PANEL 16: UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AT SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Evaluation of a Gender-Based Violence Prevention Programme within the University

Stella Musungu
HIV/AIDS, Inclusivity and Change Unit, University of Cape Town

The HIV/AIDS, Inclusivity and Change Unit (HAICU) has implemented workshops with students through an intersectional approach to addressing HIV in South Africa, since 1994 (Crenshaw, 1991). In more recent years, the workshops have focused on gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV prevention bystander approaches (Banyard, 2007). The workshops have been conducted on a face to face basis where HAICU’s peer educator facilitators are present to engage with the participants. In order to reach a larger number of students on campus, HAICU has translated the face to face workshops into an online intervention that requires participants to engage with the content via an online platform. HAICU want to learn if more students will be able to access the workshop material via the online platform and whether this is an effective way of rolling out the initiative. HAICU will be conducting a process and outcome evaluation. The key research question is whether the HAICU bystander programme changed the participant’s knowledge, attitudes and self-efficacy skills of bystander approaches to address gender based violence and HIV transmission on campus. The participant sample will consist of students who will be randomly selected from four mixed sex campus residences. The research design will consist of two phased trials, with both an intervention and a control group. Quantitative data will be gathered by researchers from questionnaires that will be administered to both the intervention and control group. Researchers will also conduct in-depth interviews with five members of the intervention and five members of the control group. The qualitative data will be analysed using the Nvivo software whereas the quantitative data will be analysed using the SPSS software package. The findings will be used to inform future bystander approaches to gender-based violence prevention programmes at universities in Southern Africa.

University Student Leaders’ Perceptions of Safety and Fear of Sexual Violence on Campus

Sinegugu Duma
Division of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Cape Town

Actual and perceived threats to personal safety and fear of sexual victimization among female undergraduate students result in self-protective behaviours that may lead to loss of personal freedom associated with university life.

The purpose of the study was to examine student leaders’ perceptions about fear of sexual victimization and threats to personal safety confronting undergraduate female students on campus and university residences.
Thirty seven male and female student leaders participated in facilitated focus group discussions. Content analysis revealed the following five themes (i) false safety perceptions, (ii) space related and time related threats to personal safety, (iii) constant worry about sexual violence, (iv) tolerance of rape culture, and (v) self-protective behaviours against sexual violence. The subtheme on male students’ disbelief about female students’ fears for their safety on campus denotes general view on false safety perceptions on campus.

False safety perceptions make individuals to neglect to take basic precautions to protect themselves and thus expose themselves to crime. Constant worry about sexual victimization on campus affects emotional health and could be responsible for an increase in the drop out of female students from university studies.

The identification of perceived fears of sexual violence and threats to personal safety while on campus and university residences is critical for the development of primary prevention intervention for personal safety and prevention of sexual violence on campus.

Mobilising Male University Students on the Issue of Violence

Crispin Hemson
International Centre of Nonviolence, Durban University of Technology

While the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 1995; 2005) has been brought into question, the ways in which the identities of men are caught up in violence remain. In particular, we in South Africa are still in a context in which men are caught up in the perpetration of violence against women and children at very high levels.

The research question is, ‘How can men develop in their understanding of and ability to respond to violence through a collaborative process of reflecting, in a context of high societal violence?’

The methodology is that of action research, focused on a group of young men, primarily rural in background, at Durban University of Technology. They formed Amajita in response to the establishment of a group of young women focused on combating sexual violence. Amajita has focused strongly on speaking of experience in a context of safety.

The findings are drawn from the analysis of two sources, the notes by the researcher, who was asked to support this group, and the written reflections by men of the group.

One finding is that some members were insistent from the outset of the need to speak of their having been subject to extreme violence in childhood within families. This attests to Breckenridge’s (1998) point about the “centrality of controlled violence in the upbringing of both white and black men.” The continuity between men’s experience of violence and the perpetration of violence became a central theme (Gould, 2016), developing a sense of the continuity of violence and the possibility of interrupting it through the creation of spaces in which men experience safety.
“Don’t Wear That Thing Because Guys’ Eyes Have No Boundaries”: Constructing Gender Based Violence on a University Campus

Ronicka Mudaly, Shakila Singh, Asheena Singh Pillay and Bongeka Mabaso  
*University of KwaZulu Natal*

Recent national student protests have illuminated multiple challenges experienced by South African students at higher education institutions. Student actions have forced the gaze of the public and university officials to focus on gender based violence in particular. Our study adopted a critical approach to explore the views and accounts of gender based violence of female students at a large metropolitan university in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In this qualitative study, a survey tool and semi structured interviews were used to generate data to respond to the following research question: “What are your perspectives and experiences of gender based violence at this university”? Theoretical insights from sexual script theory and organizational theory informed this study. Using simple frequency tests for selected survey items, as well as content analysis of qualitative questions, several insights related to the aetiology of sexual violence were revealed. These include the enduring nature of traditional gendered scripts, embedded in the pervasive influence of gender socialization in sexual interactions. Criminogenic convergences, which were linked to the disinhibiting influence of alcohol and drugs, were used to explain some incidents of sexual violence. The effect of the lack of guardianship from the higher education institution, and how this could be remedied through the formulation and implementation of a sexual violence policy, was underscored.

Managing Rape Culture: Reconceptualising Gender-Based Violence in Universities

Anthony Collins  
*Durban University of Technology*

This presentation offers a critique of traditional approaches to dealing with gender-based violence at South African universities. Clarifying the weaknesses of the historical triad of physical security, prosecution and survivor counselling, it goes on to focus on the question of rape culture and the institutional context in which gender-based violence occurs. Here rape culture not reduced to an aspect of some generalised patriarchy, but rather analysed within the specifics of various South African universities. Two influential tendencies are highlighted: critical social science education as a catalyst for personal and social transformation, and the rise of the neoliberal university as a managed corporate brand. These two themes are explored in detail to provide a framework for understanding how to challenge rape culture and reduce gender-based violence in South African universities.