

Transgender Students' Experiences of Sexual Violence on College Campuses: A comprehensive review of the literature

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INTRODUCTION

Transgender¹, genderqueer², non-conforming and questioning people's (henceforth TGNQ³) experiences of sexual, gendered, and intimate partner violence are increasingly being recognised and documented (e.g., Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Lagenderfer-Magruder, Walls, Kattari, Whitfield, & Ramos, 2016; Lombardi, 2009; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing Esq. & Malouf, 2002; Seelman, 2015; Yerke & DeFeo, 2016). Nonetheless, our understanding of the unique and complex ways TGNQ people experience sexual violence in different spaces continues to be limited. The present literature review seeks to assess existing knowledge and research on TGNQ people's experience of sexual violence, specifically, on college campuses. In so doing, gaps in the literature and in relation to on-campus sexual assault support services for TGNQ students will be identified and explored. Areas for future research will also be proposed. Generally, most research available on this topic highlight the disproportionate rates of sexual violence that TGNQ students experience on college campuses, particularly among TGNQ students with multiple marginal identities. Although quantitative studies in this area are increasingly available, qualitative research that centers TGNQ student voices, and that illuminates the complex, nuanced and intersectional nature of their experiences, is severely lacking.

TGNQ EXPERIENCES OF CAMPUS SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Invisibility of TGNQ people in research and society

Although literature on sexual minority (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual and other minority sexualities) experiences of sexual violence on college campuses is growing (e.g., Blossnich & Bossarte, 2012; Cantor et al., 2015; Edwards, Littleton, Sylaska, Crossman & Craig, 2016; Johnson, Matthews & Napper, 2016; Jones & Raghavan, 2012; Martin, Fisher, Warner, Krebs et al., 2011; Schramm et al., 2018; Sigurvinsdottir & Ullman, 2016; Tuel, 2001; Woodford, Krentzman & Gattis, 2012), there continues to be a paucity of research that specifically looks at gender minority experiences of sexual violence (Davies & Hudson, 2011; Talley et al., 2016), in general, and on-campus sexual violence, in particular (Coulter et al., 2017). To our knowledge, there are only a few studies that explicitly report⁴ on TGNQ experiences of sexual violence on campus (e.g., Cantor et al., 2015; Coulter et al., 2015; Coulter & Rankin, 2017; Coulter et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2016; Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Effrig, Bieschke & Locke, 2011; Grant et al., 2011; Griner et al., 2017; Krebs et al., 2016; Mellins et al., 2017; Messman et al. 2018; Murchison, Boyd & Pachankis, 2017; Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010; Roberts et al., 2016; Tillapaugh, 2016; Tillapaugh, 2017; Tupler et al., 2017).

TGNQ experiences of sexual assault on campus are often invisible for various reasons. For one, many studies and reporting tools do not account for sexual and gender minority identities and instead solely consider heterosexuality (Balsam, Rothblum, & Beauchaine, 2005; Todahl, Linville, Bustine, Wheeler & Gau, 2009) or only sample cisgender women and students (Coulter et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2016). Additionally, many studies homogenize TGNQ people by only allowing participants to select from three gender identity markers: "woman", "man", or "transgender" (e.g., Cantor et al., 2015; Effrig et al., 2011; Griner et al., 2017; Krebs et al., 2016; Messman et al., 2018; Murchison et al., 2017; Todahl et al., 2009) or do not differentiate between cisgender persons and trans persons (e.g., trans women will be lumped into the same category as cisgender

¹ "Transgender" or "trans" is an umbrella identity marker that includes all people who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. Transgender people are diverse and may include gender non-conforming, genderqueer, non-binary, transsexual, agender, Two-spirit and questioning persons, among many other identities and realities.

² "Genderqueer" is an identity used by people who do not identify with conventional gender identities within the gender binary. Alternatively, genderqueer people may identify with a gender other than woman or man, a combination of the two, or both simultaneously.

³ Throughout the review "TGNQ", "transgender", "trans", and "gender minorities" will be used interchangeably to signify persons who do not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth.

