



A Culturally Adapted Sexual Assault Intervention for Indigenous Women and Girls

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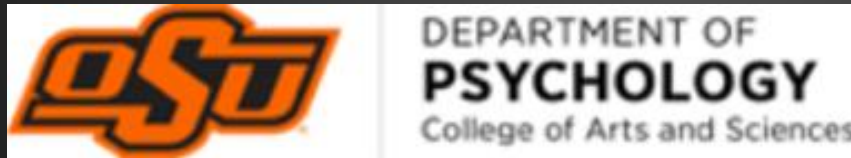
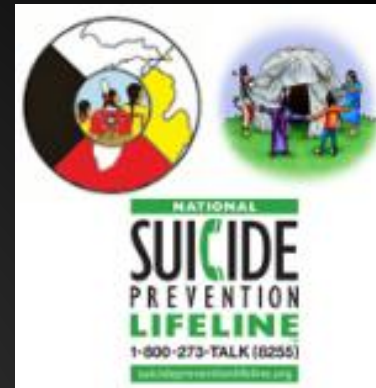
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My Context



Outline

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- Q&A



1 IN 5 WOMEN

will be a target of sexual assault while on campus



Background

To learn more about
Two Spirit and
LGBTQ+ Health

text
LGBTQ2S
to
97779



- This number rises to **1 in 4 Indigenous college women**.
- The number of Indigenous Two-spirit, non-binary, and sexual-minoritized individuals who experience rape is **unknown**.
- Approximately **50%** of sexual assaults on college campuses involve **alcohol use**.
- Rape increases the risk of nearly every psychological disorder, particularly PTSD, MDD, & SUD.
- **Only 2 EB sexual assault prevention programs exist.**
 1. Flip the Script (e.g., EAAA model, Senn et al., 2015)
 2. Bystander Intervention (Gilmore et al., 2015)
 - Brief Drinking Intervention (Clinton-Sherrod et al., 2011)
 - Tribal-specific interventions (e.g., “Tribal Best Practices” or TBPs)

Self-Defense for Indigenous Peoples' (SDIP) Study (MPIs: Cole & Anderson)

- *This multi-site, multi-method, formative study aimed to:*
 1. Assess mental health needs among Indigenous college students using a quantitative survey.
 2. Assess gaps and needs in current self-defense interventions through interviews with Indigenous college students and providers of sexual assault prevention programs to examine the acceptability and feasibility of existing interventions.
- *Funded by the PEACE OUTSIDE CAMPUS: Lindsey M. Bonistall Foundation Grant & EPSCoR North Dakota State Office (Co-PIs: Anderson & Cole).



Indigenous Vision MMIW Logo
created by: Souta Calling Last
<https://www.indigenousvision.org/mmiwarriors/>

SDIP: Method


- Recruited Indigenous college students from 10 Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) and 2 predominantly White institutions (PWIs); later expanded to national recruitment.
 - SONA Psychology Participant Pools
 - Social Media (Google, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook)
- Survey – Indigenous college students ages 18+
- In-depth interviews – Indigenous college students & Providers of sexual assault prevention programs
- Select Survey Measures
 - Alcohol Use (DDQ; Collins et al., 1985)
 - Drug Use (DAST-10; Skinner, 1982)
 - PTSD (PCL-5; adapted from Weathers et al. 2013)



SDIP: Demographics

- **N = 401** Indigenous college students completed the survey
- Completed in-depth interviews with:
 - **N = 14** Indigenous college students
 - **N = 8** Providers of sexual assault prevention programs
-]Most (**87.6%**) survey participants were currently enrolled in college, (**60.5%**) attended a TCU, and were **24-years-old** ($M = 24.40, SD = 4.2$)
- Most identified as women (**78.6%**), followed by men (**18.8%**), and trans/Two-spirit individuals (**7.2%**)
- Most identified as heterosexual (**78.2%**), followed by Two-spirit (**6.0%**), & gay/lesbian (**4.9%**)





SDIP Paper 1: Resilience and Low Substance Use Among Indigenous College Students from a Sexual Assault Prevention Study

- The goal of this paper was to simultaneously examine resilience and risk factors associated with sexual assault and substance use using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods study design.

