

## **Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation: Threatening Behaviors and Sexual Abuse among College Students**

*By Judy Porter\* & LaVerne McQuiller Williams<sup>‡</sup>*

*This study explores the intersection of gender identity and sexual orientation in shaping the experiences of threatening behaviors and sexual abuse on university campuses. It highlights how cisgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals report significantly higher rates of verbal threats, sexual harassment, stalking, and sexual violence compared to their male or heterosexual peers. The findings emphasize the compounded vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, especially LGBTQ+ women, who experience heightened risks of severe violence due to both gender-based and sexual orientation-based marginalization. These results support the importance of an intersectional approach in understanding victimization and advocate for tailored sexual violence prevention strategies in university settings. The study calls for comprehensive policies that address the unique needs of marginalized groups, with a focus on creating inclusive and supportive environments for all students.*

**Keywords:** *college students, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual violence, cisgender women, LGBTQ+ individuals, verbal threats, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, stalking, victimization, intersectional approach*

### **Introduction**

The prevalence of threatening behaviors, including verbal threats, stalking, and sexual violence, has become a critical area of study in understanding the safety and well-being of college and university students. Within this body of research, scholars identify U.S. college students as being at risk for a variety of forms of victimization such as rape/sexual assault, physical assault, verbal threats, and stalking (Cantor et al., 2020; Daigle et al., 2024; Fedina, Backes, Sulley, Wood, & Busch-Armendariz, 2020; Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2018; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000, 2002; Krebs et al., 2016; Mengo & Black, 2016; Potter et al., 2020; Wood, Voth Schrag, & Busch-Armendariz, 2018). Gender identity and sexual orientation have been identified as key factors influencing the likelihood of experiencing such behaviors.

### **Gender Identity, Threatening Behaviors, and Sexual Abuse**

The relationship between gender identity and the experience of threatening behaviors has been extensively studied, with consistent findings indicating that women, especially those in marginalized communities, are more likely to experience a range of harassment and violence. Research has shown that women, particularly

---

\*Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA.

<sup>‡</sup>Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA.

cisgender women, are at a heightened risk for various threatening behaviors, including verbal threats, stalking, and sexual violence (Fisher et al. 2000, Turchik & Edwards 2012). Women's increased vulnerability to harassment is often attributed to societal norms that reinforce gendered power dynamics, leading to more frequent objectification and subjection to violent forms of control and dominance (Berkowitz 2007).

Research indicates that women are more likely than men to report being followed, spied on, or sexually harassed (Fisher et al., 2000, Coker et al. 2011, Wood et al. 2018). Additionally, female college students experience higher rates of verbal threats compared to their male counterparts. For instance, McGonigal and Scalora (2024) found that women are more frequently targeted by verbal harassment on college campuses. Similarly, Wood et al. (2018) reported that female students are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing verbal threats and harassment than male students.

In terms of stalking, a recent study by Fedina et al. (2020) found that 17.4% of college students reported experiencing stalking since entering college, with cisgender females and transgender/nonconforming students facing higher odds of victimization compared to their peers. Male students also experience stalking, though at lower rates than female students. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020) estimates that 5.2% of men in the U.S. have experienced stalking in their lifetime. Among college students, studies have shown that male students report stalking rates between 5% and 19%, depending on the definitions and methodologies used.

Sexual assault on college campuses remains a critical issue, affecting men and women in distinct ways. Female college students report higher rates of sexual touching and attempted sexual penetration (Turchik & Edwards 2012). In addition, research consistently shows that women are more likely to experience sexual assault than men during their college years. Recent studies indicate that approximately 20% of women and 7% of men experience sexual assault during their college years, with women often facing more severe forms of assault and enduring long-term psychological impacts such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety (Cantor et al. 2020, Krebs et al. 2021, Steele et al. 2023). Men, on the other hand, are less likely to report their experiences due to societal stigma and gender norms, which can lead to unique challenges such as questioning their masculinity and dealing with homophobia if the perpetrator is male (Smith et al. 2018).

