Exploring male university students' perspectives of sexual violence prevention

Exploring male university students' perspectives of sexual violence prevention

By

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Social Work

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MASTER OF SOCIALWORK McMaster University

(2020) Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Exploring male university students' perspectives of sexual violence prevention

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NUMBER OF PAGES: 111 (129 including additional pages)

Abstract

Emerging anti-violence work has focused on the importance of engaging men in primary prevention efforts, especially on postsecondary campuses, due to the statistical reality that men are overrepresented as perpetrators of sexual violence (Black et al, 2011; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Flood, 2019). This study sought to build upon this existing body of literature by inviting male university students into discussions around their perspectives of sexual violence prevention efforts on campus to better understand how prevention programming can be improved to elicit male student engagement. Six participants were recruited from McMaster University to participate in focus groups. Focus groups begun with the facilitation of a common activity used in anti-violence programming, titled "the gender boxes," to contextualize the discussion around exploring the social construction of gender as it intersects with violence against women. The ensuing discussion revealed the following themes: (1) cisheteropatriarchal masculinity demands men perform gender in ways that recreate sexual scripts and traditional gender roles, as evidenced by their reflections on "the gender boxes" activity, (2) traditional masculinity intentionally obscures the dynamics of negotiating sex and consent, which subsequently create the potential for sexual violence to occur, (3) participants described feeling disengaged from existing prevention efforts, and (4) participants imagined potential improvements to engage men in sexual violence prevention, which largely reflected existing literature on the subject. This project contributes to anti-violence efforts through revealing the continued need to engage men in every stage of the process to then facilitate their investment in ending violence against women.

Keywords: *sexual violence prevention*; *masculinity*; *gender*; *qualitative research*; *critical masculinity studies*; *feminist theory*.

Acknowledgements

I am so grateful for so many wonderful people in my life who made the completion of this thesis possible. While it feels impossible to name them all, I'll try my best!

Thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Saara Greene, for your endless support, belief in me, and kindness throughout the past 4 years of knowing you and working with you. You have inspired me to pursue feminist research and I am so excited to continue this journey under your guidance.

Thank you to the six amazing men who participated in my study. Your enthusiasm, engagement, and reflection made this project something I am truly proud of.

Thank you to Dr. Sandy Preston for taking the time to review my thesis and provide feedback as my second reader. I am also incredibly thankful for the entire staff and faculty in the school of social work at McMaster University who each played an intricate part in my student tenure. To single out two: thank you to Dr. Allyson Ion who provided thoughtful and thorough feedback on early drafts of these chapters and encouraged me to push my work further, and thank you to Dr. Ameil Joseph for encouraging me to publish my work and to continue developing a critical perspective of violence against women.

Thank you to my wonderful MSW cohort for your continued support throughout the duration of this degree. I am so proud of you all and thankful to have shared space with you.

Thank you to my parents, Maeve and Steve, for your love, support, and encouragement. You have always been my biggest cheerleaders and I will forever be grateful for you. I'm also thankful for my dogs, Chanel and Dexter, for urging me to take breaks when needed and get some fresh air by consistently bugging me to go for a walk.

Thank you to my sister, Kate, who I have been so lucky to share both my BSW and MSW journey with. Your productivity always scared, impressed, and motivated me to get my work done, and your passion for social change is an inspiration. Thank you for the countless laughs, rants, and memories. I'm not quite sure how to do school without you.

Thank you to my friends for believing in me, hyping me up, and sending your love from afar during COVID-19.

Thank you to my favourite band in the world, Mt. Joy, for scoring my thesis writing and reminding me that there are always silver linings.

And, lastly, thank you to every person who reads this thesis. I hope that this piece of work reflects the breadth of important work that has been taken up by feminist scholars – several of whom are cited in this – and emphasizes the significance of sexual violence prevention in creating a better world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As an eager undergraduate social work student in the summer of 2017, I was thrilled to receive an Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) at McMaster University to lead my research project for four months. My study focused on examining male students' perspectives of sexual violence on Ontarian university campuses through facilitating qualitative interviews with male students about their understandings of consent, sexual violence, sexual assault policy, and the external influences shaping these ideas (Brockbank, 2019). My interest in this topic was rooted in a feminist, personal ontological positioning; hearing stories from loved ones who had experienced sexual violence reiterated the impacts of victim-blaming, rape myth acceptance, lack of support, isolation, and internalized shame. I found myself frequently wondering why women and non-binary folks were carrying the burden of sexual violence intervention and prevention, while men were seemingly absent, excluded from, resistant, or oblivious to the conversation.

In many ways, this thesis is a necessary continuation of my USRA. While I found many potentially disconcerting themes in my project, including limited understandings of consent, the perception of a 'grey area' between consent and sexual violence, the problematic dynamics of the male peer group, and a general lack of awareness around sexual assault policy and prevention on campus (Brockbank, 2019), there were significant silver linings. Namely, participants indicated that they were interested in learning and engaging more with this subject matter, found the conversations we had to be 'enlightening,' and expressed a seemingly genuine desire to act as allies and support systems for survivors, albeit with little idea of how to do so (Brockbank, 2019). These findings were hopeful as they challenged existing notions that most men are disinterested in discussions of consent, sexual violence, and allyship (e.g. Rich et al, 2010). It is my firm belief that men have an integral role in violence prevention and that involving them

actively in the process will disrupt traditional understandings of constructed and socialized masculinities, which depict men as apathetic, detached, ambivalent, and/or resistant to discussions around their role in anti-violence work.

The purpose of this study is to expand on the foundation of my undergraduate research and bring men into a conversation around how they understand, perceive, and imagine their role in sexual violence prevention. This project intends to prompt participants to consider their experiences of prevention programming to reveal how they see their strengths and weaknesses in fostering men's engagement in sexual violence prevention. Collecting and considering men's perspectives on these programs and linking it to their experiences of socialized masculinity is essential to better understand what strategies, methods, and topics are particularly relevant and reflective of men's experiences, thus potentially bolstering their engagement with and participation in these efforts.

Locating the Researcher: Women in Anti-Violence Work

As a white, cisgender, heterosexual woman interested in anti-violence work with men, I have had ongoing reflections about my role in research and practice. Research has indicated that, while male facilitators are preferred in anti-violence programming, female facilitators and a co-gender model have proven merit (McCallum, 1997; Flood, 2004; Tyagi, 2006; Casey & Smith, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Flood, 2019). For instance, McCallum (1997) interviewed male service users of a sex offender treatment program to explore how participants perceived women's roles in facilitation. Findings indicated that the inclusion of women in a facilitation role manifested in men considering the impacts of their diction and language in group sessions, appreciating the integration of a woman's point of view, and responding positively to female facilitators' empathy by exercising honesty and accountability (McCallum, 1997).

Similarly, Flood (2019) suggests that female facilitators can effectively engage and sensitize men and boys in violence prevention through creating space for them "to hear of women's experiences and concerns and to further mobilize their care for the women and girls in their own lives" (p.212). A co-gender model, where groups are moderated by one male and one female facilitator, can model an egalitarian relationship and challenge traditional gender stereotypes that subvert women and privilege men (McCallum, 1997; Flood, 2004; Tyagi, 2006; Flood, 2019).

Despite the potential positive aspects of female facilitation in male-focused anti-violence work, Allen (2005) and Tyagi (2006) identify potential limitations. For example, Allen (2005) reflects on her experiences of facilitating all-male focus groups and the risks of female facilitators inadvertently perpetuating and imposing expectations of cisheteropatriarchal masculinity by implicitly suggesting what is/is not acceptable behaviour for men. These impositions of traditional masculinity might include making assumptions about their personal (e.g. hobbies, interests, etc.) and social (race, class, sexual orientation, etc.) identities. Additionally, Tyagi (2006) notes that female facilitators might endure an uncomfortable and/or hostile environment as participants direct sexist comments or "gender-specific anger" (p.5) toward the only woman in the room, particularly in the context of mandated group settings, based on the assumption that she is there to challenge or police them. Flood (2004, 2019) and Tyagi (2006) both indicate that men often do not take a woman's role seriously in anti-violence work as she is perceived as a gendered token that is required to meet a program expectation, a staple to maintain a heterosexual group dynamic, or a fulfillment of feminine stereotypes (e.g. taking on the 'nurturing' or 'empathic' role). These factors become exacerbated by a co-gender model that recreates gendered power dynamics, where the male facilitator takes up significant space, implicitly (or explicitly) undermines the female facilitator's authority, 'rescues' the

female facilitator, or consistently qualifies her statements (Tyagi, 2006). The amalgamation of these factors might result in significant barriers to women's participation in anti-violence work

I identify with these reflections as they are ones that I have intimately experienced as a woman in violence intervention and prevention. Similar to Allen's (2005) discussion of the ways in which women can impose gendered expectations on male participants, I often wondered in my undergraduate research if participants catered their answers to what they thought I might have expected of them and their demonstrations of masculinity (Brockbank, 2019). Additionally, as a student facilitator of the Partner Assault Response (PAR) program at Catholic Family Services of Hamilton, I found that much of the anger service users felt about having to attend group sessions were directed toward me in the form of sexist comments, assumptions about my role, and dismissal of my contributions. I believe that these considerations are important for me to consider throughout this project as I am seeking to engage men in discussions about sexual violence prevention as a female university peer. The impact of my social positioning will be discussed later in this paper.

Providing Context: Sexual Violence

It is important to provide context on the issue of sexual violence both inside and outside of the postsecondary setting to highlight why work in this area is necessary and timely. Sexual violence is a pervasive social problem that has been formally introduced into academic and criminological discourses as recently as the 1980s (Russell, 1983; Koss et al, 1987; Koss, 1993; Humphrey & White, 2000; Abbey, 2002; Campbell & Wasco, 2005). Working definitions of sexual assault and rape can be drawn from Abbey's (2002) literature review of existing research on sexual violence:

> The term sexual assault is used by researchers to describe the full range of forced sexual acts including forced touching or kissing; verbally coerced intercourse; and physically

> forced vaginal, oral and anal penetration. The term rape is typically reserved for sexual behaviors that involve some type of penetration due to force or threat of force; a lack of consent; or inability to give consent due to age, intoxication, or mental status.

These terms intend to reflect the broad range of coercive, violent, and non-consensual actions linked to the perpetration or experience of sexual assault. However, the term sexual violence may include additional behaviours, language, and ideologies in societal structures that condone, promote, and justify violence, sexual assault, coercion, harassment, and/or rape. Feminist scholars refer to these sociocultural and structural discourses and practices as a 'rape culture,' where sexual violence is "tolerated, accepted, eroticized, minimized and trivialized" (Powell & Henry, 2014, p.2) through blaming victims and discrediting their experiences, sexualizing violence in mass media, and excusing perpetrators' actions at both micro and macro levels.

Sexual violence has emerged as a leading issue impacting students on postsecondary campuses in North America. Approximately one in five women and one in sixteen men will experience attempted or completed sexual assault while attending a post-secondary institution (Black et al, 2011; Department of Justice, 2013). While a minority of men embody and endorse violence-supportive attitudes, beliefs, and actions, men are overrepresented as perpetrators of sexual violence (Flood, 2003; Flood, 2004; Katz, 2006; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Flood, 2019). Research suggests that men are more likely to perpetrate violence against women within a social context where the socialization of masculinities is predicated on encouraging dominance, toughness, aggression, and other stereotypical assumptions linked to gender (Flood, 2003; Loh et al, 2005; Brown & Messman-Moore, 2010; Voller & Long, 2010; Orchowski et al, 2016). Furthermore, Stathopoulos (2013) outlines social and economic determinants of sexual violence, which include gender inequality, subscription to gender norms and stereotypes, hostile attitudes towards women, organizational and peer cultures based on masculine norms, social and

institutional acceptance of gender inequality, and positioning gender stereotypes as normative and natural. Within the context of examining sexual violence on postsecondary campuses, Morris and Ratajczak (2019) note additional contextual factors shaping men's potential perpetration of sexual violence on college campuses, including increased alcohol use, membership to male-dominant social groups (e.g. fraternities, athletics, etc.), narrow conceptualizations of masculinity, and the sexual objectification of women, among others.

The Shifting Landscape of Sexual Violence Literature

Theoretical frameworks and informed scholarship around sexual violence have undergone significant changes due to an ever-evolving societal understanding of violence against women. Early approaches to violence intervention subscribed to classical criminological theory to understand and describe sexual violence against women (Stathopoulos, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). A central tenet within this model is conceptualizing prevention as 'risk management' or 'rape avoidance,' which is predicated on the assumption that women can prevent and avoid sexual victimization on an individual, interpersonal level (Stathopoulos, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014; Flood, 2019). This process includes changing women's "high-risk" (Stathopoulos, 2013, p.5) behaviours (e.g. attire, alcohol consumption, etc.) and equipping them with necessary skills to thwart potential attackers (e.g. self-defence). Embedded within these assumptions about women's risk of victimization is the notion that all men have the potential to be dangerous and that perpetrators will likely be unknown to the victim, thus perpetuating the 'classic rape' image (Ahrens et al, 2010; Stathopoulos, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014). Foundational academic literature drawing upon criminological, risk avoidance models perpetuate these notions by exploring risk factors associated with women's experiences of sexual violence, which essentially detail a potential profile of a victim based on age, race, ability, and social

location (e.g. Koss & Dinero, 1989; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Crime prevention approaches to the issue of violence against women are severely limited and maintain several problematic implications, including the statistical realities that adherence to risk-avoidant behaviours does not guarantee safety from victimization, sexual violence is overwhelmingly committed by someone known to the victim, and that sexual violence is not a result of 'miscommunication' or misinterpretation (Stathopoulos, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014). Though more recent literature on sexual violence has shifted away from this 'opportunity reduction' framework, these criminological approaches continue to underpin current anti-violence efforts, specifically in an increased focus on crime prevention techniques, including funding dedicated to improving campus security measures (Stathopoulos, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014; Patel & Roesch, 2018).

In the 1980s and 1990s, literature on sexual violence began to document the gendered nature of this social problem – as being intrinsically linked to gender inequality – by identifying that women are at the highest risk of victimization and that men are overrepresented as perpetrators (e.g. Russell, 1983; Koss et al., 1987; Koss, 1993; Stathopoulos, 2013). Instead of focusing on individual risk factors associated with sexual violence perpetration or victimization, feminist scholars sought to break the silence surrounding sexual violence by challenging the social structures in place that enable, facilitate, excuse, and mask the reality of violence against women (Stathopoulos, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014). Research and programming informed by a feminist understanding of sexual violence shifted focus to navigating the process of holding men accountable for their beliefs, language, and actions that facilitate sexual violence, while also inviting them into dialogue around how violence against women can be prevented (Fabina et al, 2003; Flood, 2003; Flood, 2004; Katz, 2006; Pease, 2008; Stathopoulos, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014; Flood, 2019). In this process, men become part of the solution to preventing and

eradicating violence against women through "promoting alternative cultures and practices of masculinity" (Powell & Henry, 2014, p.6) that allow men to reflect on and disrupt the patriarchal systems that they benefit from and that enable, enact, justify, and protect the perpetration of sexual violence.

The amalgamation of these approaches to understanding sexual violence – where everyone plays an important role in preventing violence – has constructed the current state of the literature. Criminological approaches to sexual violence continue to propose behaviours, actions, ideologies, and languages that can prevent violence at an interpersonal level; however, shifting away from individualizing the issue, feminist scholarship on sexual violence has sought to conceptualize violence against women as a shared social problem and, therefore, a community responsibility to prevent (Stathopoulos, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014). Critical masculinity studies, which are often informed by feminist theory, suggest that men can take up ally roles in redressing the issue of sexual violence when they are appropriately engaged in messages, programming, and the facilitation of alternative masculinities (Flood, 2019).

Research Questions

1. How do male university students understand and perceive their role in sexual violence prevention efforts?
2. What do male university students see as missing or lacking in current sexual violence prevention efforts and why?
3. How can the socialization and social construction of masculinities shape attitudes toward sex, consent, violence, and prevention?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following discussion will outline the current state of the literature surrounding male postsecondary students' engagement in sexual violence prevention. Specifically, this study seeks to understand how men perceive their role in sexual violence prevention and the best practices associated with engaging men in anti-violence work. I will begin by defining the different types of prevention, reviewing the general categories of prevention programs, and describing the stages of engagement in prevention programming. The factors shaping men's engagement will then be discussed, including personal, systemic, and structural influences. I will then review the proposed best practices and challenges associated with engaging men in anti-violence programming, as described by prominent scholars in critical masculinity studies. This review will conclude by identifying the limitations within the current state of literature and the gaps that my thesis project will attempt to address.

Understanding prevention

Public health models of violence prevention within the context of university campuses can be sorted into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary (Berkowitz, 2002; Flood, 2004; Lee et al, 2007; Flood, 2011; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Powell & Henry, 2014; Casey et al, 2018). Primary prevention refers to activities that are facilitated before sexual violence occurs, including on-campus consent campaigns, male ally programs, and bystander intervention programming (Berkowitz, 2002; Lee et al, 2007; Flood, 2011; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Powell & Henry, 2014; Casey et al, 2018). Secondary prevention is characterized by immediate, short-term responses after an incident of sexual violence has occurred; examples include supports for survivors (e.g. counselling) and the integration of prevention programs for populations deemed 'at-risk' of

perpetrating, such as fraternity members and collegiate athletes (Berkowitz, 2002; Lee et al, 2007; Voller & Long, 2010; Flood, 2011; Stathopoulos, 2013; Lambert & Black, 2016; Orchowski et al, 2016; Casey et al, 2018). Tertiary prevention includes long-term responses after sexual violence perpetration occurs in order to address the lasting consequences of violence, which include sex offender treatment interventions, mandated anti-violence programming, and investment in counselling for survivors (Lee et al, 2007; Stathopoulos, 2013). For the purposes of this project, I will be focusing on primary prevention, which seeks to examine and challenge the underlying causes of sexual violence, including "cultural attitudes, values, beliefs, and norms about masculinity, sexuality, gender, and violence" (Powell & Henry, 2014, p.3).

Hong (2000), Flood (2004), Lee et al (2007), and Flood (2011) discuss the several types of primary prevention efforts, which are comprised of educational sessions, comprehensive models (e.g. ecological model and spectrum of prevention), community-level prevention strategies (community mobilization, changing social norms and policies, etc.), campaigns for building awareness, and support for survivors and allies. These activities range from being one-time community events to standardized, long-term programming, with prevention pedagogies seeking to bolster participants' empathy toward victims, teach skills in anti-violence and consent, enable men as active bystanders, and challenge gender conformity to heterosexist masculine peer norms (Berkowitz, 2002; Flood, 2004; Casey et al, 2018). Flood (2011) draws upon the spectrum of prevention model to emphasize the efficacy of six thematic levels of prevention: strengthening individual knowledge and skills, promoting community education, educating service providers and other professionals, engaging and mobilizing communities, changing organizational practices, and influencing policies and legislations. The effectiveness of primary prevention programs will be further discussed later in this review.

The process of engaging men in primary prevention programs has been explored and categorized into three interrelated domains: initial outreach, interventions supporting gender-transformative and violence preventative attitudinal and behavioural shifts, and facilitating men's participation in social action (Casey, 2010; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Casey et al, 2018). In the initial recruitment and outreach phase, public educators can gain access to potential male participants through the use of their own personal and social networks, offering educational presentations or community events to dispel common misperceptions of anti-violence programming that might deter participation (e.g. that men will be 'attacked'), media and pledge campaigns, and reaching out to youth organizations (Casey, 2010; Casey et al, 2018). These practices are proven to be effective as men are more likely to become engaged in prevention when influential peers encourage them to do so and participate with them, when they feel a personal connection to the issue, and when they feel safe from scrutiny or ridicule (Casey, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Casey et al, 2018; Flood, 2019). During interventions, the delivery of central messages is paramount; research indicates that men are most engaged when the dialogues are tailored to meet them where they are, relevant to their own lives, and highlight men's personal and communal strengths (Casey, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Casey et al, 2018; Flood, 2019). The efficacy of these strategies will be discussed later in the 'best practices' section of this review. Lastly, research continues to develop on the social action domain of primary prevention; specifically, emerging literature is exploring whether men see themselves as active allies and agents of social change in violence against women after taking part in primary prevention programs (Casey, 2010; Casey et al, 2018; Flood, 2019).

Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen (2014) helpfully outline standards for national primary prevention, which are drawn from the University of Western Sydney's final project report on involving men and boys in violence prevention. These include: utilizing coherent conceptual approaches to program design; demonstrating integration of a theory of change; facilitating inclusive, relevant, and culturally aware practices; undertaking comprehensive program development, delivery, and evaluation; and supporting the professional development of public educators (Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014, p.27). When these standards are met, primary prevention efforts have been proven to be more effective, engaging, and change oriented (Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Flood, 2019). There continues to be an identified gap in the evaluation of these services, which will be explored later in this review.

Factors shaping men's engagement

Recent literature on sexual violence deploys a public health prevention model, which ecologically frames violence as the result of interacting individual, interpersonal, community, systemic, and structural factors (Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Powell & Henry, 2014; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). This approach can be helpful when considering what factors shape men's willingness and readiness to engage in sexual violence prevention and allyship in order to better understand how programs can cater to men's unique needs. Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard (2013) outline ontosystemic, microsystemic, and macrosystemic factors influencing men's engagement in violence intervention programming. On an individual level, participants indicated that sociodemographic characteristics (e.g. age, class), personality traits, motivation for change, and existing beliefs about therapeutic intervention were major factors impacting their engagement in programming. Specifically, men suggested that a privileged social positioning (e.g. not having to worry about costs of interventions or accessibility concerns), an open and

respectful disposition, a desire to change, a willingness to lean into discomfort, and a sincere belief that intervention could work positively affected their experiences in engagement (Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013). Moreover, men who maintain a personal connection to sexual violence, such as knowing someone who had been sexually assaulted or being sensitized to the issue, report a higher level of engagement in primary prevention efforts as they feel compelled to be stakeholders and allies in the cause (Casey, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Casey et al, 2018). This intrinsic motivation is deemed important in men's engagement as it bolsters empathy towards survivors, which is necessary to facilitate attitudinal and behavioral change among men, and disrupts men's ability to distance themselves from the issue of violence against women by making it a personal problem (Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012).

