Results of the Rutgers University - New Brunswick 2018

#iSPEAK

Campus Climate Assessment

Dating Violence Module

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In 2018, all Rutgers–New Brunswick students were invited to participate in a campus climate survey to assess the prevalence of sexual and dating violence among students, as well as students' perceptions of the university, knowledge of resources related to sexual and dating violence, and disclosure (or non-disclosure) of incidents of sexual and dating violence.[1] In order to reduce response burden, students were randomly assigned to either the sexual violence module or the dating violence module. The following report presents results from the **dating violence survey module**.[2]

A broad outreach campaign, including print materials, social media, and direct communications publicized the survey. Over the survey period, 5,911 students participated in the survey (14.0% of eligible students). Of the 5,911 students who participated in the campus climate survey, 2,976 (50%) completed the dating violence module.

Women were overrepresented in the dating violence survey sample (69% of the dating violence survey module compared to about 50% of the student population). Approximately 42% of the sample identified as white, slightly over a third as Asian (32% of the sample), 14% identified as Hispanic, and 7% identified as Black/African American.

Key Findings:

1. **About 50% of students reported at least one experience of dating violence since coming to campus.**

Students who reported ever having been in a romantic relationship (n = 2102; 71% of sample) were asked how frequently they had experienced 52 different unhealthy dating behaviors since coming to Rutgers University–New Brunswick. A legal expert reviewed each behavior to determine whether it met the criteria of either a violation of the student code of conduct and/or a Title IX violation. Some behaviors met this criteria if they happened at least once (e.g., my partner kicked me) whereas others required a pattern of abuse (e.g., my partner damaged something that belonged to me). One behavior ("my partner threatened to start dating someone else") was determined not to meet the criteria of dating abuse. For a complete list of the 52 items and the criteria please see Appendix.

These 52 behaviors were then collapsed into four general categories of dating abuse: physical (e.g., pushing, shoving, or grabbing partner), psychological (e.g., saying things to hurt partner's feelings on purpose), digital (e.g., pressuring partner to respond quickly to calls, texts, or other messages), and financial (e.g., doing things to keep partner from going to job or classes).

Over one-half of Rutgers University – New Brunswick students (52%) reported at least one experience of dating violence. More specifically, 21% reported at least one experience of physical dating violence, 32% reported at least one experience of psychological dating violence, 38% reported at least one experience

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[1] The survey tool is based on the *Not Alone* toolkit from The White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault (2014). Retrieved from https://www.justice.gov/ovw/protecting-students-sexual-assault
[2] A full report of all survey questions as well as other reports on specific populations/topics are available on the Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) website.

of digital dating abuse, and 7% reported at least one experience of financial abuse. Undergraduate students were more likely to experience physical and digital dating violence than were graduate

students (odds ratios were 1.5 and 1.7, respectively), but the pattern of frequency (digital dating abuse and psychological abuse as most common, financial abuse and physical abuse as least common) was the same for both graduate and undergraduate students.

The most common type of physical dating violence, for both women and men, was being pushed, grabbed, or shoved (10% of women and 8% of men experienced this behavior at least once). The most common type of psychological dating violence, for both women and men, was a partner saying things to hurt their feelings on purpose (16% of women and 17% of men experienced this behavior two or more times). The most common type of digital dating abuse for women was being pressured to sext (i.e., send a sexual text or naked photo; 20% of women experienced this behavior at least once), whereas for men the most common type of digital dating abuse was being pressured to respond quickly to calls, texts, or other messages (14% of men experienced this behavior two or more times). The most common type of financial abuse, for both women and men, was having a partner do things to prevent them from going to class or work (5% of women and 6% of men experienced this behavior two or more times).

Physical dating violence

Physical dating violence was divided into three types: mild (e.g., scratched), moderate (e.g., slammed or held against will), and severe (e.g., assaulted with gun or knife).