⁴ This refers to studies that involved a sample of TGNQ students and that specifically reported on TGNQ students' experiences of sexual violence on college campuses, including information on prevalence rates, survivor characteristics (e.g., gender identity, age, sexuality, race, etc.), perpetrator characteristics, analyses of factors that expose TGNQ students to sexual violence, etc.

women) (e.g., Cantor et al., 2015; Garcia, Lechner, Frerich, Lust & Eisenberg, 2012; Krebs et al., 2016). In so doing, these studies erase the sheer diversity within TGNQ student communities, may fail to capture the realities of people who do not identify with any of these labels (e.g., students who are gender fluid, non-binary and agender), and neglect to consider how sexual violence is experienced differently by different TGNQ students (the GenIUSS Group, 2014; Lombardi, 2009). As Lombardi (2009) describes:

There are many other forms of gender variation, and people may or may not use words like transgender or transsexual to refer to themselves [...] Gender variant people can vary in identity, presentation, usage of hormones or other medical technologies, and the age at which they began living as their identified gender. Gender variant people can also differ by race/ethnicity, class, education, and other sociodemographic factors. The terminology used by people may differ as many will use a variety of words to refer to themselves and those like them. Gender variant populations are diverse in composition and in experiences, and such diversity needs to become a part of research studies and policies, and not assume that gender variant populations are homogenous. (p. 990)

Moreover, gender presentation and legal sex can shape how TGNQ people experience discrimination and sexual violence, as Lombardi (2009) explains:

For individuals who are gender variant, one's presentation may influence their experiences with discrimination. As such, those who have used hormones for many years or those who have utilized surgical interventions to change their gendered appearance may experience lower levels of discrimination. Having legal documents that match their social presentation may also reduce people's experiences of discrimination [...] gender presentation and legal sex is as important as one's gender identity. (p. 980)

Although most research does not account for such diversity, Grant et al.'s (2011) study allowed respondents to report on the degree to which they identified with a variety of trans and gender non-conforming identity markers, thereby recognising and honouring the heterogeneity among gender variant peoples. Furthermore, gender minority participants in Coulter & Rankin's (2017) study could freely report their gender identity. However, due to the study's small sample size, it was necessary to amalgamate certain identities to facilitate data analysis.

Furthermore, TGNQ people may accord different meanings to *transgender* as an umbrella identity marker and may use it in some contexts, but not in others (Davidson, 2007; Lombardi, 2009). Other gender minority identity labels are often only used by TGNQ people belonging to certain racial and class groups. For instance, the identity marker *genderqueer* has its roots in academia and is predominantly used by white, college students (Davidson, 2007). Additionally, many trans persons may not even identify as trans, but rather as "male" or "female" (Coulter et al., 2017; the GenIUSS Group, 2014).

Moreover, many studies on sexual and gender minorities lump TGNQ people under the "T" in LGBT⁵ and often do not meaningfully explore and report on trans experiences (e.g., Brown, Clarke, Gortmaker, & Robinson-Keilig, 2004; Castro, Nobles & Zavala, 2017; Gillum, 2017; Schramm et al., 2018; Woodford, Kolb, Durocher-Radeka & Javier, 2014; Worthen & Wallace, 2018). Instead, these studies solely focus on sexual minority (i.e., LGB) experiences of sexual violence. Furthermore, analyses of the intersections of race, ability, class and gender identity also seem to be missing from the literature; many studies on TGNQ students' experience of sexual violence consist largely of white samples (e.g., Cantor et al., 2015; Coulter et al., 2015; Coulter & Rankin, 2017; Coulter et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2016; Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Gillum, 2017; Grant et al., 2011; Krebs et al., 2016; Messman et al., 2018; Murchison et al., 2017; Wolff, Kay, Himes & Alquijay, 2017) and only a few ask participants to report on disability (e.g., Cantor et al., 2015; Grant et al., 2011).

Finally, myths around sexual violence among TGNQ and LGB people also render their realities and experiences invisible (Potter, Fountain, & Stapleton, 2012; Todahl et al, 2009). Myths such as "old lesbians

⁵ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

are not sexual,” “gay men are promiscuous,” “men can’t be raped,” “rape can only happen between a man and a woman,” and “transgender people are predatory” both undermine the significance of and mask the reality of sexual violence affecting these communities (Todahl et al., 2009, p.966-67). TGNQ and LGB people themselves may also believe in these myths, thereby limiting the extent to which sexual violence is discussed openly within sexual and gender minority spaces (Todahl et al., 2009). These myths may also be reinforced by dominant ideologies around sexual violence and who experiences it that are promulgated in mainstream media and research (e.g., that sexual violence is only experienced by cisgender women and perpetrated by cisgender men) (Tillapaugh, 2017).

