of our cascading model designed to ensure sustainability of the project (this is described in more detail in the next section).

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Participants and recruitment strategy

We have provided training to the following groups of staff within specific staff groupings, in order to allow role-relevant discussions: 10 *Senior Managers*, 29 *Security* staff, 22 *Colleges* staff, 11 *Student Union (SU)* staff, 16 *Mental Health First Contact network members*. The remaining 42 participants were training in mixed cohorts. The Services/Department to train were decided at the start of the project through a consultative process. Managers in each then decided whether it should be voluntary or compulsory for their staff and how the staff should be recruited. For *Colleges* staff and *SU* staff the training was voluntary (although staff were encouraged to attend by managers) and owing to the level of experience that staff have in *Colleges and Mental Health First Contact network* in providing welfare support, these groups received a slightly condensed version of the training which excluded the sections on Active Listening and Self Care. For *Security* staff the training was a compulsory part of their annual CPD for which they have dedicated days each year. However, at the start of each day trainers explained to participants that they could opt out of any activity in which they were uncomfortable participating in or leave the training at any time.

Training Evaluation
- 93 participants completed pre-training questionnaires
- 109 participants completed the post-training questionnaire.
- 7 participants were interviewed following the training.
- 5 facilitators were interviewed following the training.

Participants' Positive Responses

Comparing the pre/post-training questionnaires, it can be seen that significant changes have been made in participants' understanding/knowledge of sexual violence. The variables (although ordinal data collected from Likert scales) approximated a normal distribution[4] and so could be compared using Independent samples t-test. Though most of the participants did complete both pre and post-training questionnaires, these were completed anonymously and so it would be improper to use repeated measures comparisons. There was a significant difference[5] between the pre and post-training scores on all 17 measures of knowledge. Non-parametric tests were also performed, which also showed reason to accept the hypothesis that differences between pre and post-training responses were as a result of the training. We can therefore assume that the training was effective in improving knowledge of participants.

The most common expectations listed for the training, were about responding to disclosures effectively. Examples of these include: "understanding the response forms that might be negatively perceived by a survivor" and "how to deal with and support people affected". In responding to the equivalent question in the post-training

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[4] Judged to be normal when looking at histograms and the data points on Q-Q plots.

[5] Significant at p<0.05, a less than 1 in 20 probability that this difference is due to chance.

questionnaire, participants indicated that this had been addressed by the training in 31 cases. Secondly, participants commonly expected to learn about the available sources of support for victims/survivors of sexual violence and how to effectively signpost students to these. In 18 responses, participants felt that the training provided information on signposting and agencies which could provide support, suggesting that this was also effectively addressed by the training. Lastly, knowledge about what constitutes sexual violence, the myths surrounding it and how to identify sexual violence was sought by participants, and was also acknowledged as one of the key outcomes in 17 cases. In addition, in 15 cases participants indicated that they learned about barriers to disclosure that victims/survivors face and 13 responses referred to having a greater understanding of the emotional impact that sexual violence can have. The training therefore met and exceeded the expectations given in the pre-training questionnaire in educating participants on these topics.

The element of the training that most respondents reacted favourably to was the information provided, with 16 participants responding that they felt the content presented was a positive element of the training. The information provided on support agencies was also separately rated favourably by some participants.The next most popular element, with 9 responses referring to it, was the use of small discussion groups. This response was used in general or to refer to specific exercises in the training, such as this participant who enjoyed: "reflection and discussion, empathy exercises, variety of content and exercises". Finally, the use of survivor testimonies was highlighted as a positive of the training in 9 cases.

Participants' Recommendations for Change

The most common recommendation was that the level of engagement in the training could have been improved (mentioned in 13 cases). One participant in the *SU* cohort indicated that "the session was quite long; could have been delivered in a snappier format". Both this and the positive comments referring to facilitators may be accounted for in the personal taste of the participants, given that for some the facilitation was seen as overwhelmingly good, whereas others in the same group found it lacking. Some 7 participants felt that the training placed too much focus on women as the victims and men as the perpetrators of sexual violence. One participant commented "Too focused on man --> woman, very little on same sex/woman --> man. Start felt a bit man hatey" implying that the evidence-based training materials were, in fact, misandrist. These responses do have merit in spite of their contradiction with the research findings on gender-based violence, as the training was considered alienating as a result of this focus, nevertheless they must be regarded critically. A final recommendation for change was that the training should include a greater range of examples of sexual violence and proposed responses. For the number of cases in which participants felt that the training should be expanded (with more statistics, 3; more on professional boundaries, 4; and more time spent on myths about sexual violence, 2) there were also 3 cases in which participants described the training as "too long".