Men had 1.8 times greater odds of experiencing mild physical dating violence than women, whereas women had 1.6 greater odds of experiencing moderate physical dating violence than men; there was no gender difference in severe physical dating violence (see Figure 1).
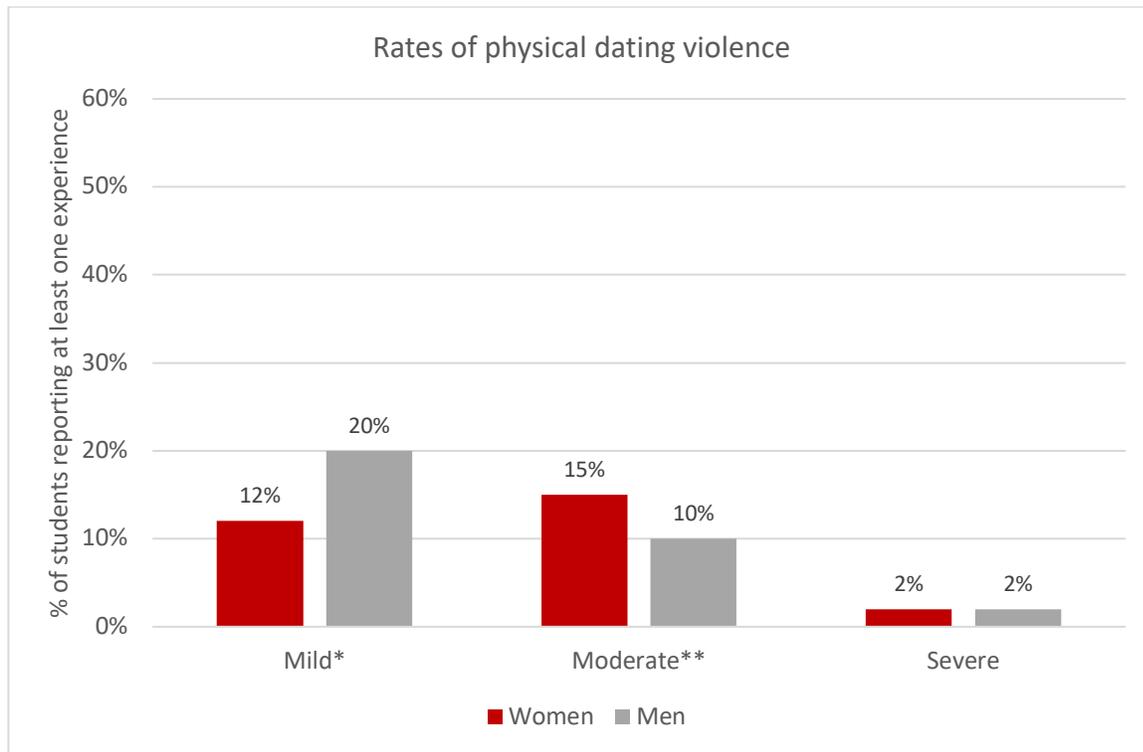
Figure 1. *Rates of physical dating violence by gender.*
*The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 19.49$, $p < .001$; **The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 8.24$, $p = .004$.

Psychological dating violence

Psychological dating violence was divided into three types: emotional abuse (e.g., did something purposefully to make partner jealous), threats of physical abuse (e.g., threw something at partner but missed), and control (e.g., would not let partner do things with other people). Women had 1.3 times greater odds of experiencing emotional abuse; there were no gender differences in threats of physical abuse or control (see Figure 2).
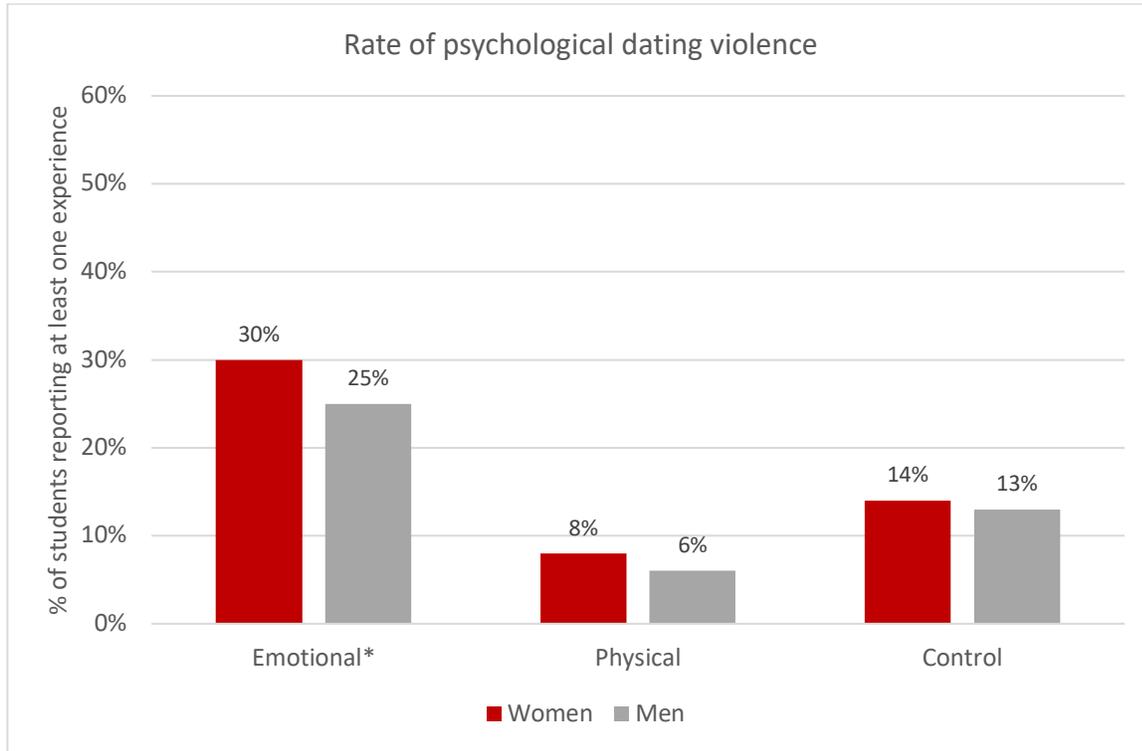
Figure 2. *Rates of psychological dating violence by gender.*
*The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 5.20$, $p = .02$.