SDIP: Descriptive Results

- Most (71.6%) screened positive for current PTSD symptoms
- 37.2% reported participating in a self-defense training
- 25.6% reported participating in a bystander intervention
- When asked to rank 4 different sexual assault prevention and/or alcohol reduction programs, participants were nearly evenly split in their preferences:
 1. Combined sexual assault & alcohol risk reduction program (26.3%)
 2. Self-defense program (25.9%)
 3. Bystander program (24.4%)
 4. Alcohol risk reduction intervention (17.3%)

SDIP: Substance Use Descriptives

Alcohol & Drug Use


- Number of reported drinks in the last week ranged from 0-43, mean = 13.3, median = 4, mode = 2.
- 13.6% of the sample reported a DAST drug abuse screening score of 3 or higher

Risky Alcohol Use

	Men %	Women %
Past Week	3.2	7.2
Past Month	3.2	5.4
Heaviest episode per month	0.2	3.0

SDIP: Qualitative Interview Analysis

- Semi-structured interview guide was developed to compliment the survey
 - Cultural involvement
 - Risk factors for sexual violence
 - Protective factors against sexual violence
- 4 coders developed a codebook
 - Independently coded students' transcribed interviews using Dedoose (Version 9.0.62)
 - *Coding of provider interviews is ongoing



Qualitative Interview Results: 2 Themes (and 2 sub-themes)

1. Systemic inequities that place Indigenous Peoples at higher risk for sexual violence

1a. Using substances to cope with colonization and trauma

“It’s used a lot in pain, with alcoholism and addiction and sexual abuse. That runs deep. That runs heavy. It’s the perpetrator of most of the damage for the Native American communities. Yeah, because like...what they did to the kids at the boarding schools, that still has its lasting effects to us there to a lot of people.” – Participant #5

1b. Certain communities are more deeply impacted by systemic inequities, which are barriers to care

“...the time, the resources and just like transportation and ability to get there. I work at [mental health center] with a large population of our people, our clients are Native American and talking with them about their families... Not even just their families too, it’s transportation’s a really huge part, especially for people that are on the reservations...” - Participant #3



Qualitative Interview Results: 2 Themes (and 2 sub-themes CONT'D)

2. Cultural and community engagement as protective

“I really want watching powwows... I don't know what the word is but it just made me feel a connected with them like just watching it and seeing them dance and stuff like that and knowing how special it is to them. Just because I personally don't know how to dance and stuff like that, and so, just like seeing them dance with such a passion just made me feel like wow that's like just amazing. And then for the dinners it was nice to like...I didn't really know my, my grandparents and stuff like that, but a lot of like the people around [Town] knew them, and so it was nice to be able to like talk to people who knew my grandparents and they told me stories and stuff like that.” – Participant #9

SDIP Paper 1: Conclusions

- Indigenous college students are at ***much lower risk for heavy drinking*** than the average college student (33% in the past month any binge drinking)
 - Compliments other recent studies (Cole, Lopez, Armstrong, Gillson, Weiss, Blair, & Walls, 2023, *Current Addiction Reports*)
- Participants were nearly evenly split in their intervention preferences, suggesting openness and potential rationale to **incorporate alcohol reduction into sexual assault prevention programming**.
- Interviews revealed **multi-level risk and protective factors** (e.g., community connectedness).
- Results inform the **development of the first culturally-derived self-defense program** for Indigenous Peoples in college.



SDIP Paper 2: Sovereignty for Your Body: Acceptability of Sexual Victimization Risk Reduction Interventions Among Indigenous College Students

- The goal of this study was to understand what type of sexual victimization risk reduction intervention (SVRRIs) programs and elements are acceptable to Indigenous college students via quantitative survey research methods.
- Using secondary quantitative data from the SDIP (401 Indigenous college students)
- Participants read standardized descriptions of 4 different SVRRIs that ranged in characteristics and ranked the interventions.
 - All participants provided acceptability ratings for Flip the Script with Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAA) and a program of their choice.
- Participants also rated the importance of specific intervention elements, including **cultural content**.

SDIP Paper 2: Results

- Most participants had a history of sexual victimization; **80.8%** had been sexually victimized at some point in their life.
- The **combined sexual violence and substance use reduction intervention** (Sexual Assault Risk and Alcohol Use Reduction Program) was most frequently ranked as the first choice by 36.2% of the sample, $p < .001$.
- Considering acceptability ratings, all four SVRRIs were considered acceptable by most of the sample, with **Flip the Script with EAAA** rated highest at **95.3%** and Bringing in the Bystander the lowest at 71.4%.
- **Cultural content** was rated as a moderately important intervention element.



SDIP Paper 2: Conclusions

- Indigenous college students are open to many different forms of sexual violence risk reduction interventions.
- Our findings suggest that simple cultural adaptations would be welcomed and scientifically supported to increase access and acceptability to violence interventions for Indigenous college students.



SDIP Paper 3: Acceptability of Lay-Led PTSD and SUD Interventions Among Indigenous College Students

- Using secondary quantitative data from the SDIP (401 Indigenous college students)
- Participants were randomly assigned to read descriptions and evaluate two of four lay-led PTSD and SUD interventions
 1. Written exposure therapy
 2. Narrative exposure therapy
 3. Motivational interviewing
 4. 12-step programs
- Participants also rated the importance of specific mental health intervention elements, including **cultural content**.

