Applying a Freirean Framework to Conceptualize a Sexual Assault Resistance Intervention

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BACKGROUND

1 in 3 women experience some form of sexual violence before their 18th birthday (1)

60% female students at UNESWA have experienced an attempted or completed sexual assault in their lifetime (2)
Purpose: Reduce sexual assault within the campus by educating women on available resources and risk reduction strategies for sexual assaults.

- Mini-workshop, group discussion and activities.
- Uses a framework of resistance.

Enhanced Assess Acknowledge Act (EAAA)

Efficacy of a Sexual Assault Resistance Program for University Women

Charlene Y. Senn, Ph.D., Misha Eliaziw, Ph.D., Paula C. Barata, Ph.D., Wilfreda E. Thurston, Ph.D., Ian R. Newby-Clark, Ph.D., H. Lorraine Radtke, Ph.D., and Karen L. Hobden, Ph.D.
Freirean's Critical Pedagogy

- Praxis- Reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it
- Education as a way to transform oppressive structures
- Banking Education
- Problem Posing Education

Retrieved from: Mount Holyoke News
RESEARCH AIM

Understand how intervention participants and facilitators perceived self-efficacy and drivers of sexual violence after participating in the #Gamechangers intervention (Swazi adaptation of EAAA)
In-depth Interviews

Intervention participants

Intervention facilitators
METHODS

- Semi-structured IDIs
- Perspective on intervention, sexual violence, self efficacy, relationships, and sexuality
- Modified Grounded Theory
- Freirean Framework
RESULTS

Praxis

Dialogue

Action

- Recognize and address relationship risk
- Acquired physical self-defense strategies

Reflection

- Improvement in mental health and confidence
- Build solidarity & peer supports

Problem Posing Education

Banking Education

Relationship drivers
- Cathexis
- Transactional Sex

Community drivers
- Stigma
- Enforce harmful gender scripts

Structural drivers
- Poverty
- Institutional Oppression/Shortcomings
RESULTS- Mental Health

It [Gamechanger] was good because I got to learn a lot from the other girl—their view and opinions. Like telling your own story if you feel comfortable. It was good and a healing sessions so I may say.

Intervention Participant
It [workshop] helped to improve our relationships as students. Like some, you would see them around the campus and we didn't know each other that well. But, after the sessions [...] we were United and created a strong bond. We were just one.

Intervention Participant
It was actually shocking for me to realise that I'm also a victim of sexual assault [...] You know when you have a fight with your boyfriend then it gets physical but then he apologized afterwards. You also think that you are the one who is at the wrong side. Yet, I realised that it was totally wrong.

Intervention Participant
It's [\#Gamechangers] women empowerment, it's just that we not only focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention now there's also things like self-defense. How one can protect herself from being exposed to abuse and danger [...] So now we are equipped [...] also now I can wear anything I like even revealing clothes [...] it doesn't mean when something happens to me that it's my fault, no, it's the attackers fault like he allowed himself to think something which will inflict pain to me.

Intervention Facilitator
RESULTS

Praxis

- Action
  - Recognize and address relationship risk
  - Acquired physical self-defense strategies

- Dialogue

- Reflection
  - Improvement in mental health and confidence
  - Build solidarity & peer supports

- Problem Posing Education
- Banking Education

Relationship drivers
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Structural drivers
- Poverty
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RESULTS- Limitations

There was this lady who shared a story of her friend who was assaulted and she went to report the matter at the police station...and then this male officer said "you know you are so pretty that's why they assaulted you" [...] She was seeking for help and justice to be done...but then that very same place which she seeked help tend to be another place of assault.

- Intervention Participant (1)
Conclusion

Dialogue enhances students' ability to resist sexual violence, reject victim-blaming narratives, and improve mental health.

Incorporating problem posing is necessary to bring about community-level changes.
Thank you

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