### **Sexual Orientation, Threatening Behaviors, and Sexual Abuse**

Sexual orientation is another critical factor influencing the experience of threatening behaviors. LGBTQ+ individuals face unique challenges, with a growing body of literature documenting their heightened risk for harassment, discrimination, and violence. LGBTQ+ individuals often face threats to their safety not only due to their sexual orientation but also as a result of heteronormative environments that marginalize and stigmatize non-heterosexual identities (Balsam et al. 2005).

Studies have shown that individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ are at a significantly greater risk for various forms of harassment, including being followed, sexually harassed, and victimized by intimate partner violence (Elipse et al. 2022, Herek 2009,

Rosario et al. 2009). Along these lines, the prevalence of stalking among LGBTQ+ students is notably higher compared to their heterosexual peers. According to the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC), 1 in 4 lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, or queer students reported experiencing stalking since entering college, compared to 1 in 6 heterosexual students. Similarly, a study by Fedina et al. (2020) found that 17.4% of college students reported stalking victimization since entering college, with cisgender females, transgender/gender-nonconforming, and sexual minority students facing higher odds of victimization compared to their counterparts.

Sexual assault among LGBTQ+ college students is a critical issue that has garnered increasing attention in recent years. Research indicates that LGBTQ+ students face significantly higher rates of sexual assault compared to their heterosexual peers (Cantor et al. 2020, Fedina et al. 2018, Klein et al. 2023, Richardson et al. 2015, Steele 2023, Woodford et al. 2018). A study by Eisenberg et al. (2017) found that bisexual and queer/pansexual/other females experienced sexual assault at rates 2.5 to over 5 times higher than heterosexual females. Similarly, Ford and Soto-Marquez (2016) reported that bisexual female students had the highest rates of sexual assault among all groups examined, with approximately 38% experiencing sexual assault during their college years. More recently research by Fedina et al. (2020) found that LGBTQ+ students are significantly more likely to report incidents of sexual assault.

The reporting of sexual assault among LGBTQ+ students is notably low, which complicates efforts to address and mitigate this issue. Despite the higher prevalence of sexual assault, LGBTQ+ students are often reluctant to report these incidents to authorities. Eisenberg et al. (2017) noted that the majority of sexual assaults among LGBTQ+ students go unreported, similar to trends observed in the general student population. This underreporting can be attributed to various factors, including fear of discrimination, lack of trust in institutional support systems, and concerns about confidentiality. The reluctance to report not only hampers the provision of necessary support and resources to survivors but also limits the ability to gather accurate data on the prevalence of sexual assault within this population.

### **Intersectionality of Gender and Sexual Orientation**

An intersectional approach is essential to understanding the unique experiences of threatening behaviors among individuals with varying gender identities and sexual orientations. Intersectionality, as a theoretical framework, acknowledges that the experiences of oppression and privilege are not experienced in isolation but are shaped by the simultaneous interaction of multiple social identities (Crenshaw 1991). For instance, cisgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals face distinct but overlapping risks related to gender-based violence and sexual orientation-based discrimination.

Research on intersectionality has also highlighted the compounded nature of discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ women, as they navigate both gendered and sexual orientation-based forms of violence (Chung & Koo 2006). In fact, LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly women, may experience greater victimization due to both

their gender and sexual orientation, amplifying their risk for sexual violence and harassment (Balsam et al. 2005).

## **Current Study**

Building on the comprehensive understanding of gender identity, sexual orientation, and their intersection with threatening behaviors, the current study aims to further investigate the nuanced ways in which these factors influence the experiences of harassment, stalking, and sexual violence among college students. By focusing on the intersectionality of gender and sexual orientation, this research intends to highlight the compounded vulnerabilities of individuals, who face distinct but overlapping risks. Specifically, the study will explore how these intersecting identities amplify the likelihood of experiencing violence and victimization within university settings.