Digital dating abuse

Digital dating abuse was divided into three categories: sexual coercion (e.g., pressured to send naked photo), direct aggression (e.g., sent a mean or hurtful message), and monitoring/control (e.g., pressured for passwords to access accounts). Women had 2.6 greater odds of experiencing digital sexual coercion than men. There were no gender differences in direct aggression or monitoring/control (see Figure 3).
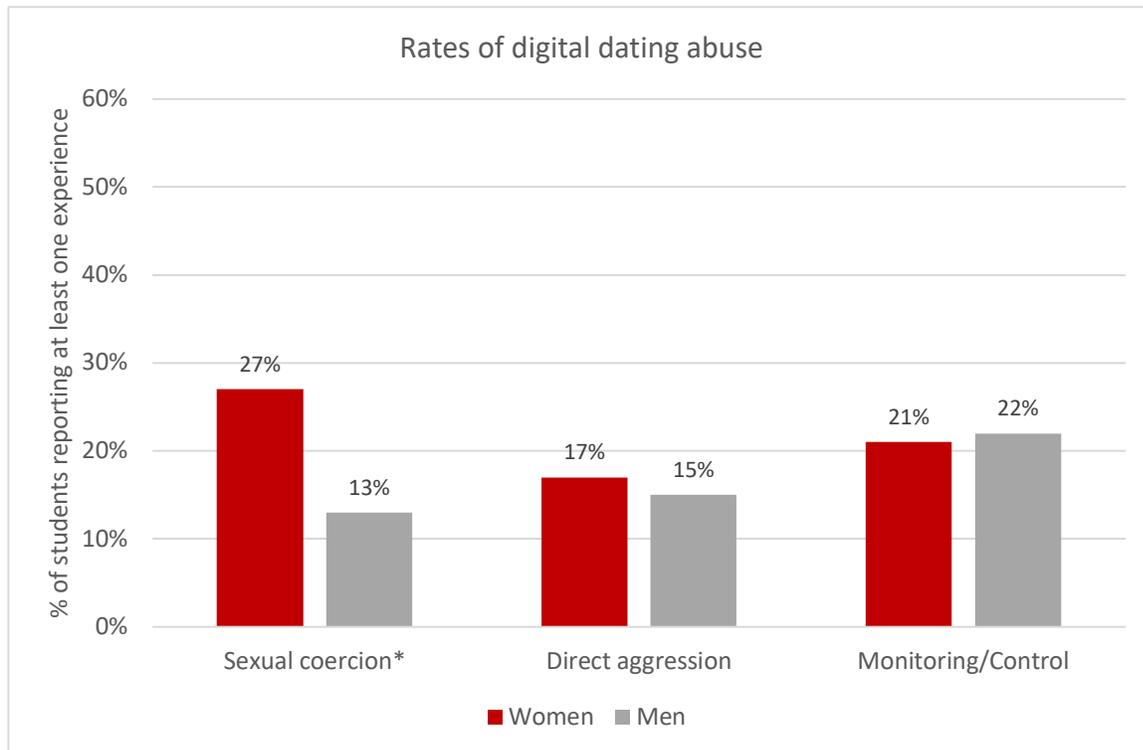
Figure 3. *Rates of digital dating abuse by gender.*
*The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 48.93$, $p < .001$.

Financial dating abuse

Participants responded to three types of financial dating abuse: a partner building up debt under their name, a partner demanding to know how money was spent, and a partner preventing them from going to work or class. Men had 2.5 greater odds of reporting their partner demanded to know how money was spent than women. There were no other gender differences in experiences of financial dating abuse (see Figure 4).
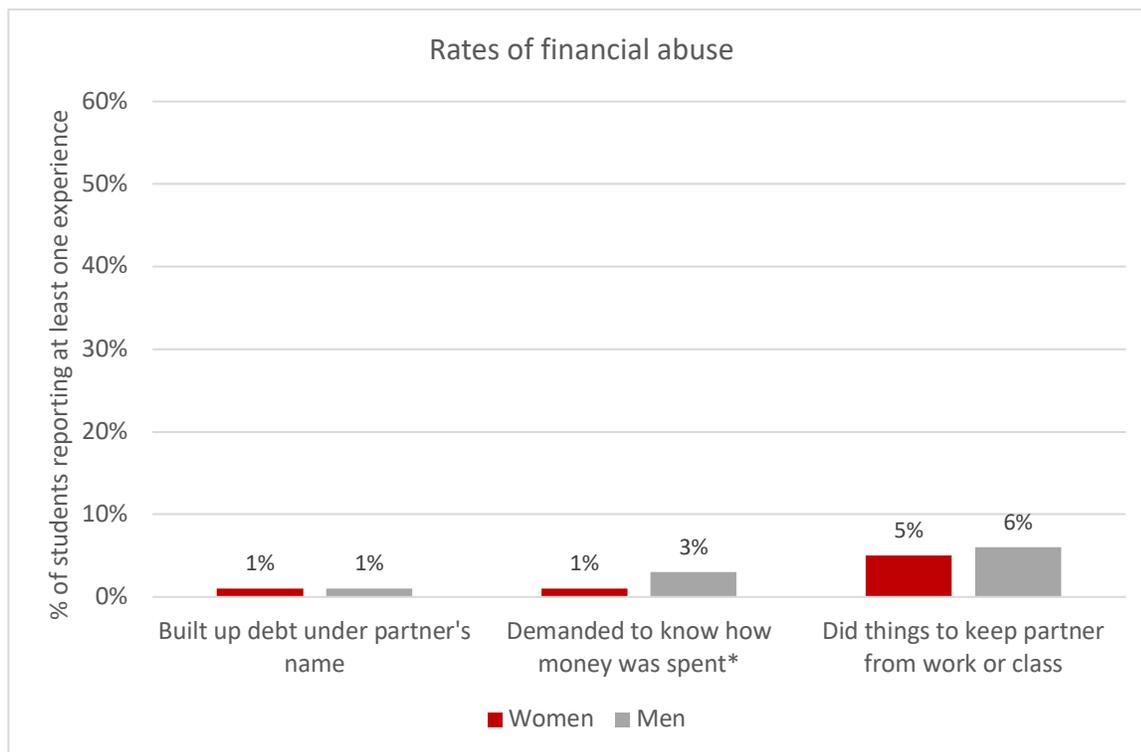

