RaY

Research at the University of York St John

For more information please contact RaY at ray@yorksj.ac.uk

Are Bystander Intervention Programmes Effective at Tackling Sexual Violence in Emerging Adults?

Anna Macklin, Nathalie Noret, and Nicholas Streatfield

York St John University

1 Introduction

All students regardless of gender, sexuality and religion "are entitled to enjoy a safe and positive experience at university" (Universities UK, 2016, p. 1)

➢ In both the UK (Universities UK, 2016) and USA (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2016) university campuses have been identified as environments in which sexual violence is endemic.

➢ Sexual violence is thought to develop through a triad of factors: motivated offenders, available victims and the absence of capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

➢ Previous prevention strategies have focused on empowering females to reduce their risk, but this places responsibility for avoiding sexual violence with the victim (Powell, 2011); sexual violence occurs within and between genders and both males and females have a role to play in enabling a cultural shift towards zero tolerance.
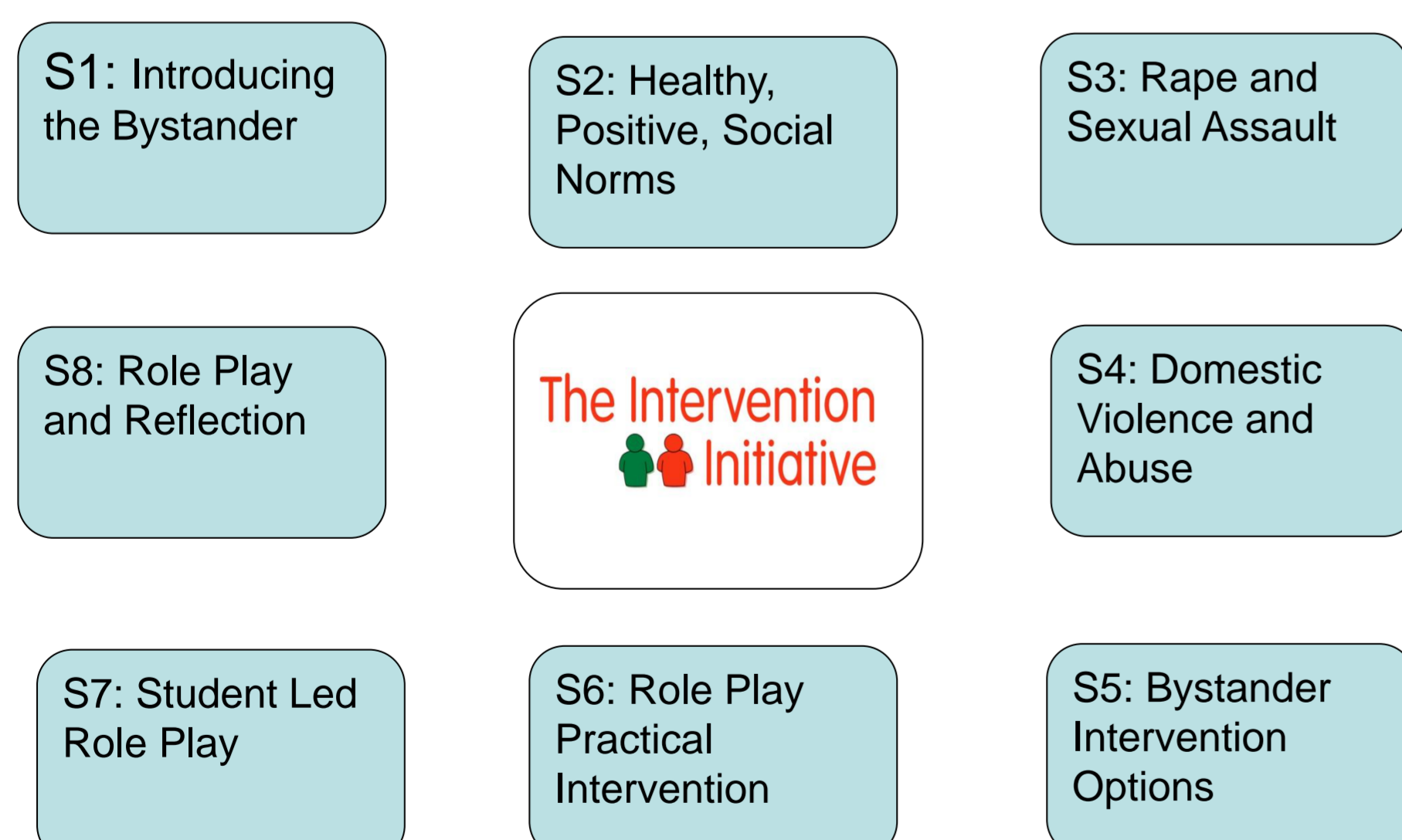
Bystander Intervention

➢ The bystander method, underpinned by the work of Darley and Lantané (1968), aims to reduce sexual violence by engaging the whole community and empowering individuals to move from passive bystander behaviour to active bystander behaviour; noticing problematic behaviours and choosing to do or say something in response (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2004).