Potential Additions

In the pre-training questionnaire, a single participant reported hoping to gain knowledge or understanding of "alcohol based incidents". Participants also frequently referred to the relevance of alcohol in incidents of sexual violence in the training sessions, usually when faced with a True/False activity pertaining to the following statement: The way a woman is dressed or the fact that she is drunk can be why she is raped. The below comments come observation data from a cohort of *Security* staff.

P1: Telling people not to get drunk could be a useful strategy for prevention, if we're going to raise awareness about this, wouldn't it be useful as a message.

P4: This applies to everything, if you're walking home drunk then you're an easy victim, for mugging, rape…

Although the facilitator's notes did not directly address this topic, in a cohort from *Colleges* staff a participant did challenge the ways in which discourses of responsible drinking can be harmful to victims/survivors of sexual violence, in that it puts the onus on preventing sexual violence on the victim/survivor.

P2: It depends who is giving you that advice. If I as a young woman decide that I'm not going to drink too much on a night out so that I'm not vulnerable, that's one thing, it's quite sensible. But if that's the official advice coming from the police, that to keep myself safe from rape I shouldn't drink, that's a problem, it's their job to keep me safe.

Facilitators' Positive Responses

All facilitators described the training positively, stating that it was "interesting" (Int 2) and "engaging" (Int 3). The existence of the training programme was recognised by one facilitator as being "really important" and saying that for academic staff "it should be mandatory" (Int 2), indicating that she agreed with the need for training staff to respond to disclosures of sexual violence. The particular tone and content of the training was viewed favourably, with one participant from Int 1 describing the sessions:

"it's actually it creates such a reflective space for people to actually think about those things that culturally happens often in everyday life." Facilitators found that the majority of participants were receptive to all elements of the training, and while some might have received less engagement, none were blocked by participants.

Facilitators were also comfortable with the notions of sexual violence existing on a continuum, being couched in gender norms and as being an issue which negatively impacts student communities. When talking about the sexual violence continuum, one participant explained "it is worth conceptualizing sexual violence in that way for the training, because that's probably the kind of sexual violence that they're [participants] more likely to see - sort of harassment and groping in nightclubs, sort of more low level sexual violence" (Int 3) indicating that linking more serious forms of sexual violence to the normalised versions, with which participants are familiar, is powerful. Some participants conceptualised forms of low level sexual violence as being "normal" or *expected* for students in certain situations; drinking and in a nightclub/bar was offered as a likely circumstance for groping and unwanted sexual advances. This was identified as an issue by facilitators in Int 3 who described the words of a participant "He was suggesting that

when people are young and when people are drunk, we've all done things that we might not agree with or that we might not have agreed to." Overall, though, facilitators found that participants engaged well with the conceptualization of sexual violence presented, saying "I think they took it on board" (Int 3).

A feature of the training sessions that was well regarded by all facilitators was that of the letter from a survivor of sexual violence. This was volunteered by a student at the institution, describing how they felt following their assault and how they found the process of disclosing and seeking help. This is described by the participants in Int 1:

"P1: Yeah yeah I think yeah the letters were one of the most powerful things
P2: Yeah to actually read something that obviously real, I think you could tell that just the feeling that yaknow the room was different."

An activity which was well-received required participants to visualise the person they trusted the most, the place where they felt safest and a secret they did not wish to share and then to disclose how these visualisations made them felt in different scenarios (namely how they would feel if they lost access to the person/place or if their secret were revealed). Although some groups responded more quickly, or with joking comments, the overwhelming response to this exercise was of solemn contemplation and empathy with survivors of sexual violence. Additionally, the final activity of Part 1 of the training, participants were asked to list and discuss the potential barriers to disclosing sexual violence that a student might face; this was routinely met with thoughtful responses and an understanding of the manifold pressures facing students.