## **Methods**

### **Data Collection**

This study surveyed 3019 college students who attended a Northwestern University situated in Upstate New York in the U.S. This is an exploratory study concerning threatening behaviors toward them. The university is a STEM-focused institution located in Upstate New York, with a student population of approximately 20,000. The student body is approximately 54% white and 46% racial or ethnic minority, with 65% male and 35% female. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, surveys were distributed at random to students in classes from all disciplines.

### **Measures**

Gender identification and sexual orientation were explored in relation to threatening behaviors that included the following eleven variables: “verbal threats of sex against your will”, “person followed or spied on you”, “person sent unsolicited letters or written messages including email and IM”, “person stood outside your work or school”, “person showed up at places you thought that they had no business being”, “left unwanted items for you to find”, “person tried to communicate in other ways against your will”, “vandalized property or destroyed something you loved”, “sexual touching against your will”, “attempted sexual penetration against your will”, and “sexual penetration against your will”.

Gender identity was measured with self-described male, female, or other. Sexual orientation was measured by Gay/Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, or other. The threatening behaviors variables measured as never, once or twice, 3 to 10 times, more than 10 times. These variables were dichotomized into never or some due to small numbers in most

of the categories. Binary logistic regression analyses were used to examine the effect of gender identity and sexual orientation on experiences of threatening behaviors. SPSS 29 was used for these analyses.

### Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of the survey respondents by self-designated gender identification and sexual orientation. Of the 3019 respondents 1707 identified as male and 1312 female. Respondents were majority heterosexual (n=2586) with a total of 163 identified as LGBTQ+ (64 male, 99 female) making up about 5.4% of the respondents to the survey. Of the LGBTQ+ group 23 men identified as Gay and 34 as bisexual and 7 other; 48 women identified as Lesbian and 49 bisexual, 2 other.

**Table 1.** *Characteristics of Respondents by Gender Identification and Sexual Orientation*  
N = 3019

	CIS	Heterosexual	LGBTQ+	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Other
men	1707		64	23		34	7
women	1312		99		99	49	2
total	3019	2586	163	23	99	83	9

### Results

Table 2 provides a cross tabulation of the threatening behaviors by gender identity and sexual orientation. Cross tabulation found that gender achieved statistical significance with a chi square of <.001 for gender and a range of <.001 and .041 for sexual orientation for the following: Women (n=51, 3.8%) and LGBTQ+ respondents (n=18, 11%) reported more verbal threats. Women (n=293, 22%) and LGBTQ+ (56, 34%) being followed or spied on. Women (479, 36.5%) and LGBTQ+ (41, 25%) reporting unsolicited letters or written messages. Women (377, 30%) and LGBTQ+ (p=.012, 39, 24%) reporting someone standing outside their work or school. Women (330, 25%) and LGBTQ+ (46, 28%) reported more unwanted items left for them to find. Women (369, 28%) and LGBTQ+ (48, 29.5%) more likely to report unwanted communication. Women (337, 25.7%) and LGBTQ+ (44, 28.5%) more likely to report someone vandalized their property or destroyed something they loved. Women (121, 10%) and LGBTQ+ (33, 20%) were more likely to report someone sexually touching them against their will. A greater percentage of women (51, 3.8%) said they had been a victim of attempted sexual penetration against their will. There was no statistically significant association between LGBTQ+ and heterosexual respondents for attempted sexual penetration against their will. A greater percentage of women (36, 2.75%) and LGBTQ+ (11, 6.75%) reported sexual penetration against their will. Showing up at places someone should not be, was statistically significantly associated with Women (379, 29%) and heterosexual respondents (p=.041, 727, 42.5%).