Prevalence of on-campus sexual violence targeting TGNQ students

Despite being misrepresented in or excluded from studies, research that is available on TGNQ people’s experiences of on-campus sexual violence reveals a startling reality. Each study that drew comparisons between transgender and cisgender experiences of on-campus sexual violence found that TGNQ students experienced sexual violence more than their cisgender peers (Cantor et al., 2015; Coulter et al., 2017; Coulter et al., 2015; Effrig et al., 2011; Griner et al., 2017; Krebs et al., 2016; Mellins et al., 2017; Messman et al., 2018; Murchison et al., 2017; Tupler et al. 2017). For instance, using data from the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey, Coulter et al. (2017) found that 20.9% of transgender students sampled experienced sexual assault as compared to 8.6% of cisgender women, and 3.6% of cisgender men (p.3-4). Cantor et al.’s (2015) study on sexual violence at the University of Pennsylvania points to a similar trend: 27.9% of TGNQ respondents, compared to 20.3% of cisgender women and 5.3% of cisgender men respondents, experienced non-consensual sexual contact involving physical force, incapacitation, coercion, absence of affirmative consent (AAC) and/or attempted penetration using physical force (p. 197). Moreover, 86.5% of TGNQ undergraduate students at the University experienced sexual harassment compared to 67.3% of cisgender women and 50.1% of cisgender men undergraduate students (Cantor et al., 2015, p.206-209). While friends and acquaintances were the main perpetrators of sexual harassment towards cisgender students, strangers in the study were the main perpetrators against TGNQ students (Cantor et al., 2015). Grant et al. (2011) reported on similar experiences of victimization among TGNQ students: 61% reported having experienced harassment, bullying, physical and sexual assault, and expulsion due to their gender identity throughout their schooling (i.e., from elementary through to graduate school) (p.35).

Risk factors

Minority Stress & Campus Climate

TGNQ students may be more vulnerable to sexual violence for a variety of reasons. Many studies draw upon Meyer’s (2003) minority stress theory when examining the experiences of on-campus sexual violence among TGNQ and LGB people (e.g., Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Effrig et al., 2011; Murchison et al., 2017; Talley et al., 2016, etc.). Minority stress theory posits that members of minority populations experience overt and covert forms of prejudice, stigma, discrimination and violence at various levels (i.e., interpersonal, institutional and systemic) leading to overall poorer health outcomes (i.e., emotional, physical, mental and behavioural) (Meyer, 2003). According to Meyer (2003), minorities, including gender and sexual minorities, can experience stress through external- and internal-oriented avenues including “(a) external, objective stressful events and conditions (chronic and acute), (b) expectations of such events and the vigilance this expectation requires, and (c) the internalization of negative societal attitudes” (p.5). Thus, in light of their devalued and minority group status, TGNQ students experience multiple, overlapping and complex forms of stress (e.g., internalised transphobia and fear of transphobic prejudice) in the context of a campus culture and educational system that privileges heterosexuality and cissexuality (Murchison et al., 2017; Talley et al., 2016).

Structural factors, such as institutional policies, legal protections and campus climate, can influence TGNQ people’s wellbeing, sense of security and risk of experiencing discrimination and sexual violence (Coulter & Rankin, 2017; Edwards et al., 2016; Meyer, 2003; Murchison et al., 2017; Rankin et al., 2010; Reisner, Greytak, Parsons, & Ybarra, 2015). Although gender identity and expression are now protected under Canada’s

Criminal Code and Human Rights Act (i.e., Bill C-16), these protections do not extend to areas under provincial jurisdiction, including health care, education and justice systems (Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2017; Parliament of Canada, 2017). Most provinces and territories, including Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Nunavut, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Yukon and Prince Edward Island, now fully protect gender identity and expression, while others only protect gender identity, including Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories (Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, 2017; Government of Yukon, 2017). However, such protections do not necessarily translate into effective anti-trans discrimination policies on college campuses across Canada, nor do they guarantee an inclusive and safer campus climate for TGNQ students.