Figure 4. *Rates of financial abuse by gender.*
*The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 8.50$, $p = .004$.

Participants who affirmed any experience of dating violence were asked a series of follow-up questions about the incident that had the greatest impact on them, including several questions about the perpetrator.

Almost all women students who experienced dating violence reported a male perpetrator (94%). Most men who reported dating violence reported a female perpetrator (82%), although 13% of male students who experienced dating violence reported a male perpetrator.

About 50% of students who experienced dating violence reported that the perpetrator was a current Rutgers student.

2. Most students did not disclose dating violence to anyone.

Most students who experienced dating violence did not tell anyone about the most serious incident (60%). Just over one-third of students who experienced dating violence disclosed the most serious incident to someone (39%); half (46%) did so within the first 24 hours. Women had 2.5 greater odds than men of disclosing to someone (see Figure 5). Graduate and undergraduate students were equally likely to disclose to someone.

Students were most likely to tell a friend at Rutgers (29% of all students who experienced dating violence told a friend at Rutgers). Very few students disclosed to a formal support service: 3% disclosed to the Office of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA), 5% to a counselor at Rutgers, and less than 1% to Title IX. Only 1% of students filed a formal complaint with the university.

Although few disclosed to formal support services, of those who did disclose to VPVA, 63% said VPVA's response was helpful. Of those who disclosed to a Rutgers therapist, 58% said the therapist's response was helpful. The sample of people who disclosed to Title IX was not large enough to examine perceived helpfulness.

Disclosure sources for dating violence

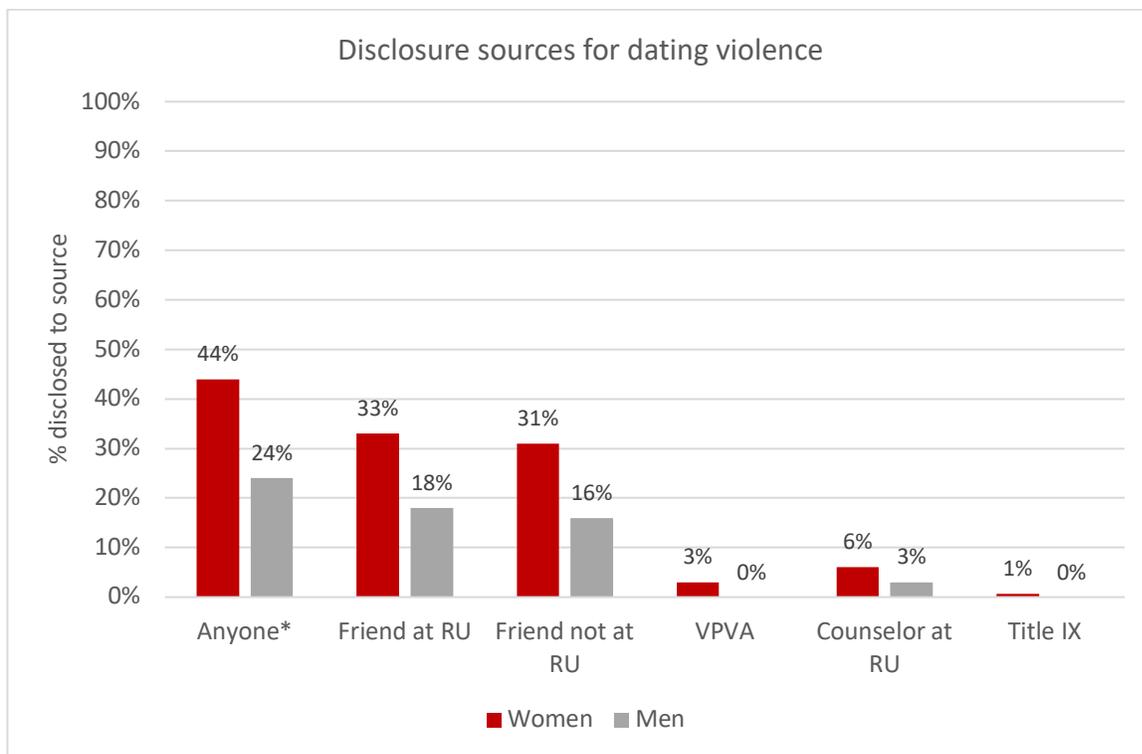| Source	Women	Men
Anyone*	44%	24%
Friend at RU	33%	18%
Friend not at RU	31%	16%
VPVA	3%	0%
Counselor at RU	6%	3%
Title IX	1%	0%

Figure 5. *Percentage of students who disclosed dating violence to anyone, and to particular disclosure sources, by gender.*
*The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 35.51$, $p < .001$.

