



College Dating Violence: Evaluating an Online Intervention

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Abstract

The purpose of this study will be to replicate and extend a randomized controlled trial that tested the effectiveness of an online bystander intervention educational program (*STOP Dating Violence*; O'Brien, Sauber, Kearney, Venaglia, & Lemay, 2019). Specifically, the intervention was modified and converted into an engaging animated video and then tested for its effectiveness. College students will be randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) the STOP intervention, (2) a website containing information about dating violence, and (3) a control condition. Data collection is currently underway. Preliminary data analyses (N=39) suggest that there is a difference in post test scores on the knowledge of bystander interventions measure across conditions ($F(2, 36) = 3.876, p < .03, \eta^2 = .18$). This study will advance knowledge regarding how counseling psychologists might cost-effectively and successfully educate undergraduates about dating violence.

Introduction

Intimate partner violence affects college students at staggering rates, with 21% of college students reporting having experienced dating violence by a current partner ("Dating and Domestic Violence on College Campuses," n.d.). Such violence puts victims at high risk for substance abuse, suicidality, risky sexual behavior, eating disorders, and further abuse from partners (Decker, Silverman, & Raj, 2005). Researchers point to community norms as playing a significant role in the perpetuation of this violence, especially on college campuses (Schwartz, DeKerseredy, & Alvi, 2000). This idea has contributed to the development of bystander intervention programs to be used in campus communities (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007). The ultimate goal of these bystander training interventions is to teach students to identify situations that involve dating violence and to intervene in a manner that is safe and productive (Moynihan & Banyard, 2008). The *STOP Dating Violence* video aims to effectively educate undergraduates about dating violence and appropriate bystander interventions.

Method

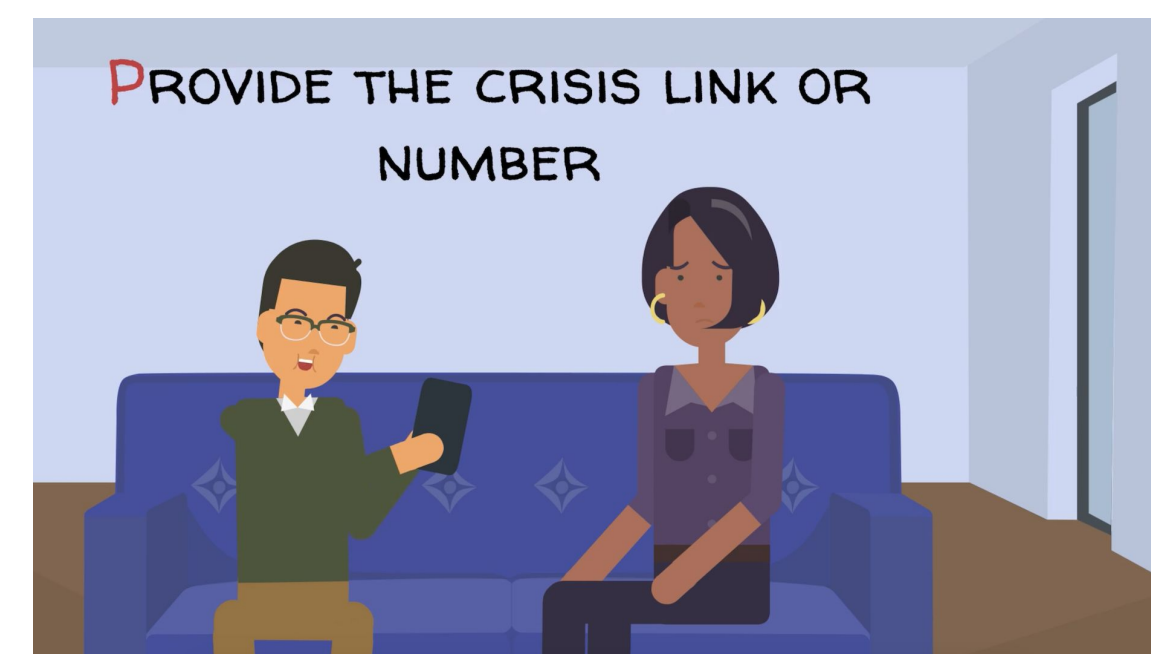
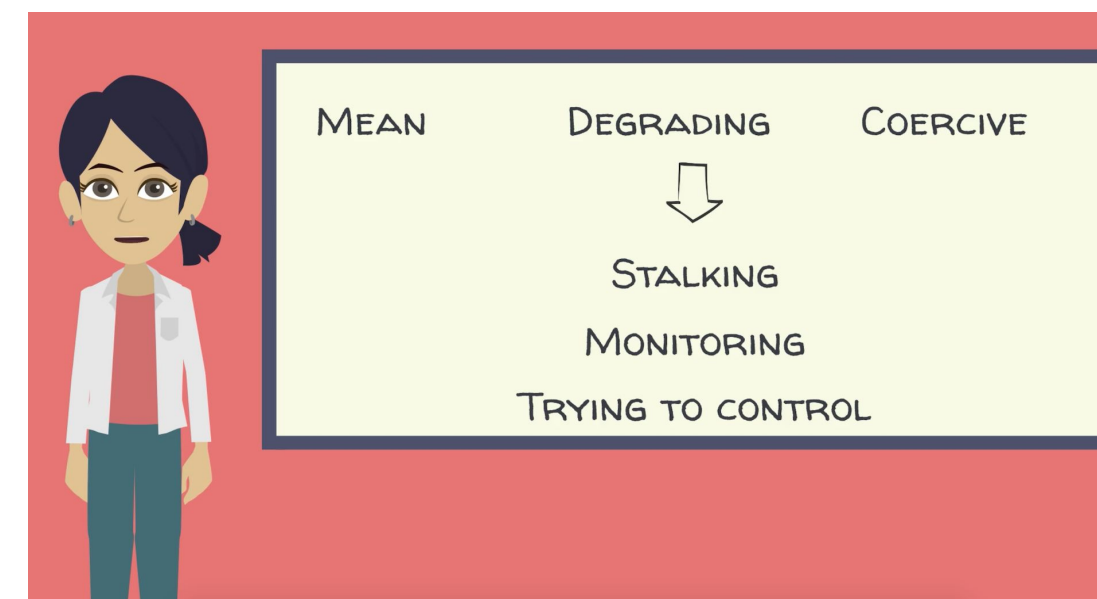
Procedures