At the microsystemic level, studies have shown that the composition of the prevention group shapes men's involvement and engagement (Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Flood, 2019). Namely, Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard (2013) identify two emergent themes: time spent in the group and intragroup dynamics. Specifically, male participants described experiencing a 'turning point' at some point in the group sessions, which involved a conceptual shift in their own ways of thinking about violence and their role in preventing it. Most often, this epiphany – which many described as a move away from apathy and toward empathy – occurred around six sessions into the group program (Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013). Additional research on men's engagement in prevention indicate that the duration of the program is important in changing men's attitudes and behaviours; men tend to report higher levels of empathy towards victims, less acceptance of rape myths, increased awareness of the languages, beliefs, and attitudes supporting sexual violence, and reductions in dating violence up to four

years after the program when prevention efforts are comprehensive and span across several interventions (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; DeGue et al, 2014; Stewart, 2014; Claussen, 2017; Flood, 2019).

Group relations, which are comprised of participants' interactions with each other and with the facilitator, also play a significant role in moulding men's experiences of engaging in primary prevention. A homosocial group composition, where prevention programs are closed to male members, is both preferred by male participants and has shown promise in changing participants' attitudes and behaviours around sexual violence (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Casey, 2010; Casey & Smith, 2010; Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Claussen, 2017; Flood, 2019). Participants in Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller's (2012) study of male postsecondary students' reflections on taking part in primary prevention programming emphasized that "having men talk to other men" (p.513) was effective in inciting participation and engaging men in the process as they could see themselves reflected in the group dynamics and felt safe and comfortable to ask questions without fear of 'offending' or harming non-male peers in mixed-gender programs. Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard (2013) add that group cohesion, open sharing of information, and a warm, nonjudgmental, and welcoming environment also foster engagement as men feel more compelled to participate when they feel connected to the male peer group and identify universal similarities across their experiences. The peer group dynamics, which might include a peer education model or a staggered system of enrolment where men who have been in the group longer mentor new participants, have been shown to be effective in transferring norms, values, and attitudes (Casey, 2010; Casey & Smith, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013). In the context of primary prevention in postsecondary institutions, men have suggested

that the participation of influential male peers (e.g. student leaders) and the use of their personal networks to recruit others have improved engagement as men are more likely to participate and invest in programming when other men demonstrate interest, openness, and commitment to the issue (Flood, 2004; Casey, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Claussen, 2017).

Similarly, studies have shown that male facilitators tend to be preferred by male participants and have the potential to facilitate positive changes (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Flood, 2019). Flood (2004) and Pease (2008) summarize the benefits of utilizing male facilitators, which include: the ways in which men can powerfully shape male peers' attitudes and perspectives, and how that power can be wielded to influence positive change; homosocial groups can create safety for men to talk about and explore different ideas associated with masculinity; men can act as role models for each other; male facilitators can use their intimate knowledge of socialized masculinity to their advantage to create camaraderie and build rapport; male facilitators tend to be seen as more credible and compelling by participants; and the facilitation of all-male groups reduce the risk of harm in mixed-gender groups or male groups facilitated by women (e.g. overt or covert sexism). While Flood (2004) and others indicate that women facilitators or a co-gender model can foster empathy, vulnerability, and openness, male facilitators tend to be preferred as participants feel they can relate to and connect with male peer and non-peer educators. Potential limitations of this will be discussed later in this review.

However, Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard (2013) add that participants' relationships with facilitators play a significant role in shaping male engagement; namely, facilitators' attitudes, understanding, empathy, professionalism, competence, and their own engagement with or

enthusiasm for the work are important in inciting group participation, especially during the first few sessions. When men feel connected to each other and the facilitator, primary prevention efforts are more likely to foster positive attitudinal and behavioural shifts, including a willingness to reflect on and challenge the socialized practices of masculinity, dispel rape myths, and take up allyship roles. In this process, the possibilities of fostering alternative and inclusive masculinities become an integral part of men's engagement in prevention (Casey, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Claussen, 2017).

Macrosystemic factors shaping men's engagement are aptly summarized by Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard (2013) as relating to "the social image of violence and masculine norms" (p.1810). Specifically, men in their study found it difficult to connect their use of violence to larger structural systems, such as cisheteropatriarchy and whiteness (Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013). For example, some men in the study suggested that intimate partner violence is primarily linked to physical violence, thus dismissing sexual, emotional, verbal, spiritual, and financial forms of abuse (Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013). To connect this idea to sexual violence, many men view sexual assault and rape as legitimate forms of violence against women and do not recognize the ways in which the cultural and linguistic discourses that trivialize, justify, and excuse sexual violence can facilitate a rape culture where violence becomes tolerated (Rich et al, 2010; Powell & Henry, 2014; Brockbank, 2019). When the issue becomes individualized, men are more likely to explain their violence as a result of pathology, an inability to 'control' their sexual urges, an innate propensity for violence, or as a justified response to perceived disrespect, attack, or denial from entitled rights (Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Dagirmanjian et al, 2017; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). In the context of primary prevention on postsecondary campuses, a lack of recognition of the structural and systemic factors impacting

sexual violence perpetration might enable men to distance themselves from the issue as most men do not see themselves as potential victims or perpetrators (Rich et al, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Flood, 2019). Casey and Smith (2010) suggest that primary prevention programs must focus on shifting meaning, specifically through connecting sexually violent ideas, beliefs, language, and behaviours to a larger structural analysis of gendered socialization, cisheteropatriarchy, and a sociohistorical account of violence against women.

Pease (2008) draws upon Connell's (2003) work to summarize the positive reasons why men might take part in prevention programming to change: for their own personal wellbeing, which acknowledges men's heightened experiences of mental health concerns, suicide, and general distress in attempting to conform to existing cisheteropatriarchal standards; relational interests, which involves men being motivated by their intimate, platonic, and familial bonds with significant women in their lives; collective interests, where the pursuit of gender equality is viewed as a benefit for everyone in the community; and principle, which refers to men's desire to challenge the systems of gender inequality based on their social justice oriented political and ethical values. These identified areas can be addressed through sensitizing experiences that connect men to the issue of sexual violence, acknowledgement and exploration of the ways in which men are adversely affected by cisheteropatriarchy, the facilitation of a safe(r) space for all-male groups to discuss their own lived experiences, questions, and concerns, and drawing upon relevant, comprehensive, and applicable concepts that connect sexual violence to broader social issues and gender equality (Connell, 2003; Flood, 2003; hooks, 2004; Pease, 2008; Casey, 2010; Casey & Smith, 2010; Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Claussen, 2017; Flood, 2019). If prevention programs tap into these domains and self-

described factors impacting men's engagement, they may be more likely to foster positive attitudinal and behavioural changes and facilitate space for alternative masculinities to be explored (Pease, 2008; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Claussen, 2017; Flood, 2019).

Best practices & strategies

A number of primary prevention strategies have been demonstrated in the literature to enhance efficacy of anti-violence efforts with men. These strategies include programs that: are single-sex/all-male; involve male facilitators and male peer educators; are endorsed and supported by influential male role models (e.g. student leaders, athletes, celebrities, etc.); deploy sensitizing tactics to connect men personally to the issue; and utilize a structural analysis to connect sexual violence to broader social systems such as white, colonial, imperialist cisheteropatriarchy (Flood, 2003; hooks, 2004; Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Casey, 2010; Casey & Smith, 2010; Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; DeGue et al, 2014; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Claussen, 2017; Casey et al, 2018; Flood, 2019). This section will outline additional best practices identified by prominent scholars in the area of men's engagement in sexual violence primary prevention. Specifically, Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen's (2014) list of best practices will be used to organize these strategies and recommendations, which will be further supported by additional literature.

Gender-Transformative

Gender transformative approaches to violence prevention seek to explicitly examine how gender roles and expectations shape men's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours around violence (Flood, 2003; Casey, 2010; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Casey et al, 2018). As Flood

(2003) notes, "[v]iolence prevention efforts must address such relationships between violence, social constructions of masculinity, and gendered power relations" (p.1). Prevention efforts that specifically engage with the socialization and social construction of gender – including the concept of masculinity – are proven to be more effective in changing men's attitudes toward gender and violence than those that universalize participants and utilize gender-neutral language and concepts (Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Casey et al, 2018). For example, bystander intervention models have been critiqued by some feminist activists for treating all participants as equally at risk of perpetrating, experiencing, and/or witnessing sexual violence, which potentially erases the gendered nature of the issue. Pease (2008) outlines central principles that should inform men's engagement in gender-transformative programming, such as ensuring that men's participation in anti-violence efforts is linked to fostering gender equality and that these efforts are accountable to women through the use of a feminist analysis. Pease (2008) and Casey (2010) also note that gender-transformative approaches to violence prevention must attend to several aspects to build a critical consciousness around the prevalence of sexual violence, including understanding men's privileges, interests, resistance, and backlash to partaking in prevention programs. Additionally, Pease (2008) cautions overreliance on a strengths-based approach, which refers to focusing on the positive aspects of masculinity and how men can be part of the solution, as it risks facilitating a space where men are resistant to exploring the ways in which they may have perpetrated or perpetuated harm. When these areas are explored, programs can then be appropriately catered to be relevant to male populations and create a sense of shared accountability for facilitating space where alternative masculinities can be discussed and hegemonic masculinity can be challenged (Flood, 2003).

To deploy an effective gender-transformative approach, primary prevention efforts must navigate the delicate balance between recognizing and understanding the ways in which men are adversely impacted by cisheteropatriarchy through engaging with their lived experiences, while also holding them accountable for "transforming the patriarchal power relations and gendered discourses which are the fabric of those same lives" (Flood, 2003, p.3). This process is a foundational tension that continues to be explored in literature on the topics of men's engagement and critical masculinity studies. Drawing on the fundamental aspects of masculinity to engage men in prevention is crucial. There is some risk, however, if relying on stereotypes of masculinity to deliver messages (e.g. questions of a masculine identity or being 'man' enough to prevent sexual violence) will covertly perpetuate the traits of cisheteropatriarchal masculinity that enable sexual violence to occur (Flood, 2003; Flood, 2004; Stathopoulos, 2013).

Comprehensive, Intensive, & Multi-Systemic

Prevention efforts must be comprehensive by engaging and involving several different members and organizations from the community (Flood, 2004; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014). As mentioned previously, prevention efforts that draw upon a number of different education strategies and maintain continuity are more likely to result in positive attitudinal and behavioural shifts among men (Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; DeGue et al, 2014). Flood (2004) indicates that comprehensive and intensive prevention efforts offer a myriad of different learning opportunities that are interactive, incite active participation, and have multiple points of contact over a sustained period of time to reiterate the importance of central messages.

To reach different community representatives and male populations, a variety of social change strategies should be deployed, which might include community education events, media

campaigns, advocacy for policy developments, research and pilot programs, development and implementation of programming into core services of an organization, and evaluation of these efforts (Flood, 2004; Peacock & Barber, 2014). It is important to draw upon these different modalities in order to reach peripheral, marginalized, and subordinated male populations that are not necessarily accessible through mainstream means. For example, many reviewed studies discussed men's experiences in voluntary prevention programs where participants were primarily student leaders, athletes, influential male peers, and/or men from privileged social positionings (Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller; DeGue et al, 2014; Stewart, 2014). While much of this information is helpful in understanding men's engagement, it evokes questions around whether the men participating, who may have already held more progressive and reflective ideas about gender, did not adequately reflect the range of men's experiences, attitudes, and behaviours around sexual violence. Previous research has shown that men who hold traditional beliefs about gender and internalize rape myth acceptance are more resistant to primary prevention and, therefore, do not tend to participate as they do not feel it applies to them (Loh et al, 2005; Katz, 2006; Rich et al, 2010; DeGue et al, 2014; Lambert & Black, 2016). To facilitate comprehensive prevention that is catering to the diversity of men's experiences, attitudes, and behaviours, deploying various types of education strategies is an important step to overcoming barriers to accessing 'hard to reach' men in the community.

Moreover, prevention programs should be multi-systemic through the use of an ecological model to address the individual, systemic, and structural factors shaping men's engagement (Flood, 2004; Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014; Powell & Henry, 2014; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). Flood (2004) notes that addressing men's cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains is

important to identify and locate how gender roles, expectations, and relations are known, communicated, enacted, and enforced by men on an individual and interpersonal level. For example, primary prevention efforts should examine how men individually experience the pressures associated with the social construction of masculinity and its demands to embody a quintessentially 'male' identity (e.g. tough, aggressive, etc.), and then how these internal tensions are communicated between and among men. Further, prevention efforts must then connect these microlevel experiences with larger systemic and structural factors, which might involve engaging men in discussions about cisheteropatriarchy and violence against women (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014). These processes intend to invite men to think about how they have been adversely impacted by cisheteropatriarchy, while also acknowledging how they might participate in and benefit from these larger systems that enable sexual violence to occur in their everyday lives (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014).

Culturally Relevant

As mentioned previously, primary prevention efforts should be tailored to reflect the lived experiences and characteristics of its participants and the communities they represent (Flood, 2004; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Flood, 2015). Flood (2004) and Casey (2010) describe a process of 'meeting men where they are at,' which involves considering men's level of awareness, willingness to reflect, and ability to lean into the discomfort of acknowledging their role in the issue of sexual violence. Catering initial sessions or early intervention efforts to reflect men's potential uneasiness, wariness, or resistance by taking up an invitational approach are tactics practitioners have utilized to incite engagement and create safety for male participants (Flood, 2004; Casey, 2010; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, &

Presterudstuen, 2014). Research has shown that men respond positively to engagement with their social networks, the use of male facilitators, endorsement and encouragement from influential male peers, and recognition of the ways in which men have been harmed by violence and traditional notions of masculinity, especially in the early stages of recruitment and initial participation in prevention efforts (Fabiano et al, 2003; Flood, 2004; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Peacock & Barber, 2014; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Claussen, 2017).

Cultural relevance is also a significant part of facilitating men's engagement in primary prevention (Flood, 2004; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014). Namely, men should not be perceived as one homogenous group who interact with and experience masculinity in a universalized or standardized way (Peacock & Barber, 2014). For example, application of the theoretical concept of hegemonic masculinity has been criticized in literature on this topic for assuming that all men strive to emulate white, cisgender, heterosexual, and traditional manhood, and for simplifying the complex power relations of dominant identities and social relationships (Harland & McCready, 2015; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). For prevention efforts to be culturally relevant, there must be recognition of the diverse, fluid, dynamic, contextual, and often contradictory forms of masculinity occupying different individuals, groups, and communities (Flood, 2004). For instance, conflated aspects of identity – such as class, geographical location, race, and sexual orientation – interact with each other to shape men's experiences of masculinity and violence (Flood, 2004; Peacock & Barber, 2014). Racialized, Indigenous, Black, queer, trans, poor, and/or disabled men are frequently subordinated and disenfranchised by cisheteropatriarchal ideals, which is then reflected in policy, curriculum, and public education efforts failing to recognize the ways in which they are uniquely harmed by the same interlocking systems that enable sexual violence to occur. These marginalized masculinities

are rarely of central focus when developing primary prevention efforts, which continues to be a significant limitation in the implementation of sexual violence prevention efforts.

Integration of primary prevention into men's social contexts

Research indicates that primary prevention efforts should be facilitated in the contexts, organizations, and systems in which men interact with daily in their personal, social, and professional lives (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014). An integrated approach requires connecting multi-systemic efforts with other services in the community to prompt men to view change on a broader scale (Flood, 2004; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014). When primary prevention efforts act at the community, systemic, and/or institutional level, men may feel more supported to engage with the individual level aspects of prevention and may not feel burdened by the notion of taking individual responsibility for sexual violence (Flood, 2004). For example, grassroots sexual assault centres should be involved in postsecondary institutions' responses to the issue of sexual violence, and these efforts should be integrated into several areas on campus, including academic, athletic, social, and professional spaces. Piccigallo, Lilley, and Miller (2012) recommend that postsecondary administrations should seek to "establish, institutionalize, support, and further evaluate" (p.520) primary prevention efforts on campus to reinforce, support, and supplement the messages delivered by other agencies in the community. In other words, public support from university administration is integral to facilitating prevention programs that reach men across campus, are normalized, and are deemed credible.

Strengths-based and allyship driven

As discussed briefly, men are shown to respond more positively to prevention efforts that approach them as potential allies rather than potential perpetrators (Fabiano et al, 2003; Flood,

2004; Pease, 2008; Casey, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014; Casey et al, 2018; Flood, 2015). Positive messages that emphasize men's roles as linked to part of the solution, highlight the strengths associated with a healthy masculinity and outline clear strategies and actions that men can take part in to promote social change. These strategies have been proven in multiple research studies to minimize resistance, defensiveness, and disengagement (Flood, 2004; Casey, 2010; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014). Casey (2010) aptly notes that approaching men as "part of the problem" (p.268) is likely to result in backlash and a refusal to partake in programming, whereas inviting men to see themselves as "having a critical role to play in solving violence" (p.268) might foster the beginnings of their reflections on men's roles in sexual violence prevention. Additionally, connecting a strengths-based and allyship driven approach to larger social justice efforts is shown to bolster engagement in violence prevention (Pease, 2008; Casey et al, 2018). When men see themselves as an intricate part of redressing the sociostructural issue of sexual violence, they may feel more engaged, accountable, and motivated to participate actively in prevention efforts (Pease, 2008; Flood, 2015; Casey et al, 2018).

Evidence-based, adheres to best practices, and involves evaluation

The final theme discussed within the literature on best practices for primary prevention is the need for these efforts to be evidence-based and subjected to rigorous evaluation to document efficacy (Pease, 2008; Carmody Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015). Evidence-based programming involves the explicit and thorough use of a theory of change and a process of grounding prevention education practices in empirical understandings of the central tensions that cause sexual violence (Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015). For example, Morris and Ratajczak (2019) outline several different theoretical frameworks

associated with critical masculinity studies and violence prevention, which include concepts such as patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, manhood acts, and inclusive masculinity. These theoretical concepts and approaches can be utilized within prevention programs with men to acknowledge the statistical reality of men's uses of violence against women, while also adhering to best practices that emphasize the need to undertake a strengths-based and invitational approach to incite their participation and engagement (Flood, 2004; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). In other words, while empirical evidence supported by positivist research and scientific method has proven that specific types of prevention programs yield positive results in attitudinal and behavioural change, integration of critical social sciences and its theories (e.g. strengths-based, invitational approaches) is significant to creating programs that reflect men's narrations of their lived experiences, insights, and questions.

Evidence-based practice also involves continuous measurement and evaluation to understand how primary prevention strategies have been implemented in real-world settings and have resulted in positive outcomes in reducing and preventing sexual violence at individual and macro levels. For example, the WiseGuyz program – a primary prevention program for young men aged thirteen to fifteen in Calgary, AB – reported significant changes in participants' perspectives of healthy relationships, expressing emotion, femininity, challenging homophobia, and sexual health practices, among others, which was evaluated through quantitative surveying and qualitative focus groups (Hurlock, 2013; Hurlock, 2014; Hurlock, 2016; Claussen, 2017). Men's involvement in primary prevention efforts should then be continuously evaluated with consideration of the best practices discussed in this review to ensure that these programs are

accountable, credible, and proven to result in positive attitudinal and behavioural shifts among men (Pease, 2008; Peacock & Barber, 2014).

Challenges

Scholarship on men's engagement in sexual violence prevention continues to develop, thus limiting our understanding of the efficacy of current and ongoing efforts (Powell & Henry, 2014; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). Flood (2003, 2019) notes that there continues to be "little discourse among men with which to build a culture of violence prevention" (p.4) and research around the connection between critical masculinity studies and men's violence remains undertheorized (Powell & Henry, 2014). The lack of discourse among men around their voluntary and willing participation in primary prevention efforts pose barriers to effectively implementing community education programs that foster men's active engagement. In this section, proposed challenges to working with men will be outlined and organized by drawing upon Flood's (2003) work. Recognizing the central challenges of engaging men in primary prevention efforts is integral to better understanding the gaps, limitations, and areas of improvement for scholars to explore.

Discourses of sexuality and traditional masculinity

As mentioned briefly earlier in this review, drawing upon stereotypical notions of masculinity to deliver prevention messages can be effective; however, it also risks perpetuating biological essentialism and the tenets of hegemonic or white, cisheteropatriarchal masculinity (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013). An example of this is a campaign – which might utilize a male athlete or celebrity to deliver the message – that suggests 'real men' do not perpetrate violence against women, or that violence is 'unmanly,' thus attempting to redefine masculinity as in direct opposition to traditional ideas of gender (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013). While the

intention behind these efforts may be positive in their attempts to challenge and reconfigure patriarchal assertions about gender and utilize influential male figures to support the message, they risk asserting a narrow, binary, and biologically predetermined depiction of masculinity, where certain characteristics are seen as natural and innate. In this process, men may cling more firmly to the assumption that certain traits are quintessentially or exclusively 'male,' or that men are predisposed and unable to interrupt predetermined attitudes and behaviours (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013). Such traits might include sexual initiation, aggression, confidence, and sexual promiscuity (Flood, 2003). Conversely, as Jozkowski and Peterson (2013) note, women are then juxtaposed against this stereotypical image as sexual gatekeepers, thus reinforcing sexual scripts where women's sexuality is labelled as deviant or promiscuous, while men are afforded positive labels such as "stud" or "womanizer" (Flood, 2003; Brockbank, 2019). These efforts then inadvertently contribute to the cisheteropatriarchal system that enables sexual violence and rape culture to flourish (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013).