3. Most survivors of dating violence did not disclose because they felt it was a private matter or didn't think it was serious enough to disclose.

The most common reasons for not disclosing dating violence were: "It is a private matter," "I didn't think what happened was serious enough to talk about," "I had other things I needed to focus on," "I didn't think others would think it was serious" and "I didn't want others to worry about me." Women were more likely than men to cite each of these reasons (odds ratios ranged from 1.6 to 2.1). Far less common was "I didn't know reporting procedures on campus" (there was no difference by gender or graduate/undergraduate status for this item).

Reasons for non-disclosure of dating violence

Reason	Women	Men
Private matter (a)	69%	61%
Not serious enough to talk about (b)	56%	46%
Other things to focus on (c)	40%	25%
Others wouldn't think serious (d)	33%	22%
Didn't want others to worry (e)	32%	20%
Didn't know reporting procedures	9%	8%

% endorsed reason

■ Women ■ Men
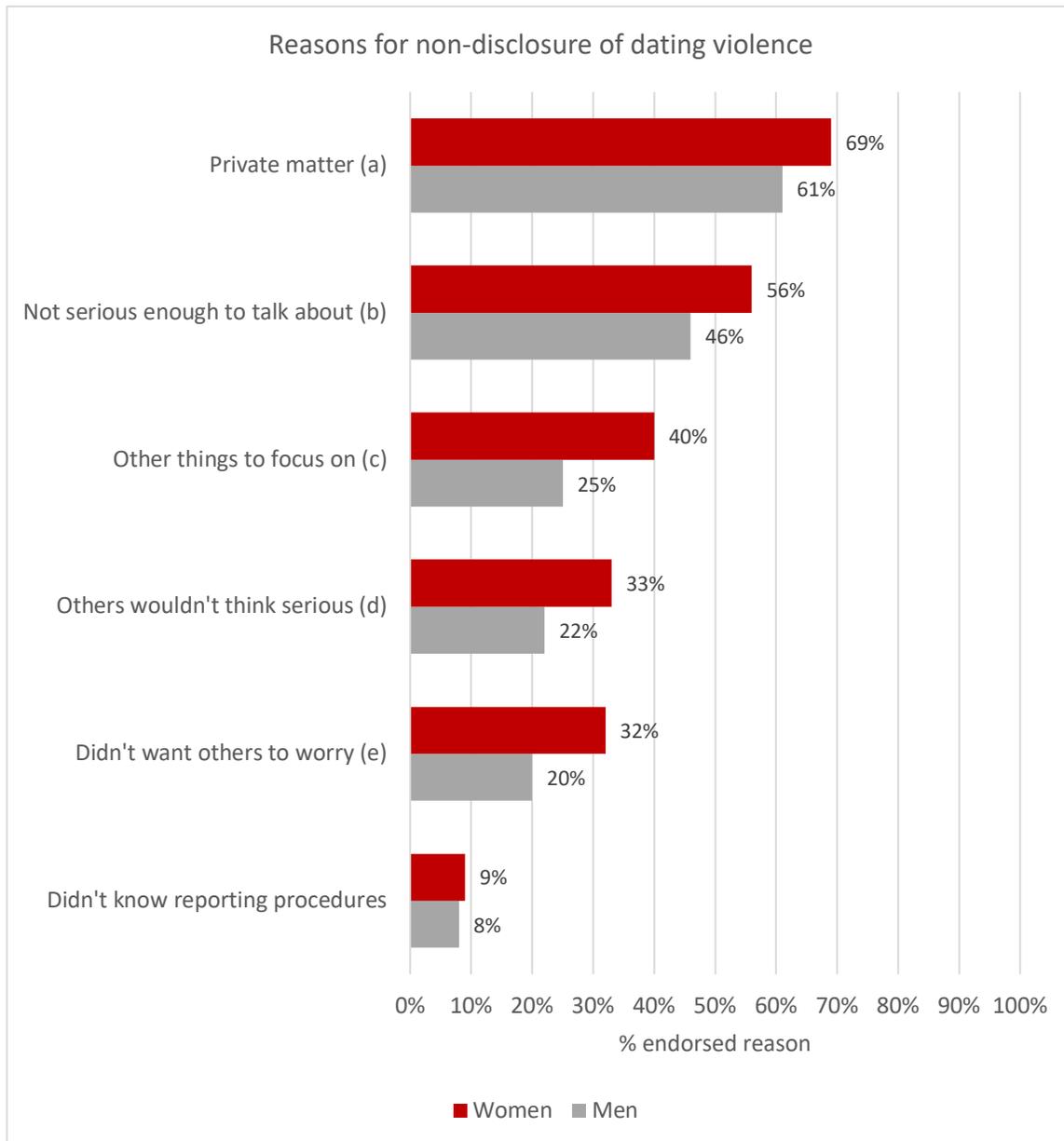
Figure 6. *Percentage of students who cited reasons for nondisclosure of dating violence by gender.*
[a] $X^2(1) = 8.22$, *p* = .004; [b] $X^2(1) = 9.47$, *p* = .002; [c] $X^2(1) = 19.79$, *p* < .001; [d] $X^2(1) = 12.17$, *p* < .001; [e] $X^2(1) = 15.66$, *p* < .001.