Facilitators' Recommendations for Change
A significant problem recognised by some facilitators was that of the potential emotional impact of the training on the facilitator. In one of the *Colleges* sessions, a participant made a disclosure of a serious incidence of sexual violence, which surprised and concerned the facilitator in question, who agreed that it "kind of threw everything" (Int 1). A similar difficulty of delivering the training is that resistance from participants can be felt as a personal slight. As a feminist facilitator myself, I felt that I may have been too defensive in my role: *"I think it's really difficult as a feminist researcher to not position everything you do from a feminist standpoint and I wouldn't say I was rude… but I did challenge everything that went against the training".*

The activity which was most resisted by participants was that of the challenging of myths about sexual violence. This activity was often met with interjections about the wording of some statements - in particular 'The way a woman is dressed or that she has consumed alcohol can be why she is raped' led to some confusion. Further, "a few groups got caught up talking about false allegations" (Int 3). In one session every working group responded "True" in relation to the myth of 'False allegations of rape are common.' One participant indicated a conflation between false allegations of sexual violence and withdrawn complaints. Facilitators in Int 3 also refer to the extent to which challenges to this myth were disregarded by one participant who had prior experience of dealing with the serious consequences of a false allegation. A facilitator in Int 3 claimed "The only thing that I found a bit clunky was about the legal definition [of rape]" and the co-facilitator

explained that this was often met with focus on difference between rape and other sexual crimes. Additionally the section of the training which focused on Active Listening was seen as repetitive: "The first time it worked well. When they redid it, I don't know how useful that was a second time".

Comments on Theoretical/Pedagogical Approach

A facilitator in Int 3 indicated that a participant from the Senior Managers team had challenged the nature of the cascade model of the training, finding problems with the perceived mandate for them to train their staff. Further, in a post-training steering group meeting of interested parties at the institution, some senior staff described the training as being "too experiential", recommending short and pragmatic training for the majority of student-facing staff. The focus on women's experiences and the gendered nature of sexual violence was criticised in post-training questionnaires and post-training interviews with participants (though this is likely replication) and facilitators.

All facilitators expressed the feeling that the training had resulted in some transformation of understanding in participants. Those in Int 1 particularly valued the dialogic model of the training and "felt as though people were generally really learning from it - and reflecting on themselves." It was thought by another that "people seemed to go away with some changed thoughts" (Int 3). In the final steering group meeting, Senior Managers (some of whom facilitated the Part 2 sessions of the training) commented that participants felt "it was nice to get some confirmation about their beliefs" through the training, and that although for some of them the content was already known, each session represented "2 hours well spent" on refreshing this knowledge.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Institutional Recommendations
Policy

The majority of the currently existing discipline policy is positive for survivors of sexual violence, including the acknowledgement that intimidating language (both in person and online) are forms of harassment and allowing a Complaint Co-ordinator to recommend the removal of a student if "he or she perceives that the continued presence of a student at the University may pose a significant danger to that student and/or other students or members of the University". A specific sexual violence policy is currently being designed as part of separate research project, which builds directly on USVreact (a HEFCE Catalyst funded project on *Safeguarding Students)* and is being implemented with consultation from the USVreact project team. There are only two clauses of the original *Regulation 7* (discipline policy) which might be deemed unhelpful for those reporting incidences of sexual violence. Recommendations to change these have been submitted from the USVreact team to the staff involved in the ongoing policy audit.

In pre-training interviews, a sabbatical officer at the York University Students' Union (YUSU) recommended a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment saying "if we don't have one already we really should, because it's the sort of thing that needs to be

done, so that will happen eventually."

Procedure

Observations of training sessions revealed that some felt the current procedures following reports of sexual violence were inadequate, with one participant from *Colleges* saying: "Students know they can call security if there's an incident, but would you really want to call security if you were raped? I'm just imagining these guys in yellow jackets marching to a student's bedroom." Another participant commented in the post-training questionnaire that "the university response is often to take the victim out of class, why not take the perpetrator out?" Further, staff had many questions about the fate of reported perpetrators: will they be excluded? In what circumstances?