Male peer culture

The male peer culture and male bonding also pose as a barrier to engaging men in sexual violence prevention (Flood, 2003; Flood, 2004; Brockbank, 2019). Flood (2003) and Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) note that male peer groups can facilitate, encourage, and legitimate attitudes, language, and behaviours that perpetuate sexual violence. For example, within the context of postsecondary campuses, high rates of sexual violence have been found to correlate with high levels of alcohol consumption, homophobia, use of pornography, subscription to traditional gender roles and sexist norms, and the promotion of 'male conquest' in sexual encounters (Flood, 2003; Flood, 2004; Brockbank, 2019). In this process, the male peer group can create an environment unconducive to unpacking and challenging cisheteropatriarchal

masculinity and reflecting on one's role in sexual violence perpetration and prevention, which are proposed best practices associated with successful primary prevention (Flood, 2003; Brockbank, 2019). While all-male groups are shown to be preferred and beneficial to men's engagement, there is some risk of fostering collusion and enabling these groups to become unsafe spaces for men to reflect upon or challenge their ideas and actions related to sexual violence. As a result, focus is problematically placed on men's defensiveness, backlash and resistance to prevention efforts, and the perpetuation of sexist and violent norms tied to masculinity (Flood, 2003; Flood, 2004; Brockbank, 2019).

Limited knowledge of consent

Primary prevention efforts seeking to utilize gender-transformative approaches to conceptualize men's roles in sexual violence as a social issue can also be adversely impacted by men's lack of awareness, knowledge, or understandings of consent (Flood, 2003; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Brockbank, 2019). Some research has shown that many young men attempt to locate and navigate 'fine lines' and 'signs of consent' during sexual encounters, which involves potentially (mis)interpreting social and physical indicators exhibited by their sexual partners such a body language, level of inebriation, previous sexual activity, and the absence of explicit resistance (Flood, 2003; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Brockbank, 2019). Men may feel that asking sexual partners for consent could result in social humiliation and sexual rejection as it is often perceived as awkward, embarrassing, or a 'mood killer' (Flood, 2003; Brockbank, 2019). These perceptions, paired with the reality that some young men find 'rough' or 'forced' sex or 'token resistance' – often depicted in pornography – to be arousing (Hald, Malamuth, & Lange, 2013), poses considerable concern around the lack of information men have around how to safely negotiate consent (Flood, 2003; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Brockbank, 2019).

When prevention efforts assume that most men understand the intricacies of consent, there is a risk of perpetuating harmful ideas and/or failing to cater the program specifically to be relevant and meet men where they are at with regard to their levels of knowledge, awareness, and comprehension (Flood, 2003; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Brockbank, 2019).

Lack of attention to social and cultural diversity

To reiterate what was discussed previously, Flood (2003) emphasizes the underdevelopment of socioculturally relevant prevention efforts that "address the complex intersections of class, race and ethnicity which shape women's and men's experiences of and involvements in assault" (p.6). If men do not feel that their lived experiences and identities are being adequately represented, they may be less likely to participate actively and engage in sexual violence prevention efforts (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013).

Acknowledging men's experiences of harm

The delicate balance between recognizing men's roles in benefitting from, protecting, enabling, and participating in the systems that facilitate sexual violence, while also acknowledging the ways in which they are harmed by it, continues to be a central tension within this work that should be considered and operationalized in primary prevention efforts (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013). When confronted with the statistical and empirical realities of men's uses of violence against women, many men respond by emphasizing that men are also victims and that women can be perpetrators (Flood, 2003; Brockbank, 2019). Flood (2003) indicates that there is some validity to this claim of men's victimization as men are more likely to be physically assaulted or murdered. At the same time, this is a defensive response that intends to distance men from the reality that men are vastly overrepresented as perpetrators of this violence. Perhaps the prevalence and significance of this kind of response reflects the growing influence of

men's rights groups in "communicating the falsehood that women are violent to men as much as men are violent to women" (Flood, 2003, p.7). These processes pose as a significant barrier to engaging men in gender-transformative, accountability-driven primary prevention programs as investing too much time into acknowledging men's experiences of harm risks facilitating an environment where responsibility for their role in sexual violence and cisheteropatriarchy is dismissed, rejected, and resisted (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013).

Men's resistance

Contributing to the difficulties in acknowledging men's experiences of violence, men's resistance to primary prevention efforts act as a significant barrier to facilitating engagement (Flood, 2003; Casey & Smith, 2010; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018). Potential manifestations of this resistance include: failing to personally reflect on their own social identities, embodiment of masculinity, and/or male privilege, distancing themselves from the issue by claiming that they would never sexually assault someone, defensiveness, disengagement or failing to participate, feelings of helplessness and distress, and fear of being attacked, unwelcomed, or shamed (Flood, 2003; Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018).

Resistance might stem from men perceiving male-focused prevention efforts as harsh, accusatory, patronizing, and uncomfortable, which could be symptomatic of cisheteropatriarchal privileges that position men as exempt from accountability for harms against women (Flood, 2003; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018). Stathopoulos (2013) adds that resistance may be rooted in men's discomfort in confronting and unpacking the systems that they are simultaneously harmed by and benefit from, or that they experience, live in, and recreate in their everyday lives. Being vulnerable in sharing their lived experiences, insights, and questions, and acknowledging

harms could be seen by men as in diametric opposition to the central tenets of a masculine identity, which is predicated on a rejection of all things deemed 'feminine' (Stathopoulos, 2013). Therefore, men could be resistant to participation and engagement in primary prevention strategies due to an unwillingness to surrender some of the privileges afforded to them by cisheteropatriarchal social systems and/or because they fear being ridiculed, rejected, embarrassed, or attacked for challenging masculinity (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018). A failure to acknowledge and unpack men's resistance to prevention risks facilitating efforts that men will disengage from, avoid, or fully protest (Flood, 2003; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018).

Appropriation of feminist interventions

Pease (2008) poses potential dangers associated with men's active involvement in creating, implementing, and evaluating violence prevention efforts, which primarily relate to the dissolution of feminist underpinnings. Specifically, a feminist approach to violence prevention seeks to be accountable to women to ensure that these efforts reflect their lived experiences and advocacy work, and actively support the eradication of sexual violence. Feminist scholars and activists have contributed significantly to the study of preventing violence against women and including men in the process (Dominelli, 2002; hooks, 2004; Pease, 2008). However, when primary prevention programs utilize male facilitators, facilitate all-male groups, and incite campaigns that praise men for rejecting violence, they risk silencing women, excluding women from the solution, appropriating decades worth of their work, gaining praise and social recognition without acknowledgement of their roots, and, subsequently, violating women's trust in the process (Pease, 2008; Flood, 2015). For example, Flood (2004) notes that men tend to be seen as more credible when disseminating prevention messages; while he acknowledges that this

might be reflective of cisheteropatriarchal power dynamics, he does not go further into unpacking how problematic it is for women to be entirely excluded from a movement that they created. An ongoing challenge of men's engagement in prevention programming relates to how these efforts can continue to include and be accountable to women in their development, implementation, and evaluation (Pease, 2008).

Structural challenges

The final overarching theme within the proposed challenges to facilitating men's engagement in sexual violence prevention is structural barriers to implementing and evaluating programs (Casey, 2010; Powell & Henry, 2014). In particular, grassroots anti-violence efforts tend to be significantly underfunded, including those spearheaded by rape crisis centres and non-profit community agencies (Powell & Henry, 2014). Conversely, the institutionalization of prevention efforts that are well-funded risk deradicalizing the issue and dissolving the feminist orientation of this work. To apply a current example, McMaster University recently cut a $9,000 contract with the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton and Area (SACHA) to train welcome week representatives and student leaders on sexual violence (Bonilla-Damptey & Wilder, 2019). McMaster then indicated that their own Equity and Inclusion Office would facilitate trainings instead. As Smith (2008) suggests, "technical professionalization" of essential service providers with "structural positioning," which includes university employees occupying conflicting roles of conducting trainings for staff and students on sexual violence, authoring the university's sexual assault policy, receiving student disclosures of sexual violence, *and* handling the formal reporting process, risks "[making] it more difficult for them to maintain close solidarity ties with disadvantaged [persons]" (p.132). In other words, by privatizing and institutionalizing sexual violence prevention within the university, it becomes difficult for students, staff, and faculty to

put their full trust in university representatives and campus investigations as their role is perceived as an effort to maintain and protect the interests of the academic institutions in which they are employed (Smith, 2008; Beres, Crow, & Gotell, 2009).

When prevention becomes institutionalized and pushes out grassroots agencies from being involved in the process, it risks becoming depoliticized and deradicalized as the institution's reputation and central interests – in this case, the university –are prioritized over student and staff safety and challenging the central tenets of rape culture on campus (Smith, 2008; Beres, Crow, & Gotell, 2009). When referring to depoliticization and deradicalization within the process of neoliberal institutionalization, Beres, Crow, & Gotell (2009) suggest that the issue of "violence against women" becomes degendered, such as being referred to as "victim's services," thus erasing the disproportionality of the social problem and the efforts of feminist organizers to draw attention to this disproportionality. This process closely links to what Pease (2008) discussed around the dissolution of the feminist orientation of violence prevention. A continued challenge in this work is facilitating grassroots, community-led initiatives that adequately reflect the lived experiences, insights, interests, and goals of anti-violence agencies taking up this work (Pease, 2008).

Limitations and gaps

While literature on men's engagement in prevention continues to develop and has taken significant strides to address previously existing gaps, there continues to be some lingering limitations. Namely, the evaluation of prevention efforts in both real-world and research settings is significantly underdeveloped as many programs do not have enough funding to sustain long-term evaluations (Stewart, 2014; DeGue et al, 2014; Powell & Henry, 2014). For example, in their systematic review of prevention programs, DeGue et al (2014) note that a significant

portion of existing research on prevention has been dedicated to "brief psycho-educational strategies that are not consistent with the principles of prevention and have not demonstrated effectiveness despite numerous evaluations" (p.359). Moreover, these programs do not tend to integrate "community- and societal-level prevention approaches for sexual violence" (DeGue et al, 2014, p.360), which are deemed critical best practices for prevention, as the focus continues to be placed on individual-level interventions with a select group of voluntary men. As discussed previously, this process risks failing to reach men who may be resistant to the central messages of feminist-informed prevention and would hypothetically benefit most from engaging with these efforts (Stewart, 2014). Overall, sexual violence prevention "remains significantly under-theorized" (Powell & Henry, 2014, p.3) and continues to develop in current literature.

Aside from the studies by Piccigallo, Lilley, and Miller (2012) and Rich et al (2010) on the reasons why (or why not) male postsecondary students chose to partake in a sexual violence prevention program, few articles explicitly engaged with men's perspectives on existing prevention programs. While empirical evaluation of violence prevention efforts, which involve tracking and documenting men's attitudinal and behavioural shifts pre- and post-program attendance through quantitative and qualitative means, is important, it is also necessary to explore men's accounts of their experiences within prevention efforts to better understand what incites or inhibits their engagement. In my own undergraduate research, I found that male postsecondary students participating in the study expressed that existing prevention efforts they had interacted with did not address the questions, concerns, ideas, insights, and reflections that young male students grapple with (Brockbank, 2019). To ensure primary prevention programs are catering to men's experiences and disseminating relevant information, engaging men in the

process of narratively and qualitatively evaluating anti-violence efforts that they have experienced during their student tenure is crucial.

Conclusion

This review has intended to provide a comprehensive summary of existing literature on men's engagement in primary sexual violence prevention efforts. Sexual violence continues to be a significant issue impacting students on postsecondary campuses, and the development of prevention programming has played a significant role in beginning to address the individual, interpersonal, systemic, and structural factors shaping violence. While best practices and challenges of primary prevention have been thoroughly researched in recent years, there continues to be a gap in inviting men into the process of evaluating and reflecting on their experiences with anti-violence efforts to identify limitations and future directions of this work. If primary prevention on postsecondary campuses reflects the lived experiences, insights, and questions of the male students they are attempting to engage and represent, perhaps they will incite active participation from a diverse range of men on campus. My thesis intends to address these gaps by inviting male postsecondary students into a group reflection on their experiences of primary prevention efforts at McMaster University to understand if these proposed best practices align with that men's narratives.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

Feminist Theoretical Approaches to Men and Masculinities

Feminist theory is a broad framework that has various approaches and positionings; however, broadly speaking, it is concerned with how society is shaped by the institutionalized system of male privilege that facilitates the exploitation and domination of people in general and women in particular (hooks, 2004; Dominelli, 2002; Orme, Dominelli, & Mullender, 2000; Davis, 2008; DeVault, 1996; Dowd, 2010; Hunnicutt, 2009; Waling, 2019; Gardiner, 2005). DeVault (1996) defines feminism as “a movement, and a set of beliefs, that problematize gender inequality” through exploring the ways in which “women have been subordinated through men’s greater power, variously expressed in different arenas” (p.31). While there are several iterations of feminist theory, there are core theoretical underpinnings that are generally shared amongst feminist scholars. Dominelli (2002) notes that “feminist understandings of the public-private divide” (p.22) have been integral to reconfiguring our collective understandings of social problems whereby women can see ‘personal’ issues as public and shared among other women. This process has disrupted sociohistorical narratives that have invalidated and silenced women’s experiences of marginalization and oppression in areas such as work, education, religion, and intimate/familial relationships, among others (hooks, 2004). Feminism has continued to evolve theoretically and “has continually questioned, disputed, and debated itself, and that self-analysis and has only strengthened feminist analysis” (Dowd, 2010, p.417).

Feminist theory seeks to disrupt biological essentialism entrenched in patriarchal understandings of gender, which posit that manhood and womanhood are dichotomous and distinct (Gardiner, 2005; Dominelli, 2002; Katz, 1995; Hunnicutt, 2009; Dowd, 2010; hooks, 2004). In her chapter on men, masculinities, and feminist theory, Gardiner (2005) details a brief

history of the origins of feminist theories in the context of challenging dominant discourses around the foundational concepts of patriarchy. Namely, early feminist scholars rejected monotheistic/religious, psychoanalytical, medical, and allegedly 'scientific' assertions that men are genetically predisposed to be aggressive, dominant, and authoritative in sexual, intimate, professional, educational, and societal contexts (Gardiner, 2005; Katz, 1995; hooks, 2004; Hunnicutt, 2009; Dowd, 2010). Embedded within these assumptions about manhood were beliefs about femininity, which constructed women as inherently weak, passive, submissive, and emotionally irrational, thus positioning them as inferior and unable to fully participate in society (hooks, 2004; Dominelli, 2002; Crenshaw, 1991; Gardiner, 2005). Feminist theory disrupted these iterations of the gender binary in dominant discourses through creating space for women's voices, narratives, and experiences to be understood as shared, legitimate, and valid in academic, vocational, and personal contexts. In this process, gendered socialization and the social construction of femininities and masculinities emerged; rather than men and women being biologically programmed to operate in specific ways, gender is constructed through social practices that privilege men and disempower women (hooks, 2004; Dominelli, 2002).

Contributing to these understandings of gendered socialization, a central concept shaping feminist theory is that of patriarchy (hooks, 2004; Dominelli, 2002; Orme, Dominelli, & Mullender, 2000; Davis, 2008; DeVault, 1996; Dowd, 2010; Hunnicutt, 2009; Waling, 2019; Gardiner, 2005). bell hooks (2004) defines patriarchy as:

> [A] political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. (p.18)

Dominelli (2002) notes that patriarchy is frequently drawn upon by feminists, particularly emphasized by radical feminists, to point to the ways in which social structures are built to

advantage men and subjugate women, thus adversely shaping women's experiences in work and educational sectors, and inter-personal, relational contexts. However, patriarchy is also a concept taken up by profeminist scholarship and men's studies in an effort to reveal how men are negatively impacted by this system of domination, specifically in how they are expected and, at times, forced to uphold 'masculine' standards (e.g. violence, aggression, indifference, control, etc.), and simultaneously reject all things 'feminine' (e.g. emotionality, passivity, etc.).

In examining patriarchy as a foundational concept, it is important to acknowledge that the version of patriarchy adopted and conceptualized by early – namely white – feminist scholars was congruent with cisheteronormative ideals and the default position of white women being subjugated and dominated by white men. As such, there are significant limitations when applying a historical understanding of patriarchy to the issue of sexual violence prevention and violence against women. Namely, Crenshaw's (1990) and other prominent feminist activists' works revealed disproportionality within women's experiences of sexual violence, with Black, Indigenous, racialized, disabled, queer, trans, and poor women experiencing sexual violence at a higher rate than their white, cisgender, able-bodied, upper and middle class counterparts due to interlocking systems of oppression within social structures. Similarly, bell hooks (2004) emphasizes that patriarchy is "the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation" (p.17) in that it subverts alternative masculinities – including those that are racialized, queer, trans, disabled, and/or poor – and prescribes social norms that men must conform to, which often put them at social, psychological, emotional, and physical risk. The glaring omission of these marginalized experiences from mainstream and historical understandings of patriarchy is an important consideration when moving forward with feminist scholarship as it points to the westernized, cisheteronormative nature of the feminist movement,

which has been rightly critiqued by racialized scholars (e.g. Crenshaw, 1991; Grey, 2004; Smith, 2006; Mehrotra, 2010).

As alluded to previously, it should also be noted that patriarchy is a highly contested concept in that it has been criticized for being undertheorized, oversimplified, and white-washed (Hunnicutt, 2009; Dominelli, 2002). Dominelli (2002) outlines the central criticisms of the ways in which radical feminists have taken up the concept of patriarchy, which include the false universalization of "white Western middle-class women's condition," a "colour-blind approach to 'race' and ethnicity," and homophobia embedded within heterosexist power relations (p.26). In other words, white feminism has largely excluded the experiences of marginalized persons from mainstream narratives around seeking equality, recognition, representation, reparations, and safety. Hunnicutt (2009) adds that patriarchy in the context of analyzing the social problem of violence against women has been critiqued by feminist scholars for oversimplifying power relations, perpetuating heteronormativity and a gender binary, and a general lack of attention to explaining the complexities of violence (e.g. male-on-male violence, female-on-male violence, and why some – not all – men use violence). Additionally, patriarchy has been scrutinized for homogenizing 'women' and 'men' and therefore failing to account for intersectionality and confluence, which is a term derived from Joseph's (2015) work to "acknowledge that all categories and systems of difference are suspect and focuses or redirects our attention to their common projects as well as their resulting fields of knowledge, practices, and technologies" (p.17). In this context, confluence refers to the ways in which patriarchy operates in tandem with other interlocking systems of oppression, including capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism. However, hooks (2004), Gardiner (2005), and Hunnicutt (2009) argue that the concept of patriarchy can still be useful in feminist theory when it considers "varieties in patriarchal

structures" and is "developed together with other forms of hierarchy and domination in which it is inextricably embedded" (Hunnicutt, 2009, p.554). hooks (2004) refers to this concept as "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (p.17) to emphasize interlocking systems of oppression shaping social structures.

Moreover, Smith (2006) describes colonial cisheteropatriarchal privilege as inextricably linked to the foundational pillars of white supremacy; in other words, interlocking systems of oppression cannot be seen as distinct or separate as they operate in tandem to reinforce and maintain each other. As Smith (2006) indicates, "in order to colonize peoples whose societies are not based on social hierarchy, colonizers must first naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy. In turn, patriarchy rests on a gender binary system in which only two genders exist, one dominating the other" (p.72). Crenshaw (1991), Mehrotra (2010), Gardiner (2005), Hill Collins, (1995) and hooks (2004) each take up this approach in their works through exploring the ways in which patriarchy is symptomatic of a colonial, white supremacist system of domination, where complex experiences of oppression and marginalization cannot be separated into and explained by binary categories of identity. Drawing on Crenshaw's theory, Mehrotra (2010) writes, "it is no longer possible to consider gender as an analytic category that is separate from other systems of oppression or without consideration of context […] race, class, and gender are interlocking and interdependent oppressions that are simultaneously experienced" (p.417-418). While this is especially emphasized in feminist theory through acknowledging women's complex experiences of violence, this conceptualization of patriarchy can also be understood as shaping men's experiences of socialized manhood, which will vary based on social location and proximity to white, cishet, able-bodied privileges.

Central to a feminist approach to understanding men and masculinities is the recognition of men's harms through conforming and contributing to a cisheteropatriarchal system that facilitates violence against women (Dominelli, 2002; hooks, 2004; Pease, 2008; Gardiner, 2005; Powell & Henry, 2014). While a feminist approach intentionally creates space to explore the ways in which men are adversely impacted by the same system they benefit from and participate in, feminist research maintains the commitment to be accountable to women through facilitating shared responsibility for the ways in which men (re)produce harm on an interpersonal, systemic, and structural level (Dominelli, 2002; Pease, 2008). To do so, feminist research must account for the white, imperialist, colonial, and heterosexist history of the movement and acknowledge the unique ways in which marginalized persons are disproportionately impacted by violence in a cisheteropatriarchal society (Smith, 2006). Feminist theory continues to be a relevant, significant, and formative approach to understanding the social construction of masculinity and its interconnectedness with violence against women.