4. **Perceptions of the university's response to dating violence were generally positive; perceptions of fellow students were more neutral.**

Students were asked seven questions to assess their perceptions of how the university would handle a report of dating violence. Students were also asked three questions to assess their perceptions of how fellow students would handle a report of dating violence. Scores ranged from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions of the university/fellow students.

Both women and men had positive perceptions of the university as demonstrated by their relatively high overall scores (the average score was nearly 4 on a 1 to 5; see Figure 7). There were no differences in perceptions of the university by gender or graduate/undergraduate status.
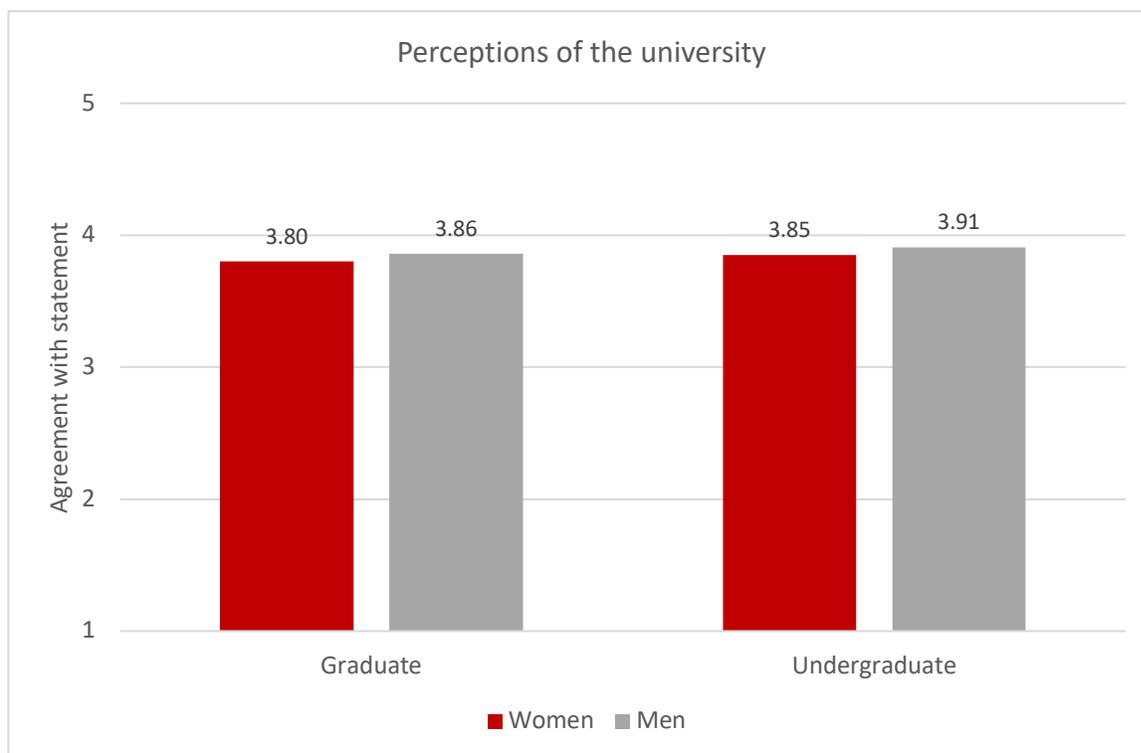
Figure 7. *Perceptions of how the university would handle a report of dating violence by gender and student status.*
Note. Victimization was included as a control variable. There were no differences by gender or graduate/undergraduate status.

Perceptions of fellow students were closer to neutral (the average score was about 3 on a 1 to 5 scale; see Figure 8). There were no differences in perceptions of fellow students by gender or graduate/undergraduate status.