Murchison et al. (2017) discovered that higher levels of minority stress among LGBTQ undergraduate students was associated with a higher risk of unwanted sexual experiences. It has also been proposed that minority stress, in a high-stigma environment like college, may result in TGNQ students adopting potentially harmful coping strategies, such as substance misuse and abuse (Meyer 2003; Talley et al., 2016; Woodford et al., 2012), thereby increasing their risk for alcohol-related sexual assault (Coulter et al., 2015). Coulter et al. (2015) found that TGNQ students who engage in heavy episodic drinking (HED) do so more often than cisgender women and men (p. 254). Furthermore, transgender students report more alcohol-related sexual assaults (7.2%) than their cisgender female peers (2.1%) and their cisgender male peers (1.1%) (Coulter et al., 2015, p. 256). The study found a strong association between TGNQ experiences of sexual assault and HED: TGNQ students who engage in HED are at a higher risk for sexual victimization and/or engage in HED because of having experienced sexual violence (Coulter et al., 2015). Tupler et al.'s (2017) study of alcohol-related blackouts (ARB) and alcohol-related consequences (ARC), including sexual assault, among transgender and cisgender college students, arrived at similar results; trans college students drink more frequently, in greater quantities, report more ARBs and experience higher rates of ARCs than their cisgender peers.

Relatedly, the degree to which the campus climate is experienced and perceived as inclusive of gender diversity appears to influence the likelihood of TGNQ students experiencing physical and sexual violence on campus. Importantly, Coulter & Rankin's (2017) study found that "greater inclusion of sexual- and gender-minority people on campus was robustly associated with lower sexual assault on campus" (p. 9). Moreover, heterosexist and cissexist campus climates create barriers for TGNQ students in seeking much needed support (Rankin et al., 2010). For instance, TGNQ students attending non-sectarian colleges face unique challenges in accessing support. TGNQ students' experiences at such institutions are often shaped by stringent anti-LGBTQ policies and transphobic campus cultures (Craig, Austin, Rashidi & Adams, 2017; Wolff et al., 2017). In some instances, trans identity and sexual minority orientations are deemed as criminal as acts of sexual violence, such as rape, and are treated as such (e.g., TGNQ identities and related "behaviours" are punished as severely as sexually violent acts through such measures as suspension and expulsion) (Craig et al., 2017). These environments make it difficult for TGNQ students to access support for identity- and mental health-related struggles they may be experiencing, and, likely, create immense barriers for students to report experiences of victimization, in general, and sexual violence, in particular (Craig et al., 2017; Wolff et al., 2017). In this regard, non-sectarian academic environments, specifically ones characterised by institutionalised and systemic transphobia, foster an atmosphere of fear whereby TGNQ students must conceal their identities and experiences to survive and continue with their studies (Craig et al., 2017). The hostility of such environments effectively prevents TGNQ students from accessing campus services that are potentially vital to their wellbeing and sense of security.

Identity formation, intimate partner violence (IPV) & sexual violence in a "high-stigma" environment

Studies also suggest that the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, and its related processes of sexual and gender identity exploration and formation, may be associated with an elevated risk for on-campus sexual violence (Potter et al., 2012; Talley et al., 2016; Tupler et al., 2017). Relatedly, intimate partner violence (IPV), including sexual violence, appears to be more prevalent among TGNQ and LGB partnerships that form

within the context of a heterosexist and cissexist campus culture during this crucial developmental stage (Gillum, 2017; Murchison et al., 2017; Potter et al., 2012). Murchison et al. (2017) found that TGNQ students experienced sexual violence the most at the hands of their intimate partners (p.233).

TGNQ students in violent relationships may be hesitant to leave their partner who may be their primary source of support and identity validation in an otherwise prejudicial environment (Murchison et al., 2017; Potter et al., 2012). They may also face innumerable barriers in accessing support including, a lack of support from friends and family, possibly due to transphobia and rejection; not being “out” yet about one’s identity; fear of prejudice; inability to see the violence and express their experiences; shame around not being able to name and express their identity in the “right way”; etc. (Murchison et al., 2017; Potter et al., 2012). The perpetrator’s awareness of these barriers increases the likelihood of IPV in TGNQ relationships and, more generally, the risk of being a target of sexual violence (Murchison et al., 2017; Potter et al., 2012). As Murchison et al. (2017) state:

Echoing the notion that high-stigma environments may allow perpetrators to target LGBQ students, higher levels of criminalized tactics (i.e., incapacitation, threats and force) against “other gender” students could reflect perpetrators’ belief that these students will not report assaults, or will not be taken seriously if they do. (p. 233)

Furthermore, Gillum (2017) studied the relationship between dating violence before and during college among sexual minority students, including transgender students. The study found that a large percentage of participants (i.e., 41 to 60%) experienced dating violence, including physical and sexual violence, whether as perpetrators and/or as victims, in the context of intimate partnerships during these two periods of their lives (Gillum, 2017, p. 141). The author hypothesizes that minority stressors, stemming from heterosexism and cissexism, likely shape this reality.