Critical Masculinity Studies

Since the 1970s, scholarship focusing on men and masculinities has expanded significantly (Connell, 2002; Pease, 2004; Kimmel, Hearn, & Connell, 2004; Flood et al, 2007; McCarry, 2007; Berggren, 2014). Flood et al (2007) note that research under the name of 'men's studies,' which rose to prominence nearly fifty years ago, was heavily criticized in the 1980s and 1990s "for its failure to develop a feminist-informed and critical scholarship," and, in response, critical masculinity studies were taken up by a number of academics seeking to "develop scholarship that collaborates with academic feminism rather than colonizing it, that is informed rather than ignorant of feminist scholarship, and that furthers progressive social change" (p.viii). Berggen (2014) outlines a brief evolution of the sociology of masculinity from 1970 to present,

which involved a shift from sex role theory – where, while gender is understood as socially constructed, there is little attention to the power dynamics inherent within the tangible performances of gender roles – to a structural perspective that acknowledge men's positions of power manifesting in several social domains. Berggen (2014) indicates that current research has taken "post perspectives," which focuses "on how norms and subjectivity are constantly negotiated in contradictory processes of power" (p.235).

Kimmel, Hearn, & Connell (2004) provide a general overview of the key characteristics of critical masculinity studies taken up by a number of influential scholars in the area: (1) a specific focus on men and masculinities; (2) consideration for feminist, queer, and other critical gender scholarship; (3) recognition of the study of men and masculinities as explicitly gendered; (4) an understanding of the social construction, production, and reproduction of masculinity and a rejection of biological essentialism; (5) acknowledgement of the dynamic, contextual, and varied performances and embodiments of masculinities across sociohistorical, cultural, and societal spaces; (6) focus on men's varying relationships with gendered power, and; (7) appreciation for and engagement with conflated aspects of identity shaping men's experiences of masculinities. In an effort to meet the above criteria, critical masculinity studies draw upon several different approaches to better understand the social construction and socialization of gender and masculinities, including patriarchy, types of masculinity (e.g. hegemonic masculinity, inclusive masculinity, etc.), male peer support (where the male peer group can encourage, support, and facilitate harmful beliefs, language, and behaviour toward women), and manhood acts (which refer to the individual and collective actions and behaviours men perform to signify their membership to masculinity), among others (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997; Connell, 2002;

Kimmel, Hearn, & Connell, 2005; Flood et al, 2007; McCarry, 2007; Berggen, 2014; Claussen, 2017; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019).

Arguably the most influential of these approaches is Connell's (1995) theory of hegemonic masculinity, which can be aptly summarized as understanding masculinity as "a social construction that is achieved within a gender order that defines masculinity as an opposition to femininity" (Harland & McCready, 2015, p.100). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) describe hegemonic masculinity as the embodiment and enforcement of practices that subordinate, marginalize, and oppress those outside of its ideals (e.g. women, marginalized men, and non-binary folks). In this process, the binary of men dominating women is disrupted as additional layers are added, where men can experience privilege and violence (at times simultaneously) through occupying dynamic, contextual, and evolving positions on a hierarchy of masculinities based on their social location (Connell, 2002; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Harland & McCready, 2015). For example, racialized, queer, trans, disabled, and/or poor men will experience masculinity differently based on their distance from or proximity to what is deemed a dominant male identity (e.g. white, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, and affluent).

Connell's theory has been contested in critical scholarship on men and masculinities through claims that it risks treating masculinity as a "single, one-dimensional concept […] characterised by 'toxic traits' such as power, violence, emotional inexpressiveness, overt heterosexual behaviour, [and] homophobic bullying" (Harland & McCready, 2015, p.102). However, hegemonic masculinity maintains relevance in emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the various forms of masculinity that exist across sociohistorical, cultural, and temporal spaces (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Harland & McCready, 2015; Morris &

Ratajczak, 2019). Additionally, in a piece authored in response to the liberal mythology of "good men," Benibo and briond (2019) note:

> [T]he important takeaway from Connell's work is that the dominant form of masculinity, the very concept of masculinity itself, is hegemonic. Domination is rooted not only in the overt acts of violence and performance, but is the core, the center, the root, the default of what hegemonic masculinity and manhood are as structural entities. What is often described as "toxic masculinity" is not the aberrant or deviant form of true "masculinity" itself, or "good masculinity." It is the default. Within that framework, there is no actual split between toxic and non-toxic masculinity.

This comment is an important takeaway from foundational work around hegemonic masculinity as it disrupts the potential for men to cling to assertions of being "good" men or embodying "good" masculinity. Benibo and briond (2019) go on to compare the conceptualization of masculinity as similar to that of whiteness; colonial, imperialist, white cisheteropatriarchy is intertwined and, therefore, cannot be dichotomized into "good" or "toxic." As Benibo and briond (2019) aptly conclude, "[t]his 'good men' versus 'bad men' paradigm stems from the same 'not all men' logic that ultimately benefits no one except men."

Research has indicated that acceptance of hegemonic masculinity is linked to heightened rape myth acceptance, sexual harassment, and sexual assault based on how it endorses, supports, and embodies the 'toxic' traits discussed previously (Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). In response, recent scholarship within this field has sought to explore inclusive masculinity, which refers to the "birth of a 'new man' who is more caring, empathetic, and emotionally expressive" (Morris & Ratajczak, 2019, p.1993). Sociopolitical shifts toward progressive social policy, including the legalization of gay marriage, and increasing representation of diverse and alternative masculinities in media (e.g. inclusion of queer and racialized men), among many other advancements, have been credited as facilitating space for men to explore and embrace a masculine identity outside of the dominant, hegemonic model of previous generations. Inclusive

masculinity within critical scholarship on men marks an important development in viewing men as part of the solution to challenging cisheteropatriarchal ideas that they can simultaneously benefit from and be harmed by (Claussen, 2017; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). However, while this concept is a potentially beneficial approach, Morris and Ratajczak (2019) caution the misappropriation of inclusive masculinity, where these allegedly new men can claim traits tied to subordinated masculinities in an effort to appear progressive and egalitarian, while simultaneously continuing to contribute to, benefit from, and promulgate the privileges of masculinity in covert ways. Additionally, claiming a progressive masculine identity risks allowing men to distance themselves from the supposed 'bad men' that commit violence against women, thus framing them as praiseworthy in comparison simply for not doing so (Benibo & briond, 2019; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). Nonetheless, inclusive masculinity maintains merit in its ability to foster space for men to discuss the ways in which they have been harmed by cisheteropatriarchy for their inability or unwillingness to conform to hegemonic ideals, while also facilitating shared accountability for challenging this system on an interpersonal and structural level.

Linking Feminist Theory to Critical Masculinity Studies

A central concern in the development of critical masculinity studies is whether it has intentionally and purposefully sought to distance itself from the foundational feminist research it is derived from (McCarry, 2007; Berggen, 2014; O'Neill, 2015). O'Neill (2015) indicates that recent scholarship in this area often asserts the logic of "postfeminism," where the need to engage with feminist principles is 'obsolete' based on the notion that "times have changed" (p.110) and that we have societally achieved gender and sexual equality. This assertion clings to assumptions that we have progressed past the need for feminism and that, because some men

have articulated an interest in exploring alternative masculinities and appear physically more diverse in the social sphere, gendered power dynamics no longer exist (O'Neill, 2015). As O'Neill (2015) emphasizes, this perception does not adequately interrogate that, while the current social context may look different than it did fifty years ago, visible difference does not necessarily mean progressive social change has been achieved. The use of postfeminism in contemporary critical masculinity studies is potentially harmful as it could obscure the ways in which gendered power relations and sexual politics continue to be a significant governing force.

Moreover, in their discussion of critical masculinity studies' engagement with exploring and explaining men's violence, McCarry (2007) critiques this body of literature through indicating that it does not adequately address men's violence, it has selectively engaged with or completely disengaged from previous feminist work in the same area, and it risks legitimating men's violence rather than critiquing it. McCarry (2007) also identifies three specific criticisms of scholarship on men's violence in the field of critical masculinity studies, which include: (1) overemphasis on reframing men as victims, thus dissipating recognition of gendered power dynamics; (2) disembodying men from masculinity, where the separation between the two potentially facilitates a lack of accountability for men's harms on interpersonal and structural levels; and (3) reflexivity around the motif of the personal being political and men's violence being viewed as an integral piece of a masculine identity (Hearn, 1998). In other words, overreliance on men's potential strengths as allies or experiences of harm as victims of cisheteropatriarchy risks dissipating men's accountability for creating, participating in, benefitting from, and protecting this system. Pease (2004) adds that there are ongoing debates within critical masculinity studies around whether masculinity can be framed positively and subjugated masculinities can be embraced, or whether that logic risks idolizing men for not

committing violence and allowing men to ignore the ways in which they benefit from cisheteropatriarchy and gendered power relations.

This discussion intends to draw upon both critical masculinity studies and feminist theory to ground itself. While I plan to draw upon the accountability-driven model in feminist theory, which commits to recognize and address men's violence against women in a cisheteropatriarchal system, I also aim to navigate the delicate balance between acknowledging the ways in which men are simultaneously privileged and harmed by the social construction of masculinities. Recognition of the roots of this work in feminist theory is important; feminism grew out of women's rejection of silence and marginalization. Engaging with critical masculinity studies that are not underpinned by feminist principles perpetuates this oppression and suppression. However, inviting men into discussion around how they understand the link between the social construction of masculinity and violence is significant as it flips the feminist script. As Kirby and McKenna (2004) paraphrase work from George (1979), "research concerned with social change should focus on the rich and powerful and not those on the margins" (p.72). My thesis seeks to integrate this perspective by reimagining the study of sexual violence and its prevention through engaging men in discussion on their complicity, conformity, and rejection of the construction of masculinity that privileges them and enables sexual violence to occur.

Theory for my Thesis

For the purposes of my thesis, both feminist theory and critical masculinity scholarship are particularly relevant in shaping the research questions guiding my study. In exploring how men understand and perceive their role in sexual violence prevention efforts and how the socialization of masculinities shape attitudes toward sex, consent, violence, and prevention, I am seeking to engage with feminist and critical masculinity studies' understandings of how gender is

socially constructed and its material, tangible impacts of the formation of a male identity. Additionally, the ontological perspective that underpins these theories, which seeks to validate and draw upon lived experiences and personal narratives as valid forms of data, informs my own understanding of this research as I plan to engage with participants' unique insights, ideas, opinions, and reflections (Mason, 2002; Gardiner, 2005; Dominelli, 2002; hooks, 2004; DeVault, 1996). While my research is focusing on men's perspectives of sexual violence prevention through critically examining the socialization and construction of masculinities, I think I will still be doing what DeVault (1996) refers to as "excavation" (p.32), which seeks to uncover hidden or alternative narratives and discourses in feminist methodologies, by collectively reimagining what allyship and prevention looks like for men engaging with these concepts potentially for the first time. This thesis seeks to interrogate issues of power, dominance, subjugation in the context of sexual violence, and the socialization and construction of masculinities is deeply involved in unpacking these processes as men experience privilege and harm simultaneously while living under a cisheteropatriarchal system.

Theory to Action

A central tenet of feminist approaches to research involve participatory and action-oriented responses that seek to transform knowledge mobilization into social change (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000; Reid, Tom, & Frisby, 2006; Frisby, Maguire, & Reid, 2009). Flood et al (2007) and Reid, Tom, and Frisby (2006) suggest that feminist theory seeks to challenge the androcentric history of research that position men's perspectives as "constituting generic human experience" (Flood et al, 2007, p.viii). To disrupt androcentric research that is critiqued for extracting resources from communities and perpetuating power imbalances between researcher and subject, feminist praxis aims to interrogate the "power manifestations resulting in gender

inequalities" (Frisby, Maguire, & Reid, 2009, p.14) and engage with multi-faceted, contextual, dynamic, and varying liberatory actions to challenge cisheteropatriarchal systems on an individual, interpersonal, and structural level (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000; Reid, Tom, & Frisby, 2006; Frisby, Maguire, & Reid, 2009). Within the context of action-oriented feminist research pertaining to men and masculinities, Frisby, Maguire, and Reid (2009) note that "a transformative approach would help [men] see how gender influences their actions and those around them" (p.15). In other words, decentering a universalized experience of manhood – one that reflects white, imperialist, colonial, and hegemonic cisheteropatriarchy – to include and amplify the voices and experiences of men benefitting from and grappling with this system simultaneously is a significant shift toward action-oriented feminist research.

Within the context of this thesis, feminist theory and critical masculinity studies inform an action-oriented approach that seeks to involve men in the process of reimagining allyship and sexual violence prevention. Focusing on men's perspectives, experiences, and insights into this particular topic is an important and intentional shift toward social change where men are actively involved in the process and are able to take responsibility for developing and evaluating sexual violence prevention efforts. Feminist theory also allows men to explore their experiences of socialized and socially constructed masculinities as it intersects with how they perceive and understand their role in sexual violence prevention. In facilitating space for men to reflect on their experiences of and insights to primary prevention programming, it is my hope that this project will bridge feminist theory, critical masculinity studies, and an action-oriented response to anti-violence work through beginning to involve men in developing and evaluating sexual violence prevention efforts.

Chapter 4: Methodology & Methods

Theory Guiding Methods

As mentioned previously, feminist theory is concerned with reconceptualizing private troubles as public social issues to shed light on systemically silenced narratives, lived experiences, and discourses. As Hunnicutt (2009) writes, feminist theories generally agree that, as gender is a governing social construct, epistemological inquiry informed by feminism "should uncover the social sources of gender oppression and inequality," which includes "the patriarchal structures of societies" (p.555). Dowd (2010) contextualizes how feminist inquiry can inform critical masculinities studies by aiming to "identify the interaction of privilege and harm" and "expose men's harms, to render them visible" (p.420). In this process, the nature of my research questions aligns with the ontological and epistemological tenets of feminist theory: to hold men accountable for contributing to and/or perpetrating violence against women; to acknowledge that white supremacist, imperialist, colonial cisheteropatriarchy also harms men in unique ways; and to draw upon men's narratives and lived experiences to reimagine feminist manhood within the context of sexual violence prevention (hooks, 2004).

Dominelli (2002) suggests that feminist theory can inform social work research and practice with men through drawing on feminist principles and methods. Firstly, my research questions and the questions included in the focus group guide align with feminist theory in challenging biological essentialism, which posits that men commit sexual offences because they are inherently sexual, dominant, and aggressive (Dominelli, 2002). Instead, I explored how participants understand gender and masculinities based on their lived experiences, personal narratives, and insights into how 'manhood' is constructed (and reinforced) by social interactions with others that reflect gendered power relations (hooks, 2004; Dominelli, 2002). As Dominelli

(2002) emphasizes, “[g]endered analyses of power relations explain why most sex offenders are men and most victims are women” (p.158). In acknowledging the governing power of patriarchal familial and social structures, I hoped to engage participants in a reflective practice where they could consider the ways in which they have simultaneously benefitted from and been harmed by cisheteropatriarchy (hooks, 2004; Dominelli, 2002).

In addition to acknowledging the impacts of patriarchal social structures on men and the function of masculinities to exercise power over those deemed ‘weaker,’ Dominelli (2002) suggests that recognizing and appreciating diversity of masculinities reflecting “differing levels of privileging amongst men and between different groups of men” will facilitate the celebration of “the redefinition of masculinity in nurturing and egalitarian directions” (p.163). As participants entered the focus group with a variety of unique lived experiences based on their social locations and proximity to white cisheteropatriarchal privilege, I attempted to attend to these differences by creating space for participants to discuss the ways expectations of masculinity have harmed them. In my experience facilitating violence intervention groups, intentionally prompting discussions that encourage service users to express how they have been adversely impacted by social structures has proven to be quite effective in building rapport and motivating engagement as they feel more comfortable taking part when they feel validated (Orne, Dominelli, & Mullender, 2010; Dominelli, 2002; Flood, 2011).

This process was also supported by research questions that focus on how prevention programs can bolster male allyship rather than framing men as potential perpetrators. Flood (2011), among many other scholars of critical masculinities studies, emphasizes that violence prevention programs are deemed more engaging and effective by male participants when they take an invitational, allyship-based approach as men feel more comfortable, supported, and safe

in participating and reflecting. I anticipated struggling to a certain extent during data collection to balance conflicting tenets within feminist theory: how do I facilitate accountability for men's harms against women when they inevitably partake in a patriarchal system, while also acknowledging the ways men are harmed by patriarchy (hooks, 2004; Dominelli, 2002)? Feminist theory would attend to this reflection by seeking to identify participants' accounts of patriarchal social systems and their role in perpetuating and challenging gender power relations within data sets in an attempt to validate the importance of lived experience and the ways men are both harmed by and benefit from patriarchy (hooks, 2004; Dowd, 2010). This reflection was a guiding concept for me through the data collection process.

Methodology

In alignment with both feminist and critical masculinity theories, this study utilized focus groups to collect and analyze data. Focus groups are comprised of alike individuals – whom have shared interests in and/or experience with a specific context – in order to facilitate a relatively informal discussion of a specific issue (Wilkinson, 1998; Parker & Tritter, 2006; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). Focus groups are an exploratory methodology that maintain multifaceted purposes, including: (1) a pedagogical function, where the dynamics of the focus group can foster enhanced knowledge on the subject being discussed; (2) a political function that seeks to engage with action-oriented responses and promote social change; and, predictably, (3) a research function, where a shared construction of reality can be examined and discussed as a collective (Parker & Tritter, 2006; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011).

Of central concern within focus group data collection and analysis are the dynamics of the focus group itself; namely, the interactive nature of the method allows for participants to take active roles in leading discussion, while the facilitator moderates the conversation in a more

passive role. Due to its "synergistic" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p.15) elements, focus groups can produce data that is seldom achieved in individual interviews through revealing norms, assumptions, and group dynamics in "deliberative, dialogic, democratic practice[s]" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p.3). The content, structure, and process of the focus group can then be considered in analysis as participants' interactions provide rich sources of information on how participants co-construct meaning, perform identity, and relate to and/or challenge each other (Wilkinson, 1998; Allen, 2005; Parker & Tritter, 2006; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). Allen (2005) notes, in alignment with feminist theory, that the unique characteristics of focus group data sets – which includes the potential for reinforcing or disrupting cisheteropatriarchy power dynamics – should be attended to as valid accounts of the ways in which the construction and performance of masculinities shape social interactions and identity.

Focus groups were selected as my methodology for this project as its central tenets reflect the goals of feminist research. As discussed previously, feminist theory aims to draw upon personal experiences, narratives, and perspectives as legitimate and valid sources of data that reveal the micro and macrolevel impacts of gendered power dynamics (Dominelli, 2002). Similarly, focus groups are utilized to draw upon participants' shared experiences, narratives, and perspectives to construct meaning (Wilkinson, 1998). Feminist theory, critical masculinity studies, and focus groups as a qualitative methodology challenge the positivist and androcentric methods of research that have traditionally been seen as more credible by centring participants' voices and creating space for them to describe their own experiences (Wilkinson, 1998; Dominelli, 2002). Focus groups also facilitate the possibility of participatory action; namely, the group setting fosters participant empowerment and the collective promotion of social justice through recognizing shared experiences and responsibilities for change (Wilkinson, 1998).

<u>Methods</u>

Research Context: COVID-19

Shortly after I submitted my ethics application to the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB) in late February 2020, McMaster University suspended all in-person classes and research activities due to public health concerns related to COVID-19. As a result, I had to modify the data collection process of the study; rather than facilitate the research in person, focus groups were facilitated via Zoom, which is an online video conferencing site. While I considered both focus groups a success, which will be discussed later in this thesis, the online nature of the focus group may have shaped participants' responses and experiences. For example, some participants disclosed that they were staying with family, intimate partners, and/or peers during the pandemic and had minimal privacy as a result. With this in mind, participants may have answered questions during the focus group differently based on their perception of their own privacy. Additionally, the interactive nature of the focus group – including the use of an activity to ignite discussion around the proposed topic – was inevitably shaped by its online medium. Namely, potential camaraderie and connection that can occur during in-person focus groups may have been reduced due to the online format feeling impersonal (e.g. some participants left their video camera off to maintain confidentiality), thus potentially impacting how participants responded to questions posed during the focus group.

It is important to make note of the social context surrounding this research project as COVID-19 implicated and impacted each participant differently. Two participants, who were considered essential workers, briefly discussed adverse and stressful working conditions that they were subjected to. One participant had been laid off during the pandemic and was unsure of when he would return to work. The remaining two participants were attempting to adjust to the

new online format of their schooling and had concerns about their summer work positions becoming obsolete. I mention these experiences to ground this study and acknowledge the financial, vocational, and personal stress participants were under as it may have affected their engagement with and participation in the research processes. I also commend each participant for actively participating in the study despite the harrowing circumstances.

This project received ethical clearance through the McMaster Research Ethics Board in March 2020.

Participant Recruitment

Six participants were recruited for this study. All participants were over the age of eighteen (ranging from twenty to thirty-three), male, and enrolled as students at McMaster University. While the designation of "male students" included those that use "he/him/his" pronouns, which indicated the inclusion of trans men, all six participants were cisgender men. Not by design, five participants were white, and one was mixed race. As postsecondary campuses have made a recent shift toward mandatory inclusion of sexual violence policies, participants had similar and opposing experiences of understanding the prevalence of sexual violence and campus and existing prevention efforts based on how long they had attended McMaster and in what capacity they were engaged with its extracurricular activities, which will be examined further later in this discussion.

Participants were recruited through online postings of the recruitment flyer on social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The flyer was posted on my personal social media accounts and on a separate account that I ran for a charity event the previous year (@mcmasterallies). I also sent the recruitment flyer to different on-campus organizations that I have worked or had contact with via e-mail and social media to request that they advertise the

poster to interested participants by posting it on their pages (e.g. McMaster athletics, McMaster engineering, Pride Community Centre, and the Student Wellness Centre, among others).