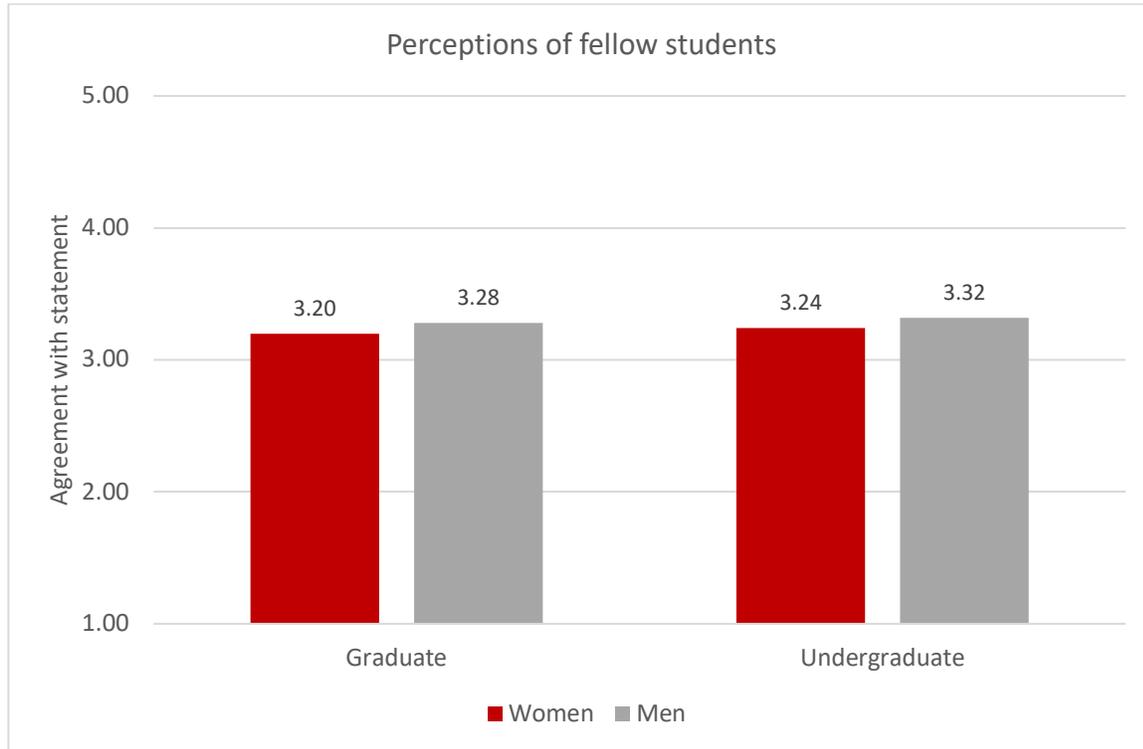**Perceptions of fellow students**

Figure 8. *Perceptions of how fellow students would handle a report of dating violence by gender and student status.*
Note. Victimization was included as a control variable. There were no differences by gender or graduate/undergraduate status.

5. **Students generally felt confident about seeking help if they or someone they know experienced dating violence.**

Students were asked whether they know where to get help on campus if they or a friend were to experience dating violence. Students rated their knowledge of where to get help on a 1 to 5 scale, with higher scores indicating more knowledge.

Students were moderately knowledgeable about where to get help for dating violence, as demonstrated by their overall average scores (a little over 3 on a 1 to 5 scale). Graduate students were less knowledgeable than undergraduate students and men were less knowledgeable than women (see Figure 9).
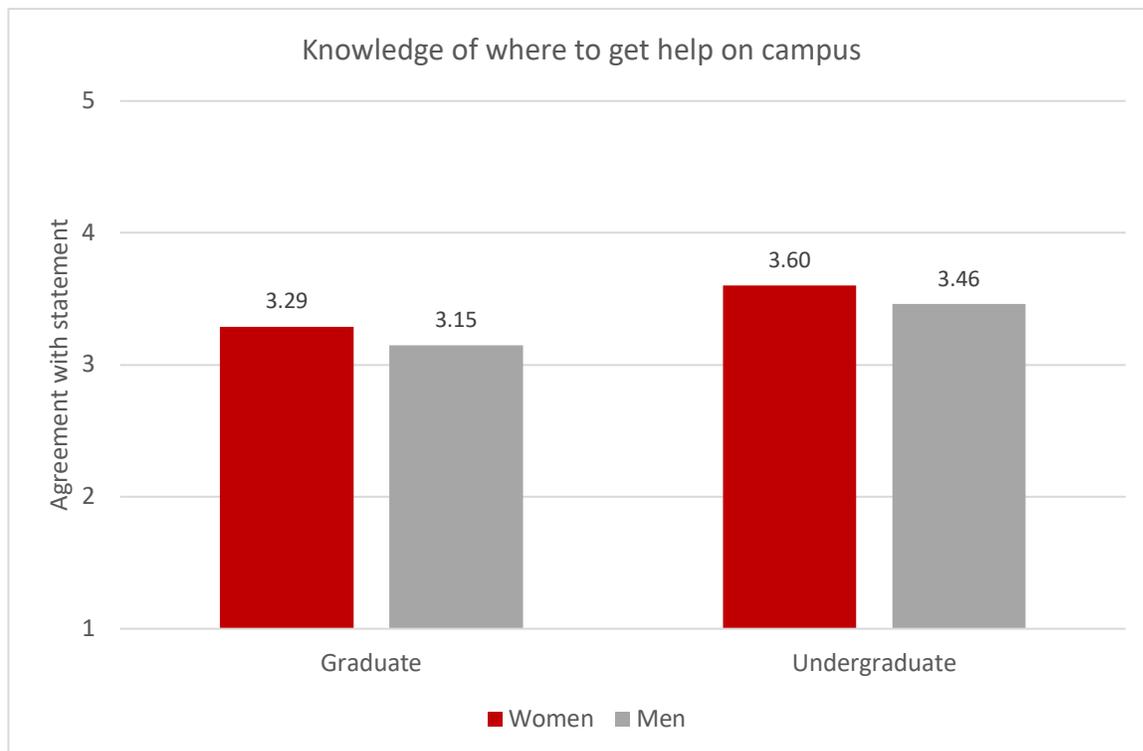
Figure 9. *Knowledge of where to get help on campus by gender.*
Note. Victimization was included as a control variable. There is a significant difference by gender, $F(1,1824) = 5.09$, $p = .02$, and undergraduate/graduate status, $F(1,1824) = 20.76$, $p < .001$.