Staff in the *Security* department were observed to have a big distrust of university senior managers – "those men in suits in Heslington Hall who don't live in the real world". These staff felt that the discipline procedures could be improved in terms of transparency, efficiency and sanctions chosen: "the punishment usually doesn't fit the crime' 'the university are very soft on students", "victims are effectively discriminated against if the university takes no or slow action", "the biggest barrier to reporting is the university, how will they be treated, how will the perpetrator be treated". *Colleges* staff reiterated that *students need to know that they can disclose without having to then go to the police and that their disclosure can be confidential* - taken from observation notes. The incoming sexual violence policy is dovetailed with the introduction of a new online reporting system for all forms of 'student misconduct' and public information on possible adjustments for survivors/possible disciplinary measures for perpetrators. There are some issues with the system referring to 'student misconduct', which, given the serious nature of sexual violence and the potentially diminishing term 'student misconduct', might not be understood as the appropriate place for students disclose incidences of sexual violence. Further, the new reporting system does not encourage reporting of staff sexual misconduct or currently offer anonymous reporting (third party reports *are* accepted). It is also not immediately noticeable on the *Health and Wellbeing* and just appears as a hyperlink in a list of other pages. The procedures for reporting, discipline and support were described as poorly advertised in training sessions, with one participant saying "I don't think it's well publicized in the university, I only know about these things because of my job, but if I was just a student, I wouldn't know where I could go." We therefore recommend that efforts are made to improve the visibility of this system and to elaborate on it's uses.

On the other hand, the webpage with the reporting form, has a clear description of the procedures that will take place following a report, and of the ways in which a person can report. As part of the continued work on the USVreact project, handouts for incoming students and academic staff are being designed to provide information on and contact details for all local support networks (including those which provide emotional wellbeing support) and recommend the new online reporting form.

Regional and national recommendations

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Participants in the USV training did not offer recommendations for regional/national government. Though some practical recommendations for "campaigns" were given, listed below, these predominantly focused on institutional change:

- Badges/stickers + posters
- Rolling out training to academic staff
- Training for student leaders and incoming students
- Handouts for all staff
- Regular drop-ins on campus from local charities
- Connecting with sports teams

Summary

Findings

Feedback from participants and facilitators alike indicates that the training programme was considered effective and worthwhile. The training met and exceeded the expectations of participants in providing understanding of sexual violence and practical skills for responding to disclosures. There is a statistically significant improvement in self-reported knowledge of sexual violence, support services and supporting survivors of sexual violence, following participation in the training programme. While methodological improvements could be made in order to ensure a robust effect, the difference between pre- and post-training responses was found to be significant at $p<0.001$ for all 17 questionnaire items.

Alterations have been made to the training programme in line with some of the recommendations put forward by participants and facilitators: splitting up long sections of information with interactive tasks, splitting into small discussion groups wherever possible, including a broader range of sexual violence forms (perhaps using scenarios), including research on the impact of alcohol consumption on sexual violence etc. However, some recommendations have been responded to critically, namely the suggestion that the training programme placed too much focus on women as victims of sexual violence. Greater effort has been made to explain the influence of gender norms on sexual violence and to provide evidence for the disproportionate number of women who are sexually abused. It is hoped that with a strong evidence base, these claims can be challenged in the training sessions through dialogue.

Legacy

The full version of the USV training runs for 2 half-days (or roughly 6 hours). Going forward, this model will be recommended to continue as a whole day of training for staff who specifically deal with disclosures (*Security, Colleges,* and Welfare advisors in the Student Hub, Harassment advisors). The USVreact project team are meeting with Human Resources to propose to embed some elements of this training into compulsory provision for all staff members, and offer optional Part Two training. The former specialist knowledge could be offered as an e-learning package, and the latter workshops for the development of practical skills could be offered at least once per term to any interested parties. It is hoped that these will continue to be led by Angie Bell and Sarah Simpson

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who facilitated the USV training in the pilot stages and are permanent staff members.

Recommendations for changes to policy, procedure and communication have been put forward to the Assistant Registrar for Promoting Community Cohesion and Respect (whose role was created to meet the objectives of the HEFCE funded *Safeguarding Students* project) and the Student Communications Manager. The *Health and Wellbeing* webpages are being updated to include more accessible and direct information on support available for survivors of sexual violence. In addition, the USVreact team are creating and disseminating a resource for the academic staff which will offer guidance on receiving disclosures effectively as well as information on the sources of support available for disclosers and a procedure for recording disclosures centrally.

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