When participants contacted me to indicate their interest in participating in the study, I sent them the letter of information and an email briefly detailing the procedures of the study. Each participant also indicated their availability for a focus group via email. As each participant was attending McMaster and had access to a Zoom account, all six were proficient in Zoom and did not require additional information regarding how it operates. I then set up a time to speak with them individually on the phone to document consent via an oral consent log. Prior to the commencement of the focus group, I reiterated the details of the letter of information and the informed consent process verbally to ensure participants understood their right to withdraw and were aware that the discussion would be recorded. Participants also received a gift card via email prior to partaking in the study.

Data Collection

Due to conflicting schedules among participants, I conducted two separate focus groups with three participants in each group. Participants were permitted to use pseudonyms of their choosing as their screen name on Zoom and did not have to turn on their camera to show their faces for confidentiality purposes. Both focus groups were around ninety minutes in length and were recorded via a digital recording device. Participants were provided with the focus group guide, which included the outline of the activity and the subsequent questions, prior to participating in the study.

To begin the focus group, I facilitated the "gender boxes" activity (see Table 1 and 2), which sought to invite participants into discussion around the traditional expectations of masculinity and femininity. This activity is derived from both the Partner Assault Response

(PAR) curriculum from Catholic Family Services of Hamilton (where I co-facilitated men's and women's domestic violence intervention as an undergraduate placement student) and the WiseGuyz program. The activity visually documents participants' responses (see Table 1 and Table 2) to prompting questions around the traits typically associated with a quintessentially 'masculine' or 'feminine' identity. Firstly, I asked participants to think about what constitutes acceptable demonstrations of masculinity, which were then recorded inside the box. When the box was filled, I then asked participants to consider what traits, behaviours, and values are deemed unacceptable for men to embody, which were written outside the box. Participants were then prompted to consider how men are labelled when they metaphorically "step outside of the box" and perform any of the traits, beliefs, or actions associated with unacceptable demonstrations of masculinity. These terms were recorded using red text to emphasize how these labels can deter men from challenging traditional masculinity. The activity was then repeated while considering women's experiences of traditional femininity.

Participants were able to visually see the gender boxes activity template as I shared my laptop screen on the Zoom video call. I incorporated this activity for a few different reasons; (1) to break the ice and foster an interactive and open space, (2) to initiate participants' reflections on the ways in which individual experiences of masculinity might be shared among men from varying social positionings, (3) to prompt participants to consider how traditional gender roles have tangible impacts on their lives, and (4) to connect the social construction and socialization of gender to the larger social issue of violence.

What are some things that are acceptable for men to do/talk about?

What are some things that are unacceptable for men to do/talk about?

The "Man" Box

What happens when you step outside the box?

What do you think society views as expected demonstrations of violence amongst boys and men?

Table 1 – Gender Boxes Activity: Blank Template of The "Man" Box

What are some things that are acceptable for women to do/talk about?

What are some things that are unacceptable for women to do/talk about?

The "Woman" Box

What happens when women step outside the box?

What do you think society views as expected demonstrations of violence amongst women and girls?

Table 2 – Gender Boxes Activity: Blank Template of The "Woman" Box

The 'gender boxes' created space for conversation around their experiences of benefit and harm within traditional gender roles. Participants were prompted to consider the impacts of gender socialization and construction on both men and women, reflect on their own experiences, and see a visual representation of what Dowd (2010) describes as "the two most common pieces defining masculinity: to not be like a woman and not be gay" (p.418). I intended for the

completion of this activity to prompt participants to begin thinking about patriarchal social structures and how they have informed masculine identities, and how consideration of these concepts could be integrated into prevention programs to support men in the process of challenging the systems that enable violence against women to occur.

Following these discussions, participants were asked to consider how society perceives acceptable demonstrations of violence against men and women to ground the discussion within the link between the social construction and socialization of gender and violence. This reflection then transitioned us into answering the focus group questions, which were projected onto the Zoom video call screen for participants to review. Focus group questions read as follows:

1) What were your initial thoughts about the "gender boxes" activity? How did you experience it? How did you feel during the activity?
2) Have you ever participated in an activity like this before? What was it like?
    a. Did this activity, or ones you participated in, change your thinking in any way? Did it reinforce what you already knew? Did anything surprise you?
3) Do you think an activity like this would be beneficial or relevant for young men to take part in? Why or why not?
    a. What was it like participating in this activity with male peers? Would this experience have been different with female or non-binary peers? Why/why not?
    b. Why or why not might this activity be important to include in violence prevention programs?
4) During the activity, we spoke a lot about the expectations of traditional masculinity and traditional femininity. Do these ideas resemble your experience growing up as men? Why or why not?

5) As we discussed, traditional masculinity often requires men to be tough, aggressive, independent, confident, brave, willing to take charge/initiative, in control, and sexually driven. How do these ideas link to things like: sex? Consent? Intimate partner relationships? Learning about these things in school, from peers, from family, etc.?
    a. How do these traditional traits shape sexual relationships, asking for consent, partaking in violence prevention programs, and forming a 'male' identity?
    b. How does your own understanding of what being a man is compare to or differ from what we understand to be traditional masculinity?
    c. If you don't want to talk about your own experiences, can you think of examples in the media, especially during the "#MeToo" era?
6) In considering your experiences as a student on a postsecondary campus, what do you recall of sexual violence prevention efforts (e.g. consent campaigns, trainings, presentations, brochures, etc.)? What stuck with you or what did you remember and why?
    a. What is positive about sexual violence prevention efforts on campus?
7) What do you think is missing from current sexual violence prevention efforts on campus, if anything? Why?
8) How do you think sexual violence prevention educators and facilitators can make the content and facilitation of these programs and campaigns better, more relevant, and more engaging to young men on campus?

At the end of the focus group, participants were asked if they had anything else to add that had not been addressed during the focus group. All participants indicated that the focus group was an interesting experience that prompted considerable reflection. I received separate messages about

a week after the focus group from two participants, which detailed their continued reflections on what we had discussed during the study.

Audio recordings of the focus groups and the oral consent log were stored on an encrypted laptop.

Data Analysis

I transcribed the audio recordings of the focus groups and deleted the audio upon completion of transcription. The data was then anonymized as participants were assigned pseudonyms. I then conducted a thematic analysis of the transcripts, which was grounded in the themes identified in the critical literature review, feminist theory, and critical masculinity studies. Thematic analysis is a descriptive method that focuses on "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data" (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018, p.808). To conduct my thematic analysis of the focus group transcripts, I followed a myriad of strategies suggested by Castleberry and Nolen (2018), Maguire and Delahunt (2018), and Vaismoradi et al (2016) Direct quotes from the transcripts were colour coded on a Word document to match the themes identified. Castleberry and Nolen's (2018) outline of the steps of a thematic analysis within the framework of qualitative analysis will be centred to describe my process, which includes compiling, disassembling, reassembling, and concluding the data.

Compiling refers to the process of transcribing and familiarizing oneself with the data (Vaismoradi et al, 2016; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). To familiarize myself with the data, I transcribed the audio recordings and reviewed the transcripts several times before beginning the coding process. Secondly, the disassembling process involves pulling apart the data and coding it by seeking and formulating meaningful groupings (Vaismoradi et al, 2016; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Coding, put simply, is the

process of identifying commonalities and differences within the data, which I initiated through colour-coding the transcripts and writing notes on what I observed (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Thirdly, reassembling involves putting the codes into themes through identifying repeated patterns in the codes and asking reflective questions around whether the excerpts reflect the overall aims of the research (Vaismoradi et al, 2016; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). I pulled the codes from the transcripts and put them into a separate document to begin to plan and construct themes. Fourthly, interpreting the data seeks to discuss "relationships between themes and more global findings in the context of all codes" (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018, p.812). Again, this process involved looking more broadly at the themes I had begun to construct and reviewing them within the context of my research questions and goals for the project. Vaismoradi et al (2016) suggest balancing the conflicting needs to immerse and distance oneself from the data; I tapped into this suggestion by spending significant time familiarizing myself with the transcripts, then taking some time away from them to process, reflect, and return to it with a fresher perspective. Lastly, concluding involves tying the themes to the purpose of the study, relating these findings to existing literature on the subject to identify similarities and contradictions, and, hopefully, answering the research questions proposed (Vaismoradi et al, 2016; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). My conclusions will be explored further in the discussion section of this thesis.

Chapter 5: Findings

The following section will explore four major themes: (1) the gender boxes activity discussion and participants' feelings about the activity, which is divided into several subthemes about the activity itself and participants' reflections, (2) discussions of the socialization and social construction of masculinity as it links to sex, consent, and sexual violence, (3) participants' current perspectives of primary prevention efforts, which are informed by their experiences at McMaster University, and (4) participants' ideas for improving men's engagement in anti-violence work overall.

Discussions from the Gender Boxes Activity

Both focus groups began with completing the gender boxes activity, which I described in the previous chapter. I felt it was important to start the focus groups in this way as both an ice breaker and as a way into deeper discussion about masculinity, gender-based violence, and men's involvement in primary prevention efforts. Participants were initially hesitant to add to the activity; they asked me to repeat the question, they posed clarifying questions, there was some uncomfortable laugher, and, when they first provided an answer, they often phrased it uncertainly or their tone sounded as if they were asking a question rather than giving an answer. This was an interesting dynamic that was eventually addressed later in the group, which I explore later in the subtheme on participants "feeling guarded" during the activity. See table 3 and table 4 for a visual summary of the topics and themes discussed in both focus groups.

The Man Box

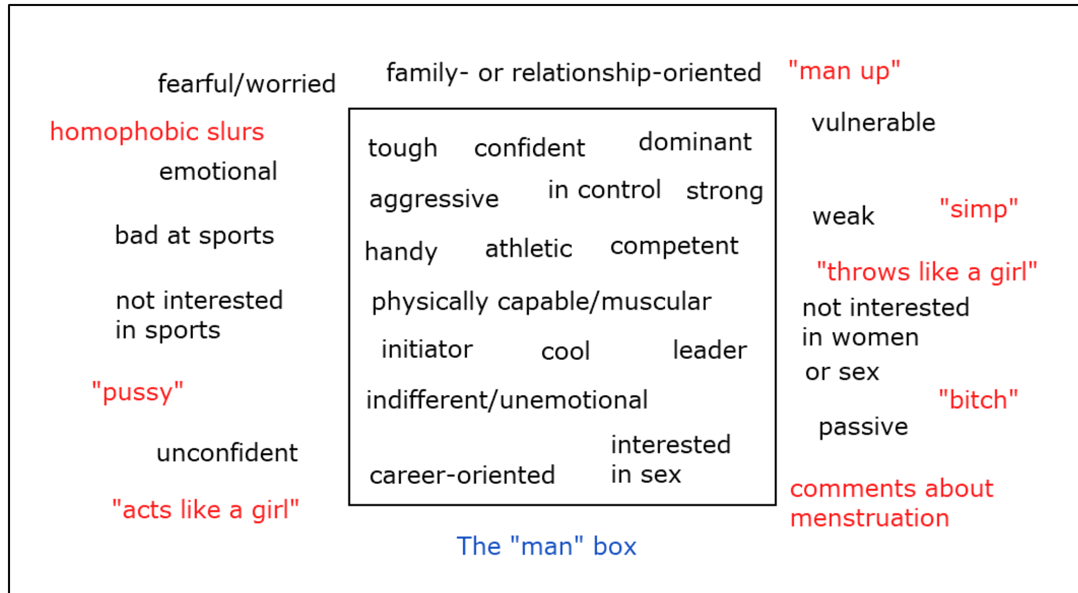

Table 3 – A visual summary of the man box generated from both focus groups

1) Inside the Box: Defining Masculinity

While discussing what were deemed expected or acceptable traits for men to embody, participants listed characteristics such as being tough, confident, dominant, and aggressive. While reflecting on how these traits were linked to acceptable demonstrations of masculinity, Nathan stated:

> Like, if someone says, "be a man" that's, like, be tough, put on your hard hat and, like, don't let anything bother you and stuff. And I think that's kind of deteriorating a little bit in society, which is good. Like, men are not…men are allowed to have more feelings now and stuff, which is cool, but yeah.

Echoing this point, Michael stated:

> I'd agree. I think some of this stuff isn't, like, as common, but I still think a lot of this stuff is still expected or, like, rewarded with your friends or with older guys you know. Like coaches or dads or uncles or whatever.

Although the statements shared by Nathan and Michael considered the potential erosion of traditional manhood in modern society, the majority of the traits they listed during the activity still had an impact on their performance of gender in specific social contexts, such as in sports, with older or authoritative male figures, and with their male peer groups. For example, Kevin,

who had played competitive basketball growing up, indicated emotion was only acceptable in certain contexts around sport, such as losing an important game or expressing anger around a result. However, Kevin emphasized that "crying if you get benched is totally unacceptable," which suggests that traditional conceptualizations of masculinity still play an important role in gender performance for participants. Participants' responses in this discussion also suggested that acceptable demonstrations of masculinity are universally understood; when one participant described a trait they had added to the board, the others agreed with them and added points about how these characteristics are performed in different contexts.

The participant's collective notions of traditional masculinity were also reflected in their descriptions of manhood in the context of their sexual relationships. As Nathan described:

> In terms of sex, like, initiating sex, for sure, is a piece of being a 'traditional' man. Because, um, most of the time when that's used, it's like this girl isn't sure or whatever, maybe she's not *not* sure, but she's not coming up to you, so you have to be a man and take the first step. You have to be a man and say, "let's do this" and initiate it. That's definitely what it means. And as far as, like, in the bedroom, actually during sex, being a man…I think that can be about anything. And yeah, like, the idea that men want sex all the time or early or whatever. I was in a rush to lose my virginity [laughs]. You know, if you're a girl and you're a virgin in university, it's like, "oh, my god, that's awesome." It's looked at as, like, you know…guys view you, you know, like, in a good way and stuff. But being a virgin as a guy at an older age is, like, embarrassing and you get chirped for it and there's nothing good about it. And maybe there is in certain aspects, but you won't hear anything good about it from your friends.

These implicit expectations to be sexually forward, focused, and experienced were described by Nathan and other participants as pressure to engage in sexual relationships early on in their adolescence. Nathan's comment suggests that to be a 'man' in the context of intimate or sexual relationships is directly linked to taking the fist step, initiating sex, and losing their virginities at an early age in adolescence to build up their sexual experience and prowess.

2) Outside the Box: Identifying Contradictions to Masculinity

While discussing responses to what are deemed unacceptable demonstrations of masculinity, participants listed traits that diametrically opposed those inside the box. Emphasis was placed on expressing vulnerability, including emotionality, softness, and weakness, as being in direct violation of traditional manhood. These characteristics were then perceived to be communicated through rejecting or underperforming in 'masculine interests,' such as athletics, heterosexual sex, and career/financial success. As Brian aptly noted, "I get asked all the time, like, 'oh, did you see the game last night?' And when I say, 'no, I'm not into sports,' it's, like, open season. 'Oh, you don't like sports? What are you, not a man?' That kind of stuff." Other participants echoed this sentiment and suggested that their "non-masculine" interests were often frowned upon, scrutinized, and derided by peers (regardless of gender) and older male authority figures (e.g. coaches, family members, etc.).

In intimate partner and/or sexual relationships, participants indicated that nervousness, worry, doubt, insecurity, and/or a lack of interest in or readiness for heterosexual sexual activity were concealed so as to not step outside the box and face ridicule or criticism from others. As Joey stated, "I wouldn't talk to my friends about, like, being nervous or not ready for sex. No way. I also wouldn't say anything about, you know, not knowing what to do during sex." This comment suggested that men might feel pressure to maintain sexual prowess, confidence, and readiness at all times to conform to the traditional notions of masculinity described above.

3) Labels: The Consequences for Stepping Outside the Box

The red text represents the terms participants indicated were labels that men accrued for stepping outside of the metaphorical box of traditional masculinity. These include homophobic and transphobic slurs, comparisons to women (e.g. "throws/acts like a girl"), comments about menstruation (e.g. "are you on your period?"), and derogatory terms such as "pussy," "bitch,"

and "simp" (an acronym that apparently stands for "Suckers Idolizing Mediocre Pussy," which signals that men act in a certain way to gain favour with women and attain sexual attention as a result). Each of these terms function as a criticism of one's manhood, which can be deployed to police, challenge, embarrass, and/or correct a man and his demonstration of masculinity. Participants were also able to identify that criticisms of manhood are usually linked to perceived femininity or queerness, which prompted further reflection in the ensuing discussion around the implications of sexism and homophobia. Interestingly, however, participants did not seem to make the connection that men portraying characteristics inside the "man box" are also not always safe from derision, violence, and/or labelling, which I thought was an interesting oversight.

The Woman Box

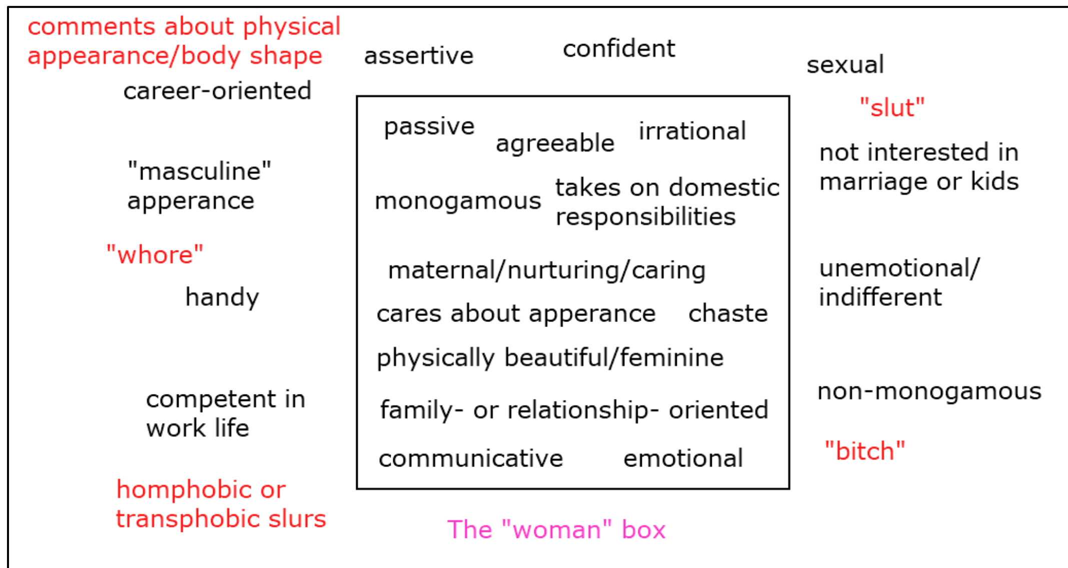

Table 4 – A visual summary of the woman box generated from both focus groups

1) Inside the Box: Defining Femininity

The juxtaposition of the woman and man boxes allowed participants to more readily engage in listing traits that they associated with traditional femininity, including passivity, emotionality, and an inherently nurturing disposition. Participants suggested that these characteristics manifest in being agreeable, maternal, chaste, monogamous, overly concerned

with physical appearance/meeting traditional beauty standards (e.g. make-up, long hair, thin waists, large breasts, dressing to appear more feminine, etc.), vain, and being relationship- and/or family-oriented. Contrasting acceptable demonstrations of masculinity, participants indicated that women are expected to desire and pursue committed, exclusive, and monogamous sexual and romantic relationships that eventually lead to marriage and children. These contradictions reflect gendered sexual scripts, which participants suggested were universally known and unspoken expectations guiding social dynamics.

2) Outside the Box: Identifying Contradictions to Femininity

The traits listed outside were perceived to violate and oppose those inside the box, which included women being competent and career-oriented, disinterested in marriage and children, confident, assertive, adept at traditionally 'masculine' tasks (e.g. being handy), unemotional or indifferent, aesthetically masculine (e.g. not wearing make-up, not having long hair, not meeting feminine beauty standards, etc.), non-monogamous, and overtly sexual. Participants indicated that the embodiment of these characteristics disrupted traditional sexual scripts and gendered power dynamics, thus threatening the current cisheteropatriarchal system, and potentially making men feel "emasculated." This was reflected in a discussion among participants in the second focus group:

> Kevin**:** I think we're moving in the direction, like as a society, where it's cool that women can lead a company or be a CEO or not have kids, but I still think women are expected to be these things a lot of the time. Like, there are men who are not cool with having a woman as a boss because they think it, like, means they're weak or something, or they think women are too irrational or emotional for those jobs.
>
> Joey: There are guys that won't watch movies or read books by women. So, like, that's fucked up, but it's still so prominent, I think. And when women aren't, like, beautiful, some guys won't respect them or listen to them or work for them. It's fucked up.
>
> Kevin: And when they are, like, traditionally beautiful, or even if they're not, they might get, like, harassed by men they work with or who work for them!

The exchange between Kevin and Joey highlights an interesting dynamic: while participants signal respect for women who step outside of the box (especially those who are CEOs or in prominent professional roles), these achievements may not act as a buffer against harassment and disrespect. And yet, embodying traits within the box did not necessarily protect women from maltreatment by men, such as conforming to westernized and feminized beauty standards. This contradiction presents a complex process that women must navigate, where stepping outside of the box can reap certain benefits while also resulting in social and professional consequences; similarly, remaining inside the box presents paralleled benefits and disadvantages.

3) Labels: The Consequences for Stepping Outside the Box

Participants were seemingly hesitant to list some of the labels that women are assigned for stepping outside of the box, which may have been a result of my identity as a woman, and how that was perceived by the participants in my role as a facilitator, researcher, and student peer. However, when I listed one label to start us off ("bitch"), participants were able to contribute terms, including "slut," "whore," homophobic and transphobic slurs, and derogatory comments about physical appearance and body shape (e.g. "fat," "ugly," etc.). Interestingly, participants identified that the term "bitch" had different meanings for men and women; while "bitch" signals femininity and weakness it men, it is assigned to women who are assertive, aggressive, mean, or who reject sexual or romantic advances from "nice" men. However, the main labels women accrue for stepping outside the box directly link to their sexuality, sexual activity, and physical appearance.