Multiple intersecting marginal identities

Studies have found that black and other trans students of colour (Coulter et al., 2017; Grant et al., 2011), students with disabilities (Cantor et al., 2015), and younger students, especially those enrolled in their first year of undergraduate studies (Cantor et al., 2015; Coulter et al., 2017; Krebs et al., 2016), are at greater risk of sexual assault than TGNQ students who are white, able-bodied and older (e.g., 25 years and older) (Cantor et al., 2015; Coulter et al., 2017). For example, Coulter et al. (2017) found that the probability of past-year sexual assault among black transgender students was 57.7% (p.1). This finding possibly demonstrates the elevated risk of violence that persons with multiple marginal intersecting identities are exposed to.

Transphobia, transmisogyny & sexual violence

Transphobia is the fear, devaluation, and hatred of people who do not identify with and live by the gender assigned to them at birth (Lombardi, 2009; Serano, 2007) and manifests in transphobic violence, including the policing of trans bodies (Lombardi et al., 2002). As Lombardi et al. (2002) explain, “At various times in their lives gender nonconformists become the focus of attention of people or groups who are emotionally invested in enforcing gender norms” (p.90). In addition to transphobia, many TGNQ people experience a complex form of oppression, *transmisogyny*, which involves the debasement of trans people *and* femininity (Serano, 2007). As Serano (2007) explicates:

When a trans person is ridiculed or dismissed not merely for failing to live up to gender norms, but for their expressions of femaleness or femininity, they become the victims of a specific form of discrimination: trans-misogyny. When the majority of jokes made at the expense of trans people center on “men wearing dresses” or “men who want their penises cut off,” that is not transphobia—it is trans-misogyny. When the majority of violence and sexual assaults committed against trans people is directed at trans women, that is not transphobia—it is trans-misogyny. When it’s okay for women to wear “men’s” clothing, but when men who wear “women’s” clothing can be diagnosed

with the psychological disorder transvestic fetishism, that is not transphobia—it is trans-misogyny. When women’s or lesbian organizations and events open their doors to trans men but not trans women, that is not transphobia—it is trans-misogyny. (p.15)

Transmisogynistic violence is experienced mostly by trans women, but also TGNQ people who present feminine qualities (Krell, 2017; Serano, 2007). Currently, no research, to our knowledge, exists that explores the relationship between transmisogyny and sexual violence on college campuses. Moreover, the notion of transmisogyny was developed without any consideration of race and class, thereby undermining its utility in understanding the experiences of trans people of colour (Krell, 2017).

Some studies suggest that “corrective” rape may serve as the basis for sexual assault towards queer and trans students in some instances (Anguita, 2011; Coulter et al., 2017; Hein & Scharer, 2013). In other words, in a heterosexist and cissexist campus environment, perpetrators may attempt “to “cure” LGBT people through sexual assault” (Martin et al., 2009 as cited in Coulter et al., 2017, p.8). In this sense, “corrective rape” may be an example of how transmisogynistic violence manifests on college campuses. Finally, a person’s trans identity may be made known during an experience of sexual assault, particularly trans people who have not undergone sex reassignment surgery (SRS), thereby further exposing them to violence that may be distinct from the violence experienced by cisgender women in such contexts (Yavorsky & Sayer, 2013, p.521)

Barriers to reporting & seeking services: Fear of prejudice & limited options

Sexual, gender, and racial minorities may be less likely to disclose experiences of sexual assault to the college administration, to the police and to members of their own cultural or racialized communities due to internalised transphobia and homophobia as well as expectations of prejudice and violence (Coulter et al., 2017; Potter et al., 2012; Todahl et al., 2009). Moreover, “the disclosure of the crime may also involve the disclosure of their sexual identities or gender orientations. For students who are not out, their perceived need to hide their sexual identities can be a barrier to seeking services” (Potter et al., 2012, p. 203). Furthermore, in disclosing their experiences of sexual violence, TGNQ and LGB people may be blamed; their sexuality and gender identity are the problem rather than the perpetrator’s actions (Davies, 2000; Davies & Hudson, 2011; Potter et al., 2012; Todahl et al., 2009).