➢ In the US federal law requires colleges and universities to provide sexual violence prevention programmes (Coker et al., 2014). In the UK there is no such mandate; however, bystander programmes are recognised as good practice (Universities UK, 2016).

➢ The Intervention Initiative (TII) is a bystander programme developed in the UK to promote change in the social environments that facilitate sexual violence (Fenton, Mott, & Rumney, 2015).

Aims: The current study was a pilot investigation focusing on the effectiveness of TII in enhancing students' bystander behaviour, and evaluating the programme for use with undergraduate students in the UK.

2 Method

➢ Thirty participants volunteered to attend the TII programme which was delivered by two female members of academic staff and one male member of staff from Student Services.

➢ The sessions were delivered over eight weeks with each session lasting between one and two hours.

Figure 1. The Intervention Initiative Sessions

S1: Introducing the Bystander	S2: Healthy, Positive, Social Norms	S3: Rape and Sexual Assault
S8: Role Play and Reflection	The Intervention Initiative	S4: Domestic Violence and Abuse
S7: Student Led Role Play	S6: Role Play Practical Intervention	S5: Bystander Intervention Options

➢ An evaluation questionnaire was administered at three time points using an online survey tool (www.survey monkey.com). The number of participants volunteering to complete the questionnaires were: time 1 (n = 15), time 2 (n = 10), time 3 (n = 8).

➢ **Bystander Self Efficacy Scale** (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2005): This scale measures participant's confidence in their ability to perform 18 different bystander behaviours. A higher score indicates a greater self-efficacy.

➢ **Evaluation of TII**: Participants were asked open ended questions exploring 1) why they volunteered for the programme, 2) ways in which the programme had influenced their bystander behaviours (T2 and T3), 3) opinions on the material and delivery of the programme (T3 only).

3 Results

Table 1. Mean (SD) Bystander Self-Efficacy Scores

	Time 1 (N=15)	Time 2 (N=10)	Time 3 (N=8)
Bystander Self-Efficacy Score	76.16 (9.87)	89.39 (5.02)	92.22 (4.89)

Evaluation of TII

1) Influence on bystander behaviours
Content analysis of participants responses to the open ended question relating to the use of bystander behaviours identified two core themes :

Change in thinking or attitude
I have definitely thought differently about situations and have more knowledge of how to subtly deal with varying situations in which I feel uncomfortable.

Active intervention
On a few occasions I have refused to laugh along at racist and homophobic remarks and have always challenged the person on what they have said. Since bystander I now realise the impact an action such as this can have.

2) Reasons for Volunteering

Develop Skills
I feel it will be a great learning experience.

CV/Career
To aid my volunteer work, help with future careers and benefit applications for masters.

Interest
I thought it would be an interesting opportunity to be involved in.

3) Material and Delivery

➢ Students found the lecture content, in class discussions, case studies and videos most useful.
➢ Role plays and supporting online material was found to be the least useful.
➢ Comments provided focused on the importance of establishing a safe and comfortable environment for delivery

I have really enjoyed the secure environment you've created within the sessions; it's very chatty and social which makes students more likely to contribute and discuss the topics.

The kind of environment that the three of you provided was so comfortable and non-judgemental, which made the programme much more enjoyable, and made me feel like I could contribute my points of view to the group.

4 Discussion

➢ Empowering individuals to feel a sense of personal responsibility to intervene, providing education to challenge myths around sexual violence, and equipping individuals with the skills to intervene increased bystander self efficacy.

➢ Anticipate a reduction in prevalence rates on campus; currently limited data collected in UK.

➢ Positive response to delivery and material from participants, important that facilitators are flexible in their delivery to suit the needs of each cohort and employ a range of teaching and learning activities (Nation et al., 2003).

➢ Voluntary attendance utilised as forcing participation can lead to disengagement with the material and the development of more extreme attitudes (Hilton, 2000).

➢ The programme enhances bystander self-efficacy but also enriches the student experience, and enables students to develop transferable skills such as communication, empathy, and team work.

➢ Promoting the value added aspects of the programme and encouraging all students to see themselves as part of the solution to ending sexual violence may encourage attendance (Berkowtiz, 2009).

➢ Small sample size so only tentative conclusions but we concur with Fenton, Mott, McCartan, and Rumney (2016) that large scale evaluations and the development of appropriate measures is essential to facilitate the development of bystander intervention programmes in the UK.