This brief discussion then gave way to a more thematic and wholistic understanding of the activity: men experience social consequences for being perceived to be "feminine" or "queer," whereas women experience social consequences for rejecting feminine norms set out

within a cisheteropatriarchal society and for being sexually active. The overall purpose of the activity – to identify these systems at work and consider how the activity communicates the intersections between gender construction and violence – was said to be enlightening by participants, especially in its visual representation on the virtual whiteboard. For example, as Brian aptly stated, "being a traditional man – like, tough, aggressive, whatever – is the foundation for violence. Because look how you get labelled if you step outside the box and look how you behave when you stay in it." Brian's comment summarized the importance of these conversations around how traditional constructions of gender the labels accrued for stepping outside of the box are performed and enacted in everyday interactions and how they may create space for violence to be normalized, internalized, and enforced.

Feeling guarded

While discussing the experience of the gender boxes activity, an interesting dynamic emerged. Participants appeared initially cautious and/or reluctant to list traits associated with traditional expectations of gender, which appeared in hesitation, asking for the question to be repeated, and phrasing their answers as questions rather than responses. A conversation during one of the focus groups provided a potential explanation. Jeff stated:

> Uh…it's weird because you seem to draw toward more stereotypical, but maybe it's because I don't wanna say something and have it interpreted a different way either. It's almost…I don't wanna say I was playing it safe, by any means, but I didn't probably say things that came to my mind right away either.

Michael provided another interesting perspective, stating:

> I kind of think, like, for myself, too…I see myself as very progressive, honestly [laughs]. And, even when we were doing that activity, I felt guarded. Every single time I wanted to say something that I thought, traditionally, I wanted to reinforce it by saying 'well, traditionally, this is what people think.' I didn't even want to associate it, maybe, with what I thought. But also, anytime I'd see something that I agree with inside or outside the box, I'd be like, 'oh, well, I'm not like that.' Even though I was having a natural reaction…like, especially a reaction to words inside the box, right? And this is just a

> thought that…I was feeling like a lot more people are outside those boxes than they'd like to admit, but almost find it so important to be inside it to maybe fit in.

Here, participants suggested that they experienced some hesitation when engaging with the gender boxes activity out of concern that voicing certain ideas would be perceived as regressive, harmful, and/or sexist and would subsequently be attributed to them as individuals. Simultaneously, participants also experienced an internal process of distancing themselves from traits outside of the box (e.g. thinking "I'm not like that"), which was considered reflective of the ways in which the expectations of traditional masculinity are entrenched in young men's thought processes around gender expression and performance. The interaction between the two – where young men are attempting to both reject and embody the expectations of masculinity – creates a sense of internal tension, thus potentially making young men feel guarded when engaging with a prevention activity like "the gender boxes."

Feeling enlightened (but unsurprised)

All participants in both focus groups indicated that they had never taken part in an activity like "the gender boxes" before. Participants indicated that engaging with this activity was enlightening, particularly with the visual component of the boxes. As Michael mused:

> I think it was really interesting to see those boxes filling up and then seeing what was going on outside of it. And to be able to actually visually, sort of, connect how, you know, the stereotypes are similar or different for women or men traditionally. It was actually…I did not expect to be so visually, kind of, enlightened.

Adding onto Michael's reflection, Nathan stated:

> Yeah, like, reflecting on my own life, too, I can definitely see elements of, you know, parts of me that are in the box and parts of me that are outside the box. And yeah…it's just kind of, like you said, enlightening. You know, it's nothing that I didn't expect, just because of my own experiences, I can tell what's considered normal and what's considered not normal as, like, a guy. But, uh, yeah, it's kind of interesting to reflect on your own life.

Participants considered the activity to be engaging and reflective of what they have learned about traditional masculinity while growing up as young men. While each participant suggested that they grew up in a more egalitarian household where expectations of traditional masculinity were not strictly enforced by their parental figures, these demands were communicated by male peers and male figures in positions of power (e.g. sports coaches, uncles, grandfathers, etc.). This activity prompted participants to reflect on the parts of themselves that conform to and/or challenge the central traits of traditional masculinity, while also considering the social consequences linked to stepping outside of the box.

Despite the enlightening nature of the activity, participants also indicated that the general findings of "the gender boxes" were reflective of what they already knew about traditional expectations and demonstrations of the gender binary. As Brian stated:

> Yeah, when I first saw this activity, I didn't find it all that surprising. From the feedback, it's typical perpetuation of gender stereotypes. And, like, how we've been socialized like this for so long, and the media doesn't help. Schools don't really talk about gender, at least when I was in elementary or high school. We talked about sexuality a bit but not about gender. And that plays a big part in sexuality. If I'd done this when I was 15, I think it would've been pretty enlightening. I was pretty aware of gender norms at that point in my life, but I think for some peers who weren't, it would've been eye-opening.

Many of the traits discussed during the activity were described by participants as universally known and understood by young men attending a postsecondary institution in Canada, thus framing them as generally unsurprising. This shared understanding points to the potential for this activity to validate men's lived experiences and build a sense of community through unpacking the ways in which these traits and the labels assigned to stepping out of the box potentially harm young men. Additionally, several participants indicated that this activity would have been particularly revelatory and enlightening to engage with when they were younger (e.g. in their teenage years).

Masculinity, Sex, Consent, and VAW

The following theme will explore participants' reflections on how the socialization and social construction of masculinity – as described through the lens of the gender boxes activity – links to understandings of sex, consent, and sexual violence.

Sex & Masculinity

Emerging from the ensuing discussion following the gender boxes activity was participants' perspectives on how the social construction of masculinity shapes attitudes toward sex. In the first focus group, Michael asserted:

> Um…I think that even, like, sex would be a metric of one's masculinity. Uh, because, you know, you need to be seen as some sort of dominant, physical…um, almost like sex is associated with being assertive. Getting what you want, that kind of thing.

Nathan agreed, stating:

> Yeah, I agree, and I was just gonna add that you brought up an interesting point about getting what you want. Even, like, what you want, is, like, predefined as not wanting a relationship in general. Just wanting the physical aspect. Just the sex and not an actual relationship. I've had, like, friends talk to me and say "I didn't know you were actually gonna date this girl. Like, I thought you were just gonna have sex with her and be done with it." And…so, I've definitely seen that and experienced that. But that's not necessarily true for every male out there, like, we all might want different things.

Jeff then provided an interesting and concluding insight to this discussion, claiming:

> Yeah, I'd say, in my experience, both can be kind of seen as a norm as well within conversation with friends and coworkers, where it would be about…I think it almost comes down to seeing a male perspective as traditionally accepting that regardless of whatever. Like, "I just wanna have sex and I don't want a relationship," or "oh, I actually do wanna have sex and a relationship" or "I do wanna get married and have kids." I think each of those can be seen as a norm and an acceptance because it's coming from a male perspective as well. Like, it becomes legitimate because it's coming from a man.

Participants suggested that, when sex and heterosexuality are perceived as integral pieces of demonstrating one's masculinity, they are then seen to be inherently linked to other traditional traits, such as dominance and control. For instance, as discussed above, demonstration of one's

masculinity is "getting what he wants" in sexual activity or intimate partner relationships, which might be attained by exercising control and dominance over an intimate partner.

Moreover, the above interaction suggests that masculine interests were seen by participants to be "predefined" by sexual scripts and the demands of traditional masculinity, such as only wanting a sexual relationship rather than wanting an intimate, committed, monogamous, and/or romantic relationship. Interestingly, the conclusion that was reached by the participants is reflected in Jeff's comment around men having the ability to dictate, normalize, and enforce social norms around sex and consenting to relationships, where their perspectives are deemed legitimate because they are articulated and enacted by men. Jeff, who is in his thirties, commented on a noticeable shift in sexual scripts for men, which moved from what Nathan had mentioned around only desiring physical/sexual relationships to eventually wanting a committed romantic relationship by a certain age. Again, Jeff emphasized that men dictate when and how that social norm shifts, and their perspectives are deemed legitimate and fair because of their privileged social positioning.

Consent

Another critical theme that emerged within the focus group data after the gender boxes activity concluded was the participants' views of consent. When reflecting on traditional masculinity in the context of sexual consent, I had the following dialogue with Michael and Jeff:

> Michael: Yeah, I was even thinking, too, in terms of asking for consent…it made me remember that traditional masculinity comes with a certain expectation of entitlement, right? Like, you deserve the things you wanna get because you're in control.
>
> Me: For sure. And that might link to interpreting "signs of consent" as permission to initiate, or the idea of asking for consent being awkward. Does that align with your experiences?
>
> Michael: Actually, something interesting about that, too, is that…you know, it's not, like, romantic to ask, like, "hey, can I kiss you?" I've heard people talk about this. Like,

> you're supposed to feel it out and get physical cues and just do it, and that unspoken initiative is more sexy or confident or something like that. And I think that even that kind of idea could make a lot of people nervous to ask for consent.
>
> Jeff: Yeah, and I would say that that's a good turn into what it is that could be seen as masculine as well, in the sense that you should know these cues and you shouldn't have to ask these specific questions. And that's unfortunate.

This conversations demonstrates how some men view verbal and explicit negotiation of consent as socially awkward, whereas reading body language and social cues is perceived as reflective of confidence and sexual prowess – both of which the participants understood to be inherent to the embodiment of masculinity. Participants suggested that these expectations put pressure on young men to maintain the ability to initiate sex without verbal negotiation, which might result in nervousness, insecurity, and uncertainty around sex and consent. As the men shared through the gender boxes activity, they often face social repercussions for this kind of vulnerability. This raises questions about how the interface between traditional masculinity and sexual consent may create a platform for sexual violence to occur. Further, some men might actually enjoy and derive sexual pleasure from exercising control and enacting entitlement, which Michael describes as being "sexier" and reflective of "confidence," thus framing sexually violent ideas, language, and behaviours as potentially acceptable. Again, the absence of verbal and ongoing negotiation of consent and the presence of pressure to embody traditional masculinity during sex facilitates the conditions under which sexual violence is possible and potentially supported.

Sexual Violence

To transition our discussion into reflections on primary prevention efforts, I asked participants to consider their perspectives of how the gender boxes activity – and the ensuing dialogue around consent, masculinity, and sex more broadly – links to sexual violence and violence against women. Brian's earlier point about how the performance of traditional manhood

creates "a foundation for violence" served as an important entry point into this discussion. For example, a short while after Brian's assertion, Kevin stated:

> Well, I've read things about how, like, guys who believe in the whole "traditional man" shit are more likely to, you know, not believe women who say they've been sexually assaulted, or say, like, "she was asking for it." I don't think that's coincidental. And I wouldn't be surprised if guys who, like, embody all those traits inside the box are also more likely to sexually assault someone. I think the gender boxes activity just shows, like, how men and women are in this weird power exchange where women…like, you guys can't win [laughs]. You know? Like, women are in a no win here.

Joey echoed Brian's comments and added his own perspective, stating:

> I think, too, like…this activity shows that sexual violence is not, you know, black or white. It's not just about, like, rape and sexual assault. Sexual violence is…um, you know, people saying women can't run companies, or that women who aren't pretty shouldn't get respect. Sexual violence is, like, harassing women who are, you know, pretty and feminine and saying they're stupid or sluts or whatever. Sexual violence is, like, thinking you can always, you know, get what you want when it comes to sex. It's not just, like, raping someone. Does that make sense?

Brian agreed and rounded out this conversation:

> Totally because, like, I think this activity is pointing out that violence is on a continuum. I remember seeing this activity for the first time when I facilitated [domestic violence intervention with men] and thinking, "oh, wow, yeah…like, the expectations of masculinity are really violent in a lot of ways." You know? Like, how guys think it's weird to ask for consent, or guys think it's okay to make a comment about a woman's appearance, like, totally unprovoked. If you sit down and really think about that, it's…kinda disturbing, to be honest. And I think this activity, like, forces you to do that.

This dialogue provided significant insight into how the gender boxes activity prompted collective reflection on traditional expectations and demonstrations of gender as they link to violence. Interestingly, participants homed in on how women are seemingly in a "no win situation," where their conformity and rejection of traditional femininity does not necessarily protect them from violence. I was particularly intrigued by participants' reflections on how sexual violence and violence against women is a continuum that encompasses sexist microaggressions (e.g. diminishing women's professional expertise), harassment, and sexual entitlement, among others.

Here, the gender boxes activity provides welcome opportunity for participants to reflect on the ways in which they contribute to, benefit from, interact with, and/or challenge this continuum of violence, particularly in the embodiment and enactment of traditional gender roles and sexual scripts. Participants appeared to appreciate the gendered aspect of the activity as it connected to their own personal experiences and reflections, which potentially eased the transition into considering sexual and gender-based violence and their role in prevention.

The above sections provided invaluable context into understanding participants' current perspectives on gender, sex, consent, and sexual violence, with the overall goal to meet them where they are at in their stage of engagement. However, it is important to acknowledge that the overall aim of this project was to explore men's perspectives on how primary prevention efforts around sexual violence can be more engaging, applicable, and relevant to men. The following sections will delve deeper into these insights, which developed from participants' reflections on the gender boxes activity and how it explores sexual violence as a continuum.

Current Perspectives on Primary Prevention

Following completion and reflection on the gender boxes activity, much of the discussion centred around identifying and reflecting on the perceived limitations of existing prevention efforts on campus, specifically from the perspectives of male university students at McMaster University who had engaged with these efforts in some way during their student tenure. The following section is divided into two subthemes: (1) young men feeling disengaged from existing prevention efforts, and (2) generic programming failing to sensitize, personalize, and invite men into the conversation.

Feeling disengaged

While discussing participants' perceptions of existing prevention efforts on campus, many sheepishly suggested that they did not remember or were generally unaware of sexual violence prevention programs and campaigns. Jeff aptly summarized participants' shared disengagement from prevention efforts, stating:

> Uh, I would say, honestly, like [prevention efforts need] more publicity because I wasn't aware of all these things, or at least I didn't acknowledge it enough to begin with, which I think is its own problem either for me or for a sense of how it's gone about and publicized to advocate for the need for this and getting more people to join in and participate and attend as well. And again, that might be my own ignorance in not looking at emails [laughs].

While some examples were discussed, such as seeing consent and sexual violence-related posters during the first few weeks of a new semester, participants that were not particularly involved in the student union and Welcome Week planning indicated that they were unaware of any sexual violence prevention programming. Interestingly, many participants admitted their own "ignorance" or inattention, which suggests that they overlooked existing prevention campaigns as they felt it did not apply to them. However, the participants' shared a sense of disengagement from prevention efforts on campus due to McMaster having a significant commuter population; all but one participant did not live on campus, did not attend Welcome Week events (where a significant portion of prevention programming takes place), and were not involved in student clubs and extracurricular activities. Their lack of awareness and engagement is potentially symptomatic of McMaster's anti-violence work failing to reach peripheral and diverse student populations outside of those living, working, and/or socializing on campus, which is a considerable limitation that requires further investigation. This conversation revealed two central forces at work: (1) male privilege, which presents as an ability to overlook and disengage from prevention efforts, and (2) institutional/structural conditions that replicate barriers to addressing sexual violence and violence against women.

Generic programming

Contributing to a communal sense of disengagement from existing on-campus prevention efforts, generic programming that fails to sensitize and invite men into discussion was also discussed as a barrier to engagement. This limitation was considered through the lens of two perspectives: (1) by the five participants who were not involved in student groups or campus life and (2) by the one participant that had acted as a Welcome Week student representative and had participated in training specifically geared toward student leaders. This distinction is an important note as participants described key differences in their experiences of and exposure to on-campus anti-violence efforts.

For the participants that were not actively involved in student organizations on campus, their awareness of prevention efforts was limited to the occasional “consent campaign” (e.g. flyers posted during Welcome Week, social media postings from the Women and Gender Equity Network and/or the Equity and Inclusion Office, etc.), or seeing a sexual violence support booth set up during specific campus events. Participants in the second focus group reflected on the perceived limitations of existing prevention programming; Kevin stated:

> I think it’d have to be more substantive than a little table off in the corner, you know? It has to be, like, “hey, go to this lecture hall and sit down and this is what we’re gonna talk about.” Do you know what I mean? Like, during Clubs’ Week, you just have two tables on opposite sides of the student centre, like, “hey, learn about sexual violence here!” And that’s just not, you know, enough.

Joey agreed, musing:

> Exactly, because, like, how many people go up to that table? And are the people who need to go up to that table going? I don’t know, I think when we talk about sexual violence prevention, it’s a lot of, like, black or white, zero to one hundred and not the, like, grey areas in between. The things that often happen in a hook up culture or at a party or whatever. So kind of, like, more broad education for those kinds of things. Because I think, when you say sexual violence, a lot of guys will go, “oh, I would never do something like that,” right? Because they’re thinking about rape or sexual assault, but that’s not the only form of it, you know? So they might be participating in something

> they're not fully understanding.

Brian rounded out this discussion with his own reflections, stating:

> I agree. I was just gonna add that just having a "#Consent" poster or a little booth that people can avoid or not look at, you know, a few weeks out of the whole year is just not doing enough. I can only remember seeing a table off in the corner with, like, sexual violence prevention information, and then never seeing anything again. I think that speaks to, like, how few campaigns and efforts reach students who don't live on campus. That or there just isn't enough. I think especially for commuter students…they're going to campus only when they have to. And they still need this information just as much as students in res do. And, yeah, like Michael said, we need to acknowledge other forms of sexual violence that people – or specifically men – are complicit in that aren't rape.

Participants describe generic prevention efforts – such as providing a booth with resources around sexual violence or a poster campaign promoting consent – as facilitating disengagement due to the reality that men often do not see themselves as perpetrators of sexual assault and, therefore, do not feel obligated to be actively involved in education and prevention. Participants suggested that generic programming fails to sensitize men to the issue and explore the continuum of sexually violent ideas, beliefs, language, and actions that men might engage with, embody, and/or enact in their everyday lives. When these prevention efforts are infrequent, selectively deployed (e.g. during Welcome Week or Clubs' Week), and entirely voluntary, men can opt out of, ignore, and/or disengage from the issue, especially when they do not see themselves reflected in its content or messaging due to the limited scope of what the prevention effort is covering (e.g. sexual assault, rape, etc.).

Kevin presented an interesting perspective of potentially challenging men's disengagement from prevention efforts:

> I remember talking to lots of people in my tutorials and stuff like that about the red dresses, and they were all in agreeance that this was a great thing. But I remember a lot of people talking about how uncomfortable it made them. Um…because it didn't just make them confront the idea that, like, "oh, my God, you know, there's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada." Like, we all know this. But it was, like, "oh, my God, they're there." I remember it was close to Halloween, and I remember people just

> thinking it was a Halloween thing. And I think that's very telling, you know? If you have people thinking, "oh, this is some Halloween prank," and, no, it's, like, about how thousands of women are missing all over Canada because the police are racist and we have a violence against women problem. You know? That's even more uncomfortable than thinking it's something meant to scare you. But I did think that that was a very sobering reality for a lot of people who wouldn't necessarily interact with that. And I'm just like wondering if that would have the same effect if you did a similar thing with, like, revealing clothing and hanging it from those same trees and said it was for sexual assault awareness week and a sign saying, "wearing this meant I was asking for it," or something like that. If that would have more of an impact than saying, "hey, here's what consent is."

Here, Kevin suggested that leaning into the discomfort around the realities of violence against women and sexual violence might prompt students to engage more with these social issues. When faced with a tangible representation of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, as symbolized by red dresses hanging in trees around campus, folks might be compelled to reflect on this injustice, discuss it with others, and tap into their emotional responses to the visual demonstration of the issue. I found this comment interesting as it sensitizes men to the issue in a different way; rather than just personalizing it by depicting violence against women as an issue that could impact men directly and personally, it forces men to confront the systems that enable violence to occur, thus facilitating a kind of discomfort that could motivate action, engagement, and participation. It is almost as if a demonstration akin to the MMIW red dress campaign is one that cannot be ignored – like a booth or poster could – due to emotional impact and messaging inherent within an arts-based and survivor-driven response.

Parallel to the experiences of participants who were not actively engaged in student leadership on campus, Michael had acted as a Welcome Week representative for his department and had participated in trainings related to sexual violence. These trainings are available to student leaders on campus, including Resident Assistants (RAs) and McMaster Student Union representatives (e.g. Maroons, student organization staff, etc.). When speaking about his experiences with the trainings, Michael stated:

> In my experience, the information delivered during those Welcome Week rep trainings is very common sense, right? I can see how that information would be common sense to anyone who knows it and could be beneficial to someone who completely doesn't know it. I guess that is positive because some people just, like, don't know about these things. But I even know…like, that could be seen as something missing or a limitation, too. [Nathan] actually pointed this out really well, too, earlier, uh…I did not see any kind of, like, gender conceptions in these things. I think that is a really good kind of context for talking about sexual violence prevention. That kind of stuff because the gender stuff makes it feel like it's actually related to you. And I think it'd be cool to have a consent-based activity or event for first years to do, and that be the only thing programmed or, like, mandatory to attend. I think usually those kind of information sessions are programmed as parallel and it would be very useful information for a lot of people to know, not just welcome week reps.