Conclusion

Dating violence is a common experience among students: about 1 in 2 students reported at least one experience of dating violence. Men were more likely than women to report mild physical violence. This finding may be explained by methodological issues that create false positives.[3] In other words, the ways in which questions about dating violence are phrased on surveys may create the appearance of gender parity (i.e., similar rates for women and men), whereas police reports and homicide data suggest that women are far more likely to be victimized.

Although the concept of digital dating abuse (i.e., dating abuse perpetrated through technology, such as cell phones or social media) is somewhat new, the results from the iSPEAK survey suggest that it is common among students. For women, sexual coercion perpetrated through cell phones or social media (e.g., pressured to send a naked photo) is especially common (27% of women report this experience). This finding aligns with other results from iSPEAK that demonstrate women are at a greater risk of sexual violence than men.

Unlike sexual violence, for which most survivors disclose the experience, most survivors of dating violence do *not* tell anyone what happened to them and very few tell formal support sources, such as VPVA. Students may feel that offices such as VPVA or Title IX only address sexual assault or that dating violence is not as serious as sexual assault. Additional educational opportunities may be useful in order to inform students about resources available for dating violence.

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[3] Hamby, S. (2016). Self-report measures that do not produce gender parity in intimate partner violence: A multi-study investigation. *Psychology of Violence*, *6*(2), 323-335. DOI: 10.1037/a0038207.

Appendix

Unhealthy dating behavior	Does this violate the Rutgers Code of Conduct?	Is this a Title IX violation?	Considered DV in analysis if frequency is...
Scratched me	If on purpose, yes	Maybe	>=1
Slapped me	Yes	Yes	>=1
Physically twisted my arm	Yes	Yes	>=1
Slammed me or held me against my will	Yes	Yes	>=1
Kicked me	Yes	Yes	>=1
Bent my fingers	Yes	Yes	>=1
Bit me	Yes	Yes	>=1
Tried to choke me or choked me	Yes	Yes	>=1
Pushed, grabbed, or shoved me	Yes	Probably	>=1
Dumped me out of a car	Yes	Yes	>=1
Threw something at me that hit me	Yes	Yes	>=1
Burned me	Yes	Yes	>=1
Hit me with a fist	Yes	Yes	>=1
Hit me with something hard besides a fist	Yes	Yes	>=1
Beat me up	Yes	Yes	>=1
Assaulted me with a gun or knife	Yes	Yes	>=1
Damaged something that belonged to me	Yes	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Said things to hurt my feelings on purpose	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2

Insulted me in front of others	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Threw something at me but missed	Yes	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Would not let me do things with other people	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Threatened to start dating someone else	Probably not	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	N/A – does not meet criteria
Told me I could not talk to a person who is of the gender I date	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Started to hit me but stopped	Yes	Maybe	>=1
Did something purposefully to make me jealous	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Blamed me for bad things they did	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Threatened to hurt me	Yes	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Made me describe where I was every minute of the day	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Brought up something from the past to hurt me	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Put down my looks	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2

Built up debt under my name by doing things like using my credit card or running up the cell phone bill	Yes	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Demanded to know how money was spent	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Did things to keep me from going to my job or my classes	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Pressured me to sext (sending a sexual text or naked photo of myself)	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	>=1
Sent a sexual text or naked photo of himself/herself/themselves to me that I did not want	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	>=1
Sent a sexual text or naked photo or video of me to others without my permission	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	>=1
Shared an embarrassing photo or video of me with others (such as a Snapchat or YouTube video) without permission	Maybe	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	>=1
Used the internet or a cell phone to pressure me to have sex or do other sexual activities	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	Sexual exploitation / sexual intimidation	>=1
Sent a mean or hurtful PRIVATE message (such as a text message, Snapchat, Twitter direct message, etc.)	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Posted a mean or hurtful PUBLIC message about me that others can see using social media (such as group text, subtweet, etc.)	Maybe (defamation)	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2

Used the internet or a cell phone to spread a rumor about me	Maybe (defamation)	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Used the internet or a cell phone to send me a threatening message	Yes	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Pressured me to respond quickly to calls, texts, or other messages	Probably not on its own, but maybe if part of a pattern of abuse	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Used the internet or a cell phone to monitor my whereabouts and activities	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Used the internet or a cell phone to threaten to harm me physically	Yes	Maybe	>=1
Sent so many messages (like texts, chats) that it made me feel uncomfortable	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Used the internet or a cell phone to monitor who I talk to or who I am friends with	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Pressured me for passwords to access my cell phone or online accounts	Probably	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Used my cell phone or online account to pretend they were me	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Looked at my private information (text messages, emails, etc.) to check up on me without my permission	Probably	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Used information from my social networking site(s) to tease me or put me down	Probably	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2
Pressured me to share my location using social media (such as a Snapchat)	Maybe	Yes if part of pattern of abuse	>=2