**Table 2.** Crosstabulation: Threatening Behaviors and Gender Identification and Sexual Orientation N=3019

	CIS Male	CIS Female		LGBTQ+	Hetero- sexual	
Variable	n percentage	n percentage	Chi Square	n percentage	n percentage	Chi Square
Verbal Threats of Sex Against Your Will	16 .09%	51 3.8%	<.001***	18 11%	49 1.7%	<.001***
Followed or Spied on You	238 14%	293 22%	<.001***	56 34%	492 17%	<.001***
Sent unsolicited letters or written messages including email and IM	480 28%	479 36.5%	<.001***	41 25%	829 29%	<.001***
Stood outside your work or school	335 19%	377 30%	<.012**	39 24%	653 23%	<.012**
Showed up at places you thought that they had no business being	390 23%	379 29%	<.041*	42 26%	727 42.5%	<.041*
Left unwanted items for you to find	345 20%	330 25%	<.001***	46 28%	629 22%	<.001***
Tried to communicate in other ways	403 23.5%	369 28%	<.001***	48 29.5%	724 25%	<.001***
Vandalized Property or destroyed something	336 19.7%	227 25.7%	<.001***	44 28.5%	628 22%	<.001***
Sexual touching against your will	57 3%	121 10%	<.001***	33 20%	155 5%	<.001***
Attempted sexual penetration against your will	7 .04%	51 3.8%	<.001***	5 3%	53 3%	.804
Sexual penetration against your will	6 .035%	36 2.75%	<.001***	11 6.75%	31 1.1%	<.001***

p=.041\*, p=.012\*\*, p=&lt;.001\*\*\*

**Table 3.** Binomial Regression: Threatening Behaviors and Gender Identification  
N = 3019

Binomial Regression Analysis								
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Verbal Threats of Sex Against Your Will	.774	.338	5.229	1	.022*	2.168	1.117	4.210
Followed or Spied on You	.373	.106	12.332	1	<.001****	1.452	1.179	1.789
Sent unsolicited letters or written messages	.383	.086	20.073	1	<.001****	1.467	1.241	1.735
Stood outside your work or school	.581	.130	20.036	1	<.001****	1.787	1.386	2.305
Tried to communicate in other ways	-.453	.136	11.171	1	<.001****	.636	.487	.829
Vandalized Property or destroyed something you loved	.290	.126	5.259	1	.022*	1.336	1.043	1.711
Sexual touching against your will	.590	.189	9.764	1	.002***	1.804	1.246	2.611
Attempted sexual penetration against your will	1.351	.446	9.175	1	.002***	3.860	1.611	9.249
Sexual penetration against your will	1.190	.486	5.994	1	.014**	3.288	1.268	8.526
Constant	-.620	.053	137.337	1	<.001	.538		

p=.022\*, p=.014\*\*, p=.002\*\*\*, p=<.001\*\*\*\*

To summarize Table 3, all the threatening behaviors save one indicated that women were much more likely to report all the events more than men. While all the threatening behaviors are very concerning the two most serious “attempted sexual penetration” and “sexual penetration against their will” were reported at higher percentages at nearly three times as often, and over twice as often.

The sole variable that was significantly statistically associated with “having a person trying to communicate in ways other than letters or written messages including email and IM” - indicated that men were less likely to report this event by over 36 percent.

A binomial regression analysis of threatening behaviors and gender identification found that nine of the variables were statistically significantly associated with gender identity with eight of the variables associated with cisgender and one variable associated with cisgender men – “having a person trying to communicate in ways other than letters or written messages including email and IM” (p=<.001, Exp(B) = .636), for every one unit increase in “someone trying to communicate in other ways”, saw a decrease of 36.4% (.487, .829) in men reporting this behavior.