Interestingly, Michael also described his experiences of training for sexual violence awareness and intervention as generic and 'common sense,' which potentially failed to acknowledge the nuances of sexual violence and address participants' concerns, questions, and lived experiences. The basic introduction to sexual violence that these trainings provide do not appear to integrate a critical or gendered analysis of sexual violence (e.g. discussions of femininity and masculinity), which Michael indicated is an effective entry point for sensitizing and personalizing the issue. Additionally, the lack of availability of these trainings to students who are not Welcome Week representatives poses as a barrier to educating and engaging larger groups of students on these issues. While I can understand potential limitations of this approach, including time constraints and limited funding to carry out training for all students, this was an important reflection from Michael that echoed those articulated by other participants in the focus groups.

The Way Forward: How Prevention Efforts Can Improve

After discussing participants' experiences of existing prevention efforts on campus, which were mainly comprised of generic programming (e.g. posters and information booths), participants were asked to consider the ways in which primary prevention efforts could be improved to better engage men in anti-violence work. As Michael and other participants

mentioned previously, prevention efforts that discuss gender socialization and construction (e.g. the gender boxes activity) were viewed as an important entry point into making the content relatable, relevant, and sensitizing. However, participants identified other potential improvements for prevention programs, which were rooted in reflections from the focus group and from their experiences with prevention. This section will explore two other subthemes that emerged from the focus group data: (1) considerations of prevention group composition, and (2) the need for prevention efforts to be integrated earlier into young peoples' education.

Prevention group composition

Participants collectively considered the ideal composition of a prevention group, specifically in the context of participating in interactive activities like "the gender boxes." This section will consider participants' perspectives of (1) the role of the facilitator, their traits, and their social positioning, and (2) the characteristics of group membership.

1) Facilitator

As a female researcher and facilitator, I asked participants if my presence during the activity impacted their engagement and comfort. In the first focus group, Jeff indicated:

> I think it would for sure feel different with a male facilitator, and participation, like echoing off one another's opinions, might have been a bit different. I don't know whether that would be worse or not, but I think they'd definitely be different.

Michael voiced his own perspective, stating:

> I actually think that, probably, it wouldn't have been better with a male facilitator. It might be even more comfortable with, say, you running the activity, um, because I feel more encouraged to share my kind of opinion on, like, you know, what would be a stereotypical way to be.

Interestingly, Nathan agreed with Michael's point, musing:

> Yeah, I agree. I feel, like, when I'm giving my opinion to a female, I'm giving, like, an unheard perspective. You know, like my perspective is actually valuable rather than just, like, giving my perspective to another guy and he already knows, like, everything I'm

> saying. And having someone like you, Maddie, made, I think, all of us feel comfortable thinking about this stuff.

Participants suggested that the presence of a male facilitator might have changed the group dynamic in some potentially noticeable ways. Interestingly, Michael and Nathan indicated that a female facilitator might prompt participants to be more open, vulnerable, and honest about the ways in which expectations of traditional masculinity require men to adhere to stereotypical traits in a potentially harmful manner.

Participants in the second focus group echoed these sentiments. Kevin stated:

> It might be different depending on the person that's leading it, you know? Like, if you had someone that was…say, they were all guys and all high school kids, and you had a guy around our age or maybe a bit older leading it, you know, where you can parse through the obvious jokes they're gonna make about how stupid this is and then, like, try and kind of get something out of them. Like, I don't think this would ever be run by, like, their history teacher. Do you know what I mean? I don't think…you need a really special person, I think, to kind of pull those answers out of those guys, and I definitely think it would be harder with either female and/or non-binary peers in the group .

I then posed a question to expand on Kevin's insight, asking "Do you think having a man at the front of the room is important, or do you think having a woman there as well would be beneficial?" Brian responded:

> I think not having a female facilitator makes a huge impact. When I was [facilitating anti-violence groups with men], my cofacilitator was a female, and during the weeks when she wasn't there and it was just me, the vibe was completely different. The answers were different, the way they talked was completely different, the activities were engaged with in a different way. I think gender plays a really important part in how they're gonna respond and express themselves. I think it's really valuable to have a female facilitator for anti-violence work with men because…it really makes them consider what they're saying. They were much more abrasive with me, or they'd be like "oh, come on, it's just the guys, we can say this." When there's a female facilitator, they're more willing to be empathetic and they're really thinking about how to be empathic in terms of, like, considering the female perspective when a female is present.

Brian had experience facilitating domestic violence intervention with men, which gave him intimate insight into group dynamics around facilitation. From this experience, he suggested that

having only a male facilitator risks fostering collusion with potentially harmful and sexist ideas and conformity to the very traits that are being challenged in the gender boxes activity. Additionally, Brian's comment emphasized that having a women present as a facilitator prompts male participants' careful consideration and reflection about what they think, what they will share, and the ability to reframe and rethink their contributions on the spot. Additionally, having a female presence was described as creating space and opportunity for men to be sensitive and thoughtful, thus disrupting traditional performances of masculinity. Joey agreed and added:

> I agree, totally. I could see having a woman there as important because, like, you might start thinking about this stuff in a different way if you have the woman's perspective. Like, I might think through what I say a bit more, I might not joke around as much, you know? But, also, I think guys, in general, would be more comfortable with having a guy they could relate to up there. Especially, like Kevin said, having a guy who is closer to their age and seems cool, like a role model or whatever, it might make them think, "oh, yeah, this stuff is important and I can talk about it."

Kevin then reiterated his perspective on the complexity of navigating facilitation, stating:

> I think that's the hard part of kind of thinking about this stuff. Like, I think it's really something you have to build up over time where, like, you almost need that guy to come in, like, once a month to have a meeting, that kind of thing. Like, you can't just show up once and teach it, and then expect it to stick. It's, you know, having them there throughout the semester or the year or whatever, and they just, you know…the first Monday of every month, we have the meeting with, you know, Maddie or whoever to discuss this and what's happened in the last month, what, you know, they've learned and stuff like that.

Participants appeared to agree that having a female facilitator might prompt them to consider another perspective and reflect on how their thoughts, statements, and attitudes during the group might land on female facilitators (e.g. joking around, using derogatory language, etc.). However, participants also considered the potential benefits of having solely a male facilitator in fostering safety, especially when the male facilitator reflects their lived experiences (e.g. close to their age, seems 'cool' and relatable, etc.). Later in this discussion, Kevin added that the facilitator should not occupy a dual or authoritative role, such as being a teacher/professor, as participants might

not feel comfortable disclosing their perspectives when they feel like it is tied to some sort of evaluation or their academic career.

While participants had some differing opinions on the gender of the facilitator shaping the efficacy of the group, participants agreed that the facilitator needs to be "approachable," "friendly," "relatable," "understanding," "organic," and, overall, the elusive "right person" to take up this kind of work and foster active engagement. The "right person" appeared to be someone who can navigate the delicate balance between understanding participants' experiences and meeting them where they are at in their level of knowledge on these issues, while also being willing to challenge some initial resistance to reflecting on men's roles in preventing violence. The perceived barriers to fostering active engagement in this subject appeared to link to continuity and the importance of repeated and multiple engagements over a sustained period. Kevin elaborated further on the importance of continuity later in the discussion:

> Because guys…once that thing is in their head, then, like, a week later maybe, they're with friends and they actually get to use that language. I think there could definitely be more encouragement to keep doing those things if it's like, "hey, I can tell Maddie three weeks from now when I see her again that this happened." Do you know what I mean? Instead of just pushing it to the side because you're not gonna see that facilitator again.

Here, continuity appears to function as a form of built-in accountability as participants can apply concepts to their daily lives and know that they will have someone to report back to and engage with afterward. This process builds rapport, group cohesion, and a shared sense of responsibility to enact the concepts discussed in a prevention group outside in the larger social context. When a facilitator models this behaviour and holds participants accountable in an open and invitational manner through continued interactions with group members, it creates the possibility for sustained change to occur.

2) Group Membership

The influence of group membership on men's engagement with sexual violence prevention was also discussed. Following the completion of the gender boxes activity, I asked participants if their participation would have been impacted if the group had been co-gendered. Jeff began the discussion and stated the following:

> I think it felt comfortable doing it this way with guys, but even then, just to echo what's already been said, I still felt a little guarded because I didn't wanna say something and then be associated with that and have someone else think that this is how I thought, et cetera, et cetera. I think it would have been more challenging and I might have been a bit, uh, less active in participating with a more feminine audience.

Michael then added that he "just completely agree[d] with that." Nathan continued:

> Yeah, me, too. I agree, like, as bad as this sounds [laughs]. Like, I just think with guys who have similar opinions and similar experiences, um, it's definitely easier. Like, going back to the boxes, the feminine box is just the male box inverted. So, like, saying something from a male perspective to a female audience might be a little intimidating or jarring because, like, if you're the only guy in the group with that perspective, nobody's gonna agree with you. That could be the case, so sharing in a group of guys is definitely, like, more comfortable.

Participants in the second focus group echoed these perspectives, with Joey stating:

> Um…so, I feel like if it were an all-male group, people would probably feel more comfortable speaking about gender. Especially when it's a conversation with women you don't know…so, like, strangers, I guess? [laughs] I think when you're with people you don't know, the conversation could get really uncomfortable for some people. And adding women into that mix…I think a lot of people would feel uncomfortable.

Kevin agreed, but posed an interesting consideration:

> Uh…I agree. I think to a point though, because, like, being in those conversation with guys…not necessarily, like, with this, but when guys say inappropriate jokes about women or that kind of stuff, like, it's obviously very well documented that, uh, there's a lot of apprehension about speaking up and saying, "no, it's wrong."

In general, participants agreed that single-gender groups comprised of men would foster high degrees of comfort and safety in engaging with content and participating actively in dialogue. Namely, participants suggested that voicing their perspectives and opinions to a female audience would make them uncomfortable due to incongruities between their lived experiences and fear

that they would be misunderstood. Again, this dialogue linked to fear of offending a female peer with derogatory language, or fear of being called out or 'attacked' by a female peer in front of a larger audience for voicing their opinions. Overall, participants emphasized that they would feel more open and honest while surrounded by male peers who might share their perspectives, understandings, and experiences of the demands of masculinity.

However, it is interesting to note that Kevin highlighted the difficulties of challenging male peers in an all-male group setting due to fear of social repercussions. Again, this reflection connects to how an all-male group risks facilitating collusion with harmful and sexist ideas, and, conversely, how the presence of a feminine figure in the prevention group might prompt participants to more carefully consider the language they use, their attitude toward the content and discussion, and the perspectives and experiences of someone from a differing social location. While a feminine presence might risk diluting participants' honesty, it might facilitate some shared accountability and a shift toward self-reflection that could be used outside of the group context. Again, the facilitation of these spaces is paramount to maintain the safety and comfort of all those involved.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This thesis sought to expand on my undergraduate research project and explore how male university students perceive and understand their roles in and experiences of sexual violence prevention, with particular focus on how the social construction of masculinity shapes their attitudes toward sex, consent, violence, and allyship. Additionally, I aimed to engage men in dialogue around their perspectives on what is currently missing from or lacking in primary prevention efforts. The overall goal of this project was to develop an improved understanding of men's perspectives on these issues to potentially integrate their insights into the future development of primary prevention programs for men. As men are overrepresented as perpetrators of sexual violence, it is important to challenge the intrinsic assumption that sexual violence is a "women's problem" and, instead, seek to engage men in accountability-based, invitational, and reflective dialogues around how they can play an active role in anti-violence work (Katz, 2006; Flood, 2019).

In this chapter, I will review and expand on the major thematic findings from this project as it links to topical literature, the overarching theoretical frameworks of feminist theory and critical masculinity studies, my research questions, and the overall goal of the research. Following discussion of these themes, I will consider the limitations and ongoing reflections from the study. This chapter will conclude with outlining the contributions and implications of this research on social work and primary prevention practices, policy, and future research, which I plan to pursue as an incoming doctoral student.

The Gender Boxes

Participants' engagement with and reflections on the gender boxes activity revealed a seemingly universal, standardized understanding of the traditional expectations and

demonstrations of gender. For example, traditionally masculine traits listed and described during the activity are understood and performed in personal, social, sexual, professional, athletic, and academic contexts, which manifest in the need to be competent, career-oriented, physically capable/muscular, strong, indifferent or unemotional, well-suited for leadership roles, and consistently interested in initiating sex with women. When men perform masculinity, they are then often permitted to dictate the flow of interpersonal relations and exercise power over others. In other words, cisheteropatriarchal power relations allow men's perspectives to govern and establish social norms as they are deemed legitimate and valid based on a privileged social positioning (Dominelli, 2002; hooks, 2004; Gardiner, 2005). For instance, Jeff's comment about how men are seemingly able decide an acceptable timeline to evolve from wanting merely physical/sexual relationships with women to wanting intimate/committed relationships reflects this process. Participants appeared to emphasize that men reap benefits and rewards for performing cisheteropatriarchal manhood, which links to the central tenets of feminist theory in identifying men's advantaged social positioning (Dominelli, 2002; hooks, 2004; Gardiner, 2005).

Interestingly, however, participants did not appear to make the connection that embodying and enacting traits inside the box does not necessarily protect men from being assigned the labels associated with stepping outside of the box. While they made this connection around traditional femininity failing to protect women from accruing labels and experiencing violence, there was not the same recognition when reflecting on "the man box." This oversight might be connected to the ways in which the labels that men are assigned when they step outside the box are linked directly to perceived femininity and/or queerness. In other words, men who subscribe to cisheteropatriarchal masculinity might perceive some sort of protection within that identity as they openly reject the traits that are seen to incite violence, harassment, derision, and

exclusion. Additionally, recognizing the complex experiences of harm that men might grapple with and perpetuate could directly contradict the central traits that define masculinity: rejecting vulnerability and emotional expression (Dominelli, 2002; hooks, 2004; Flood, 2019; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019. While these men might not be labelled as a "bitch" or a "pussy," their experiences of harm might be more insidious, which hooks (2004), in particular, explores through her assertion that cisheteropatriarchy is the most dangerous social force for men in eroding vulnerability, emotionality, and connection.

Another potential explanation for this omission from participants' reflections links to the subtheme of "feeling guarded" throughout the activity. Some participants suggested that they did not voice the first answer that came to mind during the gender boxes activity out of fear that they would offend someone or be misunderstood. Again, this dynamic mirrored a finding in my undergraduate research, where participants appeared to understand that several traits, beliefs, values, language, and behaviours that are intrinsic to the performance of masculinity can be harmful, especially to those who do not conform to the white, cishet, masculine ideal (Brockbank, 2019). As a result of my presence as a female facilitator and their participation in a group comprised of male peers who were unknown and appeared more progressive, participants were wary about expressing their unfiltered, honest insights into traditional demonstrations and expectations of masculinity, which might have subsequently shaped the findings from the gender boxes. This is an important consideration when developing prevention curriculum; while gendered discussions are imperative, facilitators and group members must attend to participants' potential resistance and ongoing concerns around reflecting on gender.

As mentioned previously in my literature review, the gender boxes activity represents a gender-transformative approach to violence prevention that aims explore and highlight how

gender roles and sexual scripts shape men's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours around violence (Flood, 2003; Casey, 2010; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Casey et al, 2018). In sharing their reflections on completing the gender boxes activity, participants appeared to agree that the gendered aspect of the activity – where space is cultivated to deconstruct and challenge traditional notions of gender – maintain efficacy and the potential to positively change men's attitudes toward gender (Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Casey et al, 2018). A gender-transformative prevention effort like the gender boxes attempts to contextualize sexual violence within a process of identifying and unpacking men's privileges, harms, and resistance to participating in prevention programs, and the ways in which sexual scripts are perpetuated and maintained in interpersonal relationships with women (Pease, 2008; Casey, 2010).

Participants also seemed to appreciate that the gender boxes activity successfully navigates the complex relationship between identifying and reflecting on the ways in which men are harmed by white, colonial cisheteropatriarchy through engaging with their lived experiences of socialized gender, while also prompting some accountability for recognizing how they have embodied, policed, and reinforced cisheteropatriarchal masculinity to the detriment of those around them (Flood, 2003; hooks, 2004). This foundational tension was described by participants as enlightening, especially when supported by the visual illustration of the gender boxes. Many participants reiterated that discussions of gender are a welcome entry point into discussing violence against women as it is something that everyone can relate to and connect with on a personal level through reflecting on their lived experiences. However, participants emphasized that this activity would have been particularly eye-opening if it was delivered to a younger audience, particularly to those in their early teen years, as it would challenge some commonly

held assumptions that young men carry, including sexist perspectives of sex, the gender binary, acceptable language, and violence against women. This finding echoed what I discovered in my previous research study; participants viewed prevention efforts at the university level as simply "too late" to change men's attitudes, perspectives, and behaviours (Brockbank, 2019). While I can appreciate that prevention efforts should begin earlier, the insistence that prevention is ineffective at the postsecondary level potentially reflects participants' privileges and assumptions that these efforts do not apply to them and therefore do not require their engagement. Again, this is an important consideration moving forward: how do we engage men at the postsecondary level who feel as if the issue of sexual violence prevention does not apply to them?

Sex, Consent, Sexual Violence, and the Social Construction of Gender

Similar to the conversations I had with participants in my undergraduate research (Brockbank, 2019), participants indicated that traditional demonstrations of masculinity include constant interest in pursuing and engaging in heterosexual sex, entitlement to sex, and the inherent ability to read social cues signalling consent. Participants suggested that the expectation to perform cisheteropatriarchal manhood during sexual activity might include forgoing the verbal and explicit negotiation of consent due to the process being viewed as "awkward" or "embarrassing." Embedded within this assumption is the implicit suggestion that asking for consent would be reflective of sexual inexperience, lack of confidence, and an inability to read social cues (e.g. body language), which are all traits contradicting traditional masculinity. When cisheteropatriarchy demands men be sexually forward and skilled, men are put in a precarious position where they are expected to initiate sex without necessarily asking for consent, thus creating the potential for sexual violence to occur. Moreover, when taking initiative and reading social cues signalling consent are viewed as "sexy" or "confident," sexually violent ideas and

behaviours are then framed as potentially acceptable or even desirable. This dynamic reinforces traditional sexual scripts where men are sexual initiators and women are sexual gatekeepers, and where certain social cues are perceived as signs of consent (e.g. body language) that men must interpret without verbal negotiation (Brockbank, 2019). Participants described this process as "uncomfortable" and as putting "pressure" on young men to demonstrate sexual prowess and innate knowledge of navigating the complexities of sexual encounters.

As discussed during my literature review, gender-transformative primary prevention efforts (e.g. the gender boxes activity) that attempt to link the social construction of masculinity to violence against women can be negated and/or rendered ineffective if male participants lack awareness and a comprehensive understanding of consent and sexual violence (Flood, 2003; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Brockbank, 2019). Participants' comments around avoiding verbal negotiation of consent in favour of navigating the 'fine lines' around a sexual encounter and the nonverbal 'signs of consent' emphasize the potential for (mis)interpreting social cues and creating the possibility of sexual violence to be tolerated or accepted (Flood, 2003; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Brockbank, 2019). Previous research supports this assertion as participants in my undergraduate study expressed that asking for consent could result in embarrassment and social/sexual rejection as it might be viewed as a 'mood killer' (Flood, 2003; Brockbank, 2019). Furthermore, participants' comments around how nonverbal cues and taking sexual initiative are "sexy" reflect the reality that some men find 'rough,' 'forced,' and/or 'controlling' sex to be sexually arousing, which then reveals men's positions of power, the gendered dynamics governing sexual encounters, and the deeply entrenched culture of violence against women that is tolerated, recreated, accepted, perpetuated, and protected by white, colonial cisheteropatriarchy (Dominelli, 2002; Flood, 2003; hooks, 2004; Hald, Malamuth, &

Lange, 2013; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Brockbank, 2019). For example, Hald, Malamuth, & Lange (2013) discuss the influence of pornography and the depictions of 'token resistance' and other rape myths in mainstream media as reinforcing rape culture, where potentially rough, aggressive, violent, and/or non-consensual sex is glorified. This process perpetuates the notion that asking for consent is awkward, unsexy, and embarrassing, while simultaneously supporting the idea that initiating sex, exercising entitlement, and "getting what he wants" without asking is an ideal demonstration of masculinity (Brockbank, 2019).

Again, when prevention programming implicitly assumes that participants maintain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of negotiating and attaining consent, these programs might be ineffective as they are not reflective of and/or catered to attendees' knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the complexities of sex, consent, and sexual violence (Flood, 2003; Carline, Gunby, & Taylor, 2018; Brockbank, 2019). Prevention efforts that engage with the social construction of gender must also recognize, discuss, and unpack the gendered sexual scripts underpinning mainstream depictions of sex, which participants indicated is an ideal entry point as it links their personal experiences to the larger social issue of violence against women. Challenging mainstream depictions, implicit messaging, and popular motifs around sex (e.g. as seen in pornography and other media) is also part of this puzzle as men seek sexual education from these mediums, especially when comprehensive sexual education is not available in school (Brockbank, 2019). This dynamic then risks perpetuating rape myths and framing verbal negotiation of consent as "unmanly," "awkward," and/or "embarrassing." When men see themselves and their experiences, questions, and concerns reflected in prevention programming, they are more likely to engage in invitational, empathy-based, and understanding discussions about how the social construction of masculinity fosters acceptance and

internalization of sexual scripts, rape myths, and fallacies around demonstrations of masculinity in sex (Flood, 2019). Making explicit connections between sex, consent, sexual violence, and the construction and socialization of masculinity is imperative to ensure that participants understand how sexual violence is a continuum – which participants sharply noted in our discussion – and how everyone has a role in sexual violence prevention.