An Association of American Universities (AAU) report found that TGNQ people, along with cisgender women, were less likely to report positive experiences in on-campus sexual assault reporting processes (Cantor et al., 2015). Compared to their cisgender peers, TGNQ students were least likely to believe that other students would support a survivor after reporting an experience of sexual assault or misconduct to the school’s administration; that the administration would take the report seriously; that the survivor would be protected by school officials; that campus officials would take action against the offender; and that campus officials would take action to address factors that may have led to sexual assault or sexual misconduct (Cantor et al., 2015). Furthermore, significantly more TGNQ people, compared to their cisgender female and male counterparts, believed that the perpetrator, and/or their associates, would retaliate against the survivor after having reported the experience to the administration (Cantor et al., 2015, p.11).

On-campus, and off-campus, services catered to and inclusive of TGNQ survivors of sexual violence are scant (Edwards et al., 2016; Potter et al., 2012; Todahl et al., 2009). Many studies stress the need for on-campus sexual violence prevention and support programs that are TGNQ and LGB sensitive (Coulter et al., 2015; Hein & Scharer, 2013; Potter et al., 2012; Roberts et al., 2016). Sexual assault and intimate partner violence services are readily reserved for heterosexual and cisgender people, and cisgender women, in particular (Edwards et al., 2016; Potter et al., 2012). When TGNQ people do try to access such services, they are often turned away or experience prejudice due to transphobic beliefs (e.g., trans women are not ‘real’ women and may assault cisgender women) as well as heterosexist and cissexist assumptions about the reality of sexual violence among TGNQ people (Greenberg, 2012; Seelman, 2015; Yerke & DeFeo, 2016). As Todahl et al. (2009) describe:

Numerous socially derived perceptions of LGBTQ persons converge to reduce availability and access

to services and contribute to discriminatory, accusatory, and insulting responses when services are sought and received. Poor service availability, for instance, is associated with gender and heterosexist assumptions (e.g., perceptions that males are not sexually assaulted and that same-sex sexuality is deviant and, consequently, that LGBTQ persons are less deserving of services). (p.954)

Internalised transphobia & other risk factors

Research has shown how internalised homophobia is related to experiences of on-campus sexual violence and intimate partner violence in same-gender relationships (Balsam et al., 2005; Edwards & Sylaska, 2013). Currently, however, there appears to be no studies that assess the relationship between gender minority stress, internalised transphobia and vulnerability to on-campus sexual violence among TGNQ students. In addition to internalised transphobia, research on the role of rejection sensitivity in putting TGNQ students at greater risk of sexual violence is lacking (Murchison et al., 2017).

DISCUSSION & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The purpose of the present review was to assess existing knowledge and research on TGNQ student experiences of sexual violence on college campuses. Fortunately, research in this area is growing and there appears to be an increasing recognition of the unique realities and needs of trans students in relation to their experiences of sexual violence on campus. However, available studies are limited in important ways.

Sample size, reporting tools & data collection

Most studies considered in this review employed quantitative methods, collected data via self-report questionnaires and surveys, and had small sample sizes of TGNQ students making it difficult to examine the intersections of gender identity, race, sexual orientation and age. Thus, a study drawing from a large random sample of TGNQ students is needed. However, as Grant et al. (2011) explain, “[a] truly random sample of transgender and gender non-conforming people is not currently possible, as government actors that have the resources for random sampling have failed to include questions on transgender identity in their population-based research” (p.14).

Moreover, self-reporting tools, such as surveys, should be designed in such a way to allow TGNQ respondents to choose from a variety of gender identity markers beyond the category of “transgender”. Asking respondents which gender they were assigned at birth would make identifying trans respondents within a sample easier and more accurate given that many trans people do not identify as trans, but rather as women or men, among other identities. Additionally, integrating more descriptive measures into tools, including questions about participants’ gender expression, would allow for more nuanced understandings of how different TGNQ people experience violence given that how one identifies is not always congruent with how one’s gender is expressed and perceived by others (the GenIUSS Group, 2014; Lombardi, 2009).

Most research on TGNQ students’ experiences of sexual violence on college campuses is based on data collected in the United States. Although, arguably, such findings can be used to understand the experiences of TGNQ people in Canada, Canada’s sociocultural, legal and political climate differs significantly from that of the United States. Research focusing on the experiences of TGNQ students on Canadian college campuses is needed.