- Participants will be recruited through the Psychology subject pool, flyers, personal contacts, and social media.
- Participants will access an online Qualtrics survey and be randomly assigned to one of three conditions:
 - The *STOP* intervention
 - A website containing information about dating violence
 - A control condition
- Participants will complete pre- and post-test quantitative surveys assessing knowledge of the *STOP* method and appropriate bystander interventions.
- Participants will receive one SONA credit for their participation.

Participants

- Data will be collected from 204 undergraduate students.
- To date, 39 students have completed this study (84.6% women, 15.4% men).
- The average age of the participants was 19.67 (SD = 1.52).
- Most of the participants were heterosexual (84.6%) and single (64.1%).

Intervention



Results

- Means, standard deviations, ranges, and a correlation matrix will be computed.
- An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) will be used to examine scores on the measure of knowledge about appropriate bystander interventions.
- The independent variable will be the experimental condition, with the pretest score as the covariate and the posttest score as the dependent variable.
- Preliminary analyses were conducted with the data from 39 participants.
- There was a difference in post-test scores on the knowledge of bystander interventions measure across conditions ($F(2, 36) = 3.876, p < .03, \eta^2 = .18$).
- Pairwise comparisons showed differences between the intervention and website conditions in knowledge of appropriate bystander interventions ($p < .04$).
- No difference was found between the intervention and control conditions.

Conclusion

Our initial findings were unexpected as we hypothesized that students who viewed the intervention would score higher than individuals in both the control and website conditions. This finding may have occurred because of the small sample used for the preliminary analyses.

Additional data will be collected and the findings from a larger sample will be analyzed.

In addition, the thesis will examine bystander behaviors over time and the barriers and facilitators associated with these behaviors. Barriers and facilitators of bystander intervention need to be studied so researchers can develop the effective educational programs about dating violence for college campuses. It is our hope that the findings from this study will inform the development of future interventions to reduce rates of dating violence on college campuses through the education of responsible, motivated, and knowledgeable bystanders.