Men's Current Perspectives of Prevention

Participants' current perspectives on existing primary prevention efforts were informed by their experiences as male postsecondary students at McMaster. The discussion centered around feeling disengaged from prevention efforts due to their generalized approach. Participants' reflections mirrored the literature reviewed previously; for example, sensitizing men to the issue of sexual violence through connecting it to their personal lives, such as knowing a survivor or seeing themselves reflected in prevention programming content, tend to be more engaged in primary prevention efforts as they feel represented, called upon, and an intricate part of the solution to preventing violence against women (Casey, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Casey et al, 2018). The gender boxes activity was described by participants as drawing upon a sensitizing approach as men are able to make connections between their experiences of the socialization of masculinity and how it creates the potential for violence, which several participants described as enlightening. Again, engaging with men's internal motivations and reasons to participate in prevention is significant as it fosters empathy and shared accountability, which is necessary to facilitate attitudinal and behavioral shifts toward seeing sexual violence as a personal problem that everyone has a role in preventing (Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012).

Participants' descriptions of feeling disengaged from prevention efforts potentially reflects white, colonial cisheteropatriarchal privilege that allows men to selectively opt in or out

of prevention efforts based on their belief that the message does not apply to them. Previous research has shown that men, especially those who subscribe to cisheteropatriarchal conceptualizations of gender, tend to be more resistant to engaging with primary prevention based on their belief that it is irrelevant and inapplicable to them (Loh et al, 2005; Katz, 2006; Rich et al, 2010; DeGue et al, 2014; Lambert & Black, 2016). However, emerging work from Morris and Ratajczak (2019) and Benibo and briond (2019) emphasize that men cannot be dichotomized into categories of 'regressive'/traditional and 'progressive'/inclusive masculinities in order to understand men's engagement in ant-violence efforts as all men benefit from upholding, embodying, and enacting the harmful traits produced by cisheteropatriarchy. In particular, men who claim progressive, inclusive, alternative, egalitarian, and/or 'new' manhood through locating themselves within oppressed populations and emphasizing the ways in which men are harmed by cisheteropatriarchy might also be actively contributing to and benefitting from the privileges of masculinity and the subordination of those outside this identity.

Clinging to a progressive masculine identity risks allowing men to distance themselves from the issue of violence against women, perpetuate the binary between 'good' and 'bad' men, pathologize perpetrators, and individualize the social problem of sexual violence (Benibo & briond, 2019; Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). Participants in this study often self-identified as 'progressive,' which then covertly justified their lack of engagement in existing prevention efforts as they did not think that they required education on consent and sexual violence. These statements implicitly perpetuated the divide between 'progressive' and 'regressive' men, which Benibo and briond (2019) emphasize is counterintuitive to challenging and deconstructing the white, colonial cisheteropatriarchy that enables and perpetrates violence against women. In order to effectively facilitate men's engagement, prevention efforts must attend to the complexity of

men's experiences, perspectives, attitudes, and identities as it links to the socialization and construction of masculinity by challenging these dichotomies and fostering a sense of shared accountability for the issue. Namely, breaking down the fallacies of 'good' and 'bad' men under cisheteropatriarchy is essential to highlight how sexual violence is a sociocultural problem that we all have a role in perpetuating and preventing.

Men's Perspectives of Improving Prevention Efforts

As demonstrated in the findings, the facilitation and composition of the spaces that men occupy in prevention are critical to success of engaging men. Research has shown that male facilitators tend to be preferred by male participants and have proven merit in facilitating positive attitudinal and behavioural shifts (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Roy, Châteauvert, & Richard, 2013; Stathopoulos, 2013; Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Flood, 2019). Participants appeared to identify the potential benefits of utilizing male facilitators, which included the male peer influence, the advantages of having a male role model, and how male facilitators are more likely to understand where participants are coming from based on their intimate knowledge and lived experience of socially constructed and socialized masculinity (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008). Participants also identified that men would likely be more comfortable with a male facilitator, especially when he is "relatable" (e.g. close in age, 'cool,' understanding, etc.), as they would be less concerned about sharing something that might offend, undermine, and/or harm a female facilitator. While Flood (2004) indicates that female facilitators would have an important role to play in prevention, the literature generally insisted that male facilitators maintain promise in bolstering men's engagement in primary prevention.

Interestingly, however, participants suggested that having a female facilitator present (e.g. in a co-gender facilitation model) would be ideal as it would prompt participants to both

consider a feminine perspective of these issues, while also creating a space where men feel more comfortable to express vulnerability and emotion, thus disrupting demonstrations of masculinity that might be present in an all-male group facilitated by a man. When a female facilitator is present, participants might be more careful, considerate, and reflective around what they contribute to the group, how they respond to others' comments, and how they internalize the content of the program due to the inclusion of a woman's perspectives and experiences. Moreover, participants suggested that they would be less likely to "joke around" as a female facilitator might represent the seriousness of the issue of violence against women. While I was intrigued to hear participants' perspectives, I often wondered if their assertions around the importance of including a female facilitator unintentionally perpetuated traditional constructions of gender. For example, participants' comments implied that a female facilitator would be more understanding and caring. Does this assumption suggest that women are inherently more nurturing, compassionate, and/or maternal? What if a female facilitator did not embody these traits and instead continuously prompted accountability, challenged participants' statements, and resisted a traditionally feminine image? This is an important consideration moving forward as female facilitators continue to navigate a complex relationship with participants in anti-violence work (McCallum, 1997; Tyagi, 2006; Flood, 2019).

Participants also spent some time considering group composition and who is represented as participants of prevention programming. Homosocial groups comprised solely of male members is both preferred by male participants and has proven merit in changing participants' attitudes and behaviours around sexual violence (Flood, 2004; Pease, 2008; Casey & Smith, 2010; Foubert, Godin, & Tatum, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Claussen, 2017; Flood, 2019). In this study, participants agreed that all-male prevention programs would be much more

comfortable, safe, and engaging as men would feel supported in voicing their perspectives without concern of offending and/or harming female or non-binary participants. I think this dynamic was emulated in the focus group itself; participants were incredibly supportive and encouraging of one another during the gender boxes activity and the ensuing dialogue around their opinions, insights, and perspectives of prevention programs. In the context of the postsecondary primary prevention, men have suggested that the participation of influential male peers and the group being comprised of male peers from their personal networks has been shown to improve engagement as men are more likely to participate in programming endorsed and supported by other men (Flood, 2004; Casey, 2010; Piccigallo, Lilley, & Miller, 2012; Claussen, 2017). Participants largely echoed these sentiments and suggested that partaking in prevention programs with male friends and peers would foster comfort, safety, and openness to engage with content. Again, maintaining continuity with co-participants over a sustained period of engagements was discussed as an effective technique to build rapport, foster inclusion, and create a non-judgmental, open environment where men will gain confidence in contributing to, reflecting on, and internalizing prevention program content.

Implications & Contributions: Why Does this Research Matter?

My thesis intends to build upon the body of work, which is represented by Piccigallo, Lilley, and Miller's (2012) and Rich et al's (2010) respective studies, predicated on exploring men's perspectives of primary prevention by inviting men into discussion to review and reflect on their experiences and understandings of anti-violence work in the postsecondary context. This study facilitated an example of a primary prevention activity to garner immediate, organic feedback from participants about how it was experienced, perceived, and understood by male postsecondary students. The ensuing discussion around the intersections between the social

construction of masculinities and sex, consent, and sexual violence then contextualizes the conversation around effective and engaging prevention efforts that invite men into profeminist dialogues about their role in preventing violence against women.

While literature continues to develop around feminist anti-violence work and the framework of critical masculinity studies informing effective violence intervention, the research reviewed throughout this thesis considerably lacked the integration of men's perspectives and narratives into the development, implementation, and evaluation of prevention programming. This discussion has centered men's voices and framed them as an integral piece to developing prevention efforts that reflect men's lived experiences, with the overall goal to successfully foster their engagement and participation. This thesis is important as it contributes the insights and perspectives of male postsecondary students, who are a target population for sexual violence prevention efforts, to existing research on best practices in anti-violence work with men.

Implications for Social Work

The philosophy of McMaster's school of social work is predicated on the motif of the personal as political, where oppressive structures and power imbalances inevitably shape individual issues ("Our Philosophy," n.d.). This perspective then informs action-oriented responses from social workers to challenge, dismantle, and deconstruct the institutional power governing social problems that disproportionately impact marginalized persons. Challenging these power imbalances requires what George (1979) describes as a pivotal aspect of socially just research: "research concerned with social change should focus on the rich and powerful and not those on the margins" (Kirby & McKenna, 2004, p.72). In other words, my research focuses on men based on their privileged social positioning and proximity to white, colonial cisheteropatriarchy because I believe that engaging men in anti-violence work is the key to

effective prevention of violence against women. As men maintain substantial power socially, politically, economically, professionally, and personally, they play an intricate role in upholding, recreating, and participating in the institutions that enable sexual violence and violence against women to occur (Katz, 2006). This reality is reflected in the overrepresentation of men as perpetrators of violence, especially sexualized violence, and the ways in which the carceral system does not bring 'justice' to survivors as a mere 3 out of every 1000 perpetrators face conviction and sentencing (Katz, 2006; Black et al, 2011; Johnson, 2012). Work akin to my thesis seeks to shift public discourse away from an individualized, pathologized, crime prevention model to understand violence against women, which requires women to undertake the burden of avoiding victimization, to instead shift toward illustrating how this social issue is men's responsibility to prevent, challenge, and eradicate (Katz, 2006; Powell & Henry, 2014).

Social work practice that reflects the lived experiences and integrates the insights of the population it is attempting to engage is imperative to bolster participation and ensure that programming is relevant, applicable, and invitational. Implementing informed and engaging prevention efforts on postsecondary campuses is a social work practice that resembles the school of social work's philosophy: flipping the script to challenge and deconstruct the cisheteropatriarchal power imbalance shaping the social issue of sexual violence by inviting men into a process of shared accountability for preventing violence against women. Public education and frontline anti-violence programming would directly benefit from the integration of young men's perspectives on how these efforts can foster and bolster male engagement in the social issue of violence against women. Facilitating and receiving continued feedback and evaluation on prevention programming from community stakeholders and the men participating in these programs is currently lacking in prevention efforts, which was emphasized in the literature

(Pease, 2008; Carmody Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015). My thesis – and work related to it – attempts to address this gap by involving men actively in the process of understanding how prevention efforts can be improved.

Implications for Policy

This project maintains the potential to influence the development of McMaster University's sexual violence policy and protocol, which was established in 2016 in response to the Ontario government's Bill 132. Bill 132 required all Ontario postsecondary institutions to develop and implement their own stand-alone policy responding to sexual violence on campus (Bill 132, 2016; Lopes-Baker et al., 2017; MacKenzie, 2018; Patel & Roesch, 2018; Choise, 2018). McMaster's policy primarily outlines the adjudicative processes tied to investigating a report of sexual violence. A major criticism of McMaster's policy – and the policies developed by other Ontarian postsecondary institutions – is that the proposed solutions fail to integrate the insights, experiences, and concerns of students and community stakeholders (e.g. sexual assault centres). For instance, if grassroots feminist organizers, local sexual assault centres, and student survivors were to be actively involved in the process of authoring sexual violence policies, increased focus would be dedicated to naming rape culture, removing gag orders (where survivors are not permitted to speak about their experiences publicly while an investigation is ongoing), considering intersectionality and the gendered nature of the issue, and prioritizing survivors' needs when conducting campus investigations and enforcing sanctions ("Our Turn," 2017; Choise, 2018). In this process, universities would have to be publicly accountable for facilitating a campus culture that allows sexual violence to occur at a heightened rate. McMaster, among other institutions, appears reluctant to name the issue as a rape culture in policy out of concern that it would result in diminished enrollment, public backlash, and a poor reputation.

In 2019, the Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey was disseminated across Ontario to consolidate students' perceptions and experiences of sexual violence on their respective campuses ("Summary Report," 2019). Approximately 160,000 students completed the survey from various universities and colleges in Ontario ("Summary Report," 2019). The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Merrilee Fullerton, publicly stated that the results of the survey were "disturbing," as over 63% of student participants indicated that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment while attending a postsecondary institution ("Ontario government boosts grant funding," 2019). Moreover, nearly 60% of university student respondents indicated that they were unaware of sexual violence resources, supports, services, policies, and reporting procedures on campus ("Summary Report," 2019). Minister Fullerton promised a $6 million funding boost to support the development and evaluation of sexual violence policies and programs on campus, which would mainly be dedicated to trainings for staff, students, and volunteers and increased funding for security measures, such as cameras and lighting ("Ontario government boosts grant funding," 2019).

If students' and sexual assault centres' insights were to be adequately integrated into this response, this funding boost would be dedicated to increasing resources and supports for survivors and funding valid and legitimate prevention programs on campus, led by feminist organizers (Bonilla-Damptey & Wilder, 2019; Patel & Roesch, 2018; MacKenzie, 2018; Beres, Crow, & Gotell, 2009). As Beres, Crow, & Gotell (2009) suggest when discussing a shift toward neoliberal governance, "sexual violence has been reprivatized and individualized, redefined through degendered discourses of abstract risk and individuated criminal responsibility" (p.144). In other words, focusing on security measures rather than community-based responses individualizes the issue of sexual violence and ignores to sociocultural and intersectional nature

of the issue, thus freeing postsecondary institutions from accountability for implementing effective prevention strategies. Patel & Roesch (2018) identify this as a reactionary response to public pressures to respond to sexual violence, where universities or the government implement ‘band-aid’ solutions that are not empirically supported or proven to be effective in an effort to circumvent backlash. Again, the failure to seek and integrate student perspectives from sexual assault centres into policy and procedure results in institutionalized and governmental responses essentially missing the mark on their approaches to the issue of sexual violence on campus.

Additionally, facilitating policy evaluation in a space where students feel safe and comfortable is imperative. For example, while McMaster invites student, staff, and faculty feedback on the sexual violence policy, the town hall meetings and online surveys are facilitated and collected by university administrators. When a representative of the institution maintains control over authoring the policy, enacting and enforcing it, and gathering evaluations of it, they may inadvertently (or intentionally) deter survivors, students, and political actors from voicing their feedback due to fear of dismissal, punishment, backlash, invalidation, and/or exclusion (Choise, 2018; “Our Turn,” 2017; Lee & Wong, 2019; Beres, Crow, & Gotell, 2009). In consideration of this reality, those who choose to actively evaluate the policy might reflect a “declassed, deracialized, and depoliticized” (Hancock, Mooney, & Neal, 2012, p.359) demographic or community (e.g. those who are not directly involved in this issue), therefore perpetuating a depoliticized understanding of sexual assault on university campuses.

My thesis and the breadth of research on primary prevention would intend to shift postsecondary institutions’ policy focus from security measures, reporting processes, adjudication, and potentially punitive forms of intervention after an incident of sexual violence to instead explore the campus sociocultural climate that might be enabling sexual violence to occur.

In other words, these policies should clearly outline what the university is doing to stop sexual violence before it happens, which might include prevention efforts that seek to instill a sense of shared accountability for sexual violence among students, staff, and faculty. Evaluation of these policies should also be facilitated by those who do not directly represent the university and its interests so students, staff, and faculty can feel safe, comfortable, and supported when sharing their opinions without fear of punishment, backlash, and exclusion. My project emphasizes the need to integrate male students' perspective, insights, and ideas around bolstering engagement in primary prevention, which should then be reflected in institutional policies on sexual violence.

Implications for Future Research

Involving men in the process of imagining, developing, implementing, and evaluating primary prevention efforts should be explored further in future research on the topics of primary prevention, sexual violence, and engaging men. My project reiterated the need to consider how current prevention efforts might be lacking in the areas of gender-transformative programming, comprehensive discussions of the intersections between sex, consent, violence, and the social construction of gender, sensitizing and personalizing men to the cause, and developing prevention efforts that reflect men's perspectives, insights, reflections, and questions. Additionally, my project was comprised of primarily white participants; while it is important to focus on men in more privileged positions to facilitate social change, involving marginalized men (e.g. racialized, queer, trans, disabled, etc.) in research on improving sexual violence prevention efforts would ensure that peripheral populations are being represented, considered, and engaged. Future research should continue to explore how prevention efforts are currently being experienced by men of varying social positionings to better understand the effort's efficacy, relevance, and sustainability. Several scholars have emphasized the need for continued,

funded, and comprehensive evaluation of evidence-based programming in future research on this subject to improve the direction of prevention overall (Pease, 2008; Carmody Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Peacock & Barber, 2014; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015).

As an incoming doctoral student in the school of social work at McMaster University, I plan to expand on this project to co-develop and evaluate a primary prevention program with male participants that could be implemented in secondary and/or postsecondary schools and community organizations for youth. I think that a participatory action research approach informed by feminist theory and critical masculinity studies would address the gaps present in existing research; this work would facilitate social change and action-oriented responses to research emphasizing the need for male engagement in anti-violence efforts. Involving men in every step of primary prevention programming might foster a sense of shared accountability and engagement in devising solutions to the issue of violence against women. Community-based and participatory action research could be a significant step toward social justice-informed practice in prevention, which would change the culture around imagining effective and sustainable change.

Limitations & Reflections

While I believe this project maintains plausible transferability to comparable demographics and the Ontarian postsecondary context overall, there are limitations to consider. Firstly, the sample size of six participants limits this study as the findings are, therefore, not generalizable to the male student population at McMaster University. Moreover, and not by design, all participants occupied a similar social positioning: white (or white-passing), cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied male students at McMaster University. As a result, participants' shared experiences in their proximity to privilege were potentially reflected in the major themes discussed. For example, participants expressed that they might feel more comfortable sharing

space with male peers during prevention programming as opposed to a mixed gender setting. I wonder how marginalized men – including those that are queer, trans, and/or racialized – would perceive their safety and comfort in an all-male prevention group. The assumption that men would feel more comfortable voicing their opinions to an all-male group because they would worry less about 'offending' anyone with humour, questions, or comments about patriarchal masculinity implicitly suggests that men would not be offended by certain topics in a way that women or non-binary folks would. However, would marginalized men feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or harmed by an all-male group setting where cisheterosexist assumptions underpin much of the discussion (e.g. heterosexual sex, physical traits of masculinity, experiences of violence as a cishet man, etc.)? Marginalized men's experiences were not present in this study, thus obscuring the transferability of these findings to peripheral and underrepresented male populations on campus. This is an important consideration moving forward in this work.

Additionally, the study's participants agreed to partake in the study voluntarily and frequently espoused more progressive ideas around gender, sex, consent, and sexual violence (e.g. recognizing that gender is socially constructed, previously engaging in anti-violence work, etc.). As a result, participants' accounts do not appear to reflect the perspectives and understandings of men who hold more regressive or traditional ideas (e.g. hostile attitudes toward survivors, rape myth acceptance, endorsement of prescriptive gender roles, etc.). It evokes the question around whether these themes would have been relevant or applicable to male students who were at earlier stages in their engagement around sexual violence. This limitation has been an ongoing consideration in much of the literature on men's engagement in anti-violence work, which should continue to be explored in emerging research. Namely, how can we

engage marginalized men and/or men who subscribe to traditional beliefs to become actively engaged in primary prevention efforts?

Another limitation is how the study was carried out via online participation. While I considered the focus groups to be quite successful in generating data and facilitating organic discussion, the online medium may have shaped the research process and results. For example, I mentioned earlier in the methodology section that participants voiced privacy limitations and the potential for interruptions throughout their participation, which might have impacted how honest and forthcoming they were with their responses. The discussions we had during the focus groups appeared to be quite dynamic; however, at times, it did feel a bit awkward as participants were concerned about talking over each other and jumping in to answer a question. Some of the camaraderie I envisioned seemed to be absent due to the nature of the online medium and the absence of face-to-face interaction in a shared space, which I have observed as a facilitator of anti-violence groups. Additionally, technological concerns interrupted the study. For instance, at one point, my internet cut out and I missed around one minute of dialogue, which disrupted the flow of conversation (although it did make for a brief and welcome pause for comic relief). I also had three to five more individuals who indicated interest in participating; however, technological limitations and schedule conflicts due to COVID-19 prevented them from being able to participate. Again, while I found the study to be successful overall, the social context surrounding the study inevitably impacted its facilitation and analyses.

Positionality

As discussed in the beginning of this thesis, I also continue to reflect on my social positioning as a female researcher in anti-violence work with men and how this inescapably shaped the research. While I was pleased and flattered that participants indicated that they

enjoyed my presence as a facilitator of both the focus group and a hypothetical prevention program, I wondered how the process and content of the focus group would have changed if the facilitator had been male. Specifically, would participants have been less guarded and more open to share their honest insights into their experiences of socialized and socially constructed masculinity? Participants suggested that having a woman present during anti-violence work facilitates the potential for more reflective and intentional engagement; however, it might also foster a sense of discomfort and disconnection between participants and the facilitator when lived experiences differ significantly (McCallum, 1997; Allen, 2005; Tyagi, 2006; Flood, 2019). While I would not necessarily classify this as a limitation, it is an ongoing consideration, especially as I continue to pursue this research in my future doctoral studies.

Conclusion

This thesis sought to examine how men perceive and understand their role in sexual violence prevention by exploring their perspectives on sex, consent, the social construction of gender, socialized masculinity, violence against women, and their experiences of primary prevention programs on postsecondary campuses. Feminist theory and critical masculinity studies situated my approach in navigating the balance between invitational and accountability-driven participatory research that invited men into group dialogue where cisheteropatriarchal masculinity could be investigated, reflected upon, and challenged. Participants' insights largely reflected the existing literature on sexual violence and engaging men in primary prevention, which solidifies the development of this field of work as necessary, timely, and significant in challenging the structures upholding violence against women. My future studies will continue to pursue integrating men's insights into the creation of engaging primary prevention efforts, which I hope will contribute to dismantling rape culture on postsecondary campuses and beyond.

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