Qualitative data

Importantly, qualitative studies that offer TGNQ people the opportunity to fully voice their experiences, identities and perceptions of on-campus sexual violence, rape culture, reporting processes and support services are needed. As Brown et al. (2004) stress, “Qualitative studies, including interviews, might help to sort out reasons for perceptual, attitudinal, and experiential differences and provide insights for potentially effective training and intervention programs” (p.21). Qualitative studies would also be more conducive to

capturing and representing the sheer diversity of identities, expressions and experiences of TGNQ students and would aid us in understanding how different trans persons negotiate femininity, masculinity, sexuality, heterosexism, queerness, racism, colonialism, transphobia, and other processes integral to their identities, relationships and lived realities.

Furthermore, much research in this area operates from a deficit standpoint, painting TGNQ students as powerless and living a life of precarity (Jourian, 2018). Qualitative research exploring the agency, power and wisdom of TGNQ students in navigating campus life and in addressing and/or healing from sexual violence are needed. Although Jourian's (2018) study does not explore sexual violence among trans students specifically, it offers important insights as to how transmasculine persons understand and negotiate masculinity in a wider culture that is grounded in binary and essentialist notions of what it means to be a "man" and "masculine" (e.g., how men are supposed to be sexually dominant and how they should objectify and sexualise feminine persons). Participants' stories in the study "illuminate the continuous reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity, compulsory heterosexuality and cisnormativity through each other" (Jourian, 2018, p. 371). The author goes on to suggest that centering transmasculine experiences in sexual violence and consent programming can support all men in critically reflecting on and changing how they treat women and feminine persons. As Jourian (2018) states:

[Transmasculine persons] are uniquely positioned to notice and unveil the 'languages and images' of gender, thus destabilising and unnaturalising it. Through their articulations of how their journeys with and within masculinity invariably intersect with sexuality, they further unveil gender's reliance on heterosexuality, the unintelligibility of one through the other, thus offering us new and potentially liberatory formations of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships. (p. 373)

Intersectionality & gender minority stress models

Moreover, "studies that examine the role of gender identity and its intersection with sexual identity within transgender and gender non-conforming sub-populations are still largely missing" (Talley et al., 2016, p.490). In addition, although studies have found that trans people of colour are more vulnerable to transphobic and sexual violence compared to white trans people (Lombardi, 2009), research on the intersections of gender identity, race, class, and disability are lacking (Coulter et al., 2017). There also seems to be no studies that specifically consider and explore the experiences of Indigenous gender minority students, such as two-spirit students. Relatedly, existing minority stress models only focus on single identity categories (e.g., sexual identity or gender identity); none have been proposed for individuals and groups experiencing multiple marginal identities such as race, class, Indigenous identity, immigration status, sexual orientation and gender identity (Talley et al., 2016). There also appears to be little research considering the interplay of internalised transphobia, alcohol-use, identity formation, peer support, gender minority stress as well as institutional structures and policies in increasing TGNQ students' risk for on-campus sexual violence, including intimate partner violence.

Available research on TGNQ experiences of sexual violence on college campuses neglect to consider online forms of sexual and gendered violence. Future research in this area would benefit from exploring the relationship between offline and online forms of sexual and gendered violence as experienced by TGNQ students on college campuses.

Finally, there seems to be no research that assesses the effectiveness of sexual violence prevention strategies that target sexual minorities and trans people (DeGue et al., 2014). Moreover, most prevention strategies that have been evaluated involve "majority-White samples" (DeGue et al., 2014, p. 357). In other words, little is known about the effectiveness of culturally-sensitive sexual violence prevention strategies for TGNQ students, and, in particular, TGNQ students of colour and Indigenous students.

CONCLUSION

TGNQ students experience sexual violence on college campuses at strikingly high rates compared to their cisgender peers. A campus climate marked by heterosexism, cissexism, transphobia and stigma greatly shapes TGNQ students' experiences of sexual violence as well as their experiences in disclosing and reporting instances of assault to peers and to the college administration. The challenges TGNQ students negotiate on campus are further compounded by internalised forms of discrimination, racism, gender minority stress as well as a lack of support from friends, family, and trans-affirmative sexual assault support services. More research is needed to better understand the complex landscape trans students must negotiate, particularly those affected by sexual violence. Larger and more diverse samples, in addition to qualitative research that centers TGNQ student voices and that draws on intersectional, queer, critical disability, critical race and Indigenous epistemological, theoretical and methodological frameworks are needed.

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