SDIP Paper 3: Results

- Over half (62.6%) of participants met criteria for possible PTSD, 41.9% met criteria for possible SUD, and 30.2% met criteria for both PTSD and SUD.
- Majority of participants (80.0% to 86.4%) provided a positive rating of each of the four interventions.
- Participants indicated a preference for interventions to be held in college/school settings (70.4% to 74.3%) and on Tribal lands/within their community (60.8% to 64.6%).
- Participants emphasized a strong preference for an Indigenous provider (81.9% to 89.4%).
- Cultural content was rated as a moderately important intervention element.



SDIP Paper 3: Conclusions

- Indigenous college students are highly receptive to different lay-led PTSD and substance use interventions.
- The findings highlight the need to train Indigenous non-professionals and integrate cultural adaptations to increase access and acceptability of these interventions for Indigenous college students.



Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge & Act (EAAA) – Overview

- Four 3-hour units (or two 6-hour units) involving:
 - Psychoeducation, facilitated discussions, & application/practice activities
- Assess, Acknowledge, & Act
 - Based on an evidence-based resistance program for women
 - Guided by the Cognitive Ecological Model to provide a theoretical framework for environmental and psychological factors that affect women's responses to sexual assault
- Fourth unit: Sexuality & Relationships
 - Adapted from the "Our Whole Lives" sexuality-education curriculum

(Goldfarb & Casparian, 2000; Kimball, 2000; Nurius & Norris, 1996; Orchowski et al., 2020; Rozee & Koss, 2001; Senn et al., 2008, 2011, 2015; Ullman, 1997)

EAAA Facilitator Training

- EAAA has demonstrated lower rates of SA up to 24-months follow-up
- Detailed manual for facilitators, including **environmental adaptations**
- Facilitator training involves:
 - 75+ hour sequence
 - 8 weeks of didactics
 - 2.5 day in-person training
 - Fidelity = 1 year



Prior EAAA Adaptations

- Senn and colleagues (2021)
 - Adapting EAAA for 1) **younger girls** and evaluating it in an RCT, and 2) collaborating with other scholars to adapt EAAA for **Trans-identified students**.
- Leone and colleagues (2025) conducted a pilot trial of an adapted EAAA intervention for **women ages 18-24 who regularly co-use cannabis and heavy alcohol (4+ drinks in two hours)**
 - Results indicated women rated the program very high in likability, quality, organization, relevance, and usefulness, and were likely to recommend it to other women.
 - Overall, acceptability and usability ratings for EAAA+ were high.
 - Content analysis of open-ended questions indicated some women wanted more cannabis and/or alcohol content included.

Current Study: Indigenized EAAA

- 4 Indigenous Facilitators (3 OSU students, 1 UND student)
- Environmental Adaptations:
 - Resource kits with Indigenous-made office supplies (stickers)
 - Indigenous designed violence prevention/awareness posters





Indigenized EAAA + EAAA Group Results at OSU

- Recruited Indigenous college students ages 18+
 - SONA Psychology Participant Pools
 - Center for Sovereign Nations, American Indians Into Psychology (AIIIP) Program, Student Union, & email contacts
- 3 Groups Planned (1 in Spring 2025, 2 in Fall 2025)
 - Only 1 Indigenized group completed (n=4 Indigenous women) due to participant cancellations and lack of sign-ups
- In total, **n=24** participants completed EAAA at OSU!
 - **7** Indigenous women (3 in non-adapted group)
 - **9** Bi/Enby (1 in non-adapted group)
 - **12** Control
 - Ages: ($M = 20.50, SD = 1.72$)



Challenges & Opportunities

- We had lower participation than expected, which mirrors other recent qualitative work.
 - Behl and colleagues (2024) identified 3 themes reflecting challenges of EAAA, including:
 - Time commitment
 - Outdated program materials
 - Single gender focus
- Next steps:
 - Present findings back to communities
 - Discuss logistics with team – balancing fidelity with other challenges
 - Conduct an online needs assessment survey to inform additional adaptations and/or future SA interventions (e.g., shorter format, hybrid delivery?)

SDIP Infographic



Scan me!

THE SELF DEFENSE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES STUDY REPORT

A JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN
THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE LAB
OF UNIVERSITY OF NORTH
DAKOTA & CULTIVATING
OPPORTUNITIES THAT LEAD
TO EQUITY (COLE) LAB OF
OKLAHOMA STATE
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WWW.INDIGENOUSVISION.ORG

#HIMARRIORS

Questions?



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