Cisgender women were more likely to report verbal threats of sex against their will (p=.022, Exp(B) 2.168), for every one unit increase in reports of “receiving verbal threats of sex against your will” there was an odds of 116% (1.117, 4.210)

chance of reporting this behavior; having “someone following or spying on them” ( $p < .001$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  1.542) indicates that for every one unit increase in reporting this behavior, the odds of reporting this is increased by 45% (1.179, 1.789), the odds of “someone sending unsolicited letters or written messages” ( $p < .001$ ;  $\text{Exp}(B)$  1.467) increased by 46% (1.241, 1.735), the odds of reporting a “person standing outside work or school” ( $p < .001$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  1.787) increased by 78% for each unit increase (1.386, 2.305), the odds of a “person vandalizing property or destroying something you loved” ( $p = .022$ ,  $\text{Exp}(b)$  1.336) increased by 33% (1.043, 1.711) for every one unit increase in that behavior, The odds of having reported “sexual touching against your will” ( $p = .002$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  1.804) increased by 80% (1.246, 2.611) for each unit increase, the odds of having “reported attempted sexual penetration against your will” ( $p = .002$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  3.860) increased by 286% (1.611, 9.249), and the odds of reporting “sexual penetration against your will” ( $p = .014$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  3.288) increased by 229% (1.268, 8.526) for each unit increase.

**Table 4.** Binomial Regression: Threatening Behaviors and Sexual Orientation  $N = 3019$

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Followed or Spied on You	.949	.187	25.746	1	<.001****	2.584	1.791	3.728
tried to communicate in other ways	-.650	.241	7.250	1	.007*	.522	.325	.838
Vandalized Property or destroyed something you loved	.657	.226	8.425	1	.004**	1.928	1.238	3.004
Sexual touching against your will	1.604	.238	45.350	1	<.001****	4.974	3.118	7.934
Attempted sexual penetration against your will	-2.035	.655	9.635	1	.002***	.131	.036	.472
Sexual penetration against your will	2.073	.488	18.076	1	<.001****	7.947	3.056	20.663
Constant	-3.360	.120	788.495	1	<.001****	.035		

$p = .007^*$ ,  $p = .004^{**}$ ,  $p = .002^{***}$ ,  $p < .001^{****}$

To summarize Table 4, LGBTQ+ respondents were more likely to report being followed or spied on (over 1 and half times), vandalized property or something they loved destroyed (92%), being sexually touched against their will (nearly 4 times as much), and reporting “sexual penetration against their will (nearly 7 times as much).

A binomial regression analysis of threatening behaviors and sexual orientation found that four variables were statistically significantly associated with GLBTQ+ orientation, while two variables were statistically significantly associated with heterosexual orientation.

Having someone who “tried to communicate in other ways” ( $p=.007$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  .522) and “attempted sexual penetration against your will” ( $p=.002$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  .131) was statistically significantly associated with heterosexual orientation. It was found that holding all other predictor variables constant, the odds of someone who “tried to communicate in other ways” decreased by 52% (.325, .838) for a one unit increase in reports of someone who “tried to communicate in other ways”. While the odds of “attempted sexual penetration against your will” decreased by 13% (.036, .472) for a one unit increase in reported an “attempted sexual penetration against your will”. Respondents who identified as heterosexual were less likely to report someone who “tried to communicate in other ways” and “attempted sexual penetration against your will”.

Respondents who identified as LGBTQ+ were more likely to report being “followed or spied on” with the odds increasing by 158% for every one unit increase in reports of being “followed or spied on” ( $p<.001$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  2.584 (1.791, 3.738)). The odds of LGBTQ+ respondents reporting having their property vandalized or something they loved destroyed increased by 92% ( $p=.004$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  1.928, 1.238, 3.004). The odds increased by 397% of having been sexually touched against their will ( $p<.001$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  4.974, 3.118, 7.934). The odds of LGBTQ+ respondents reporting “sexual penetration against your will” increased by 695% ( $p<.001$ ,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  7.947, 3.056, 20,663).

## Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that gender identity and sexual orientation play in individuals' experiences of threatening behaviors and sexual abuse on university campuses. Cisgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals reported higher rates of verbal threats, sexual harassment, stalking, and sexual violence compared to their male or heterosexual counterparts. This study contributes to the growing body of research highlighting how both gender and sexual orientation intersect to influence the prevalence and severity of harassment and violence, further reinforcing the need for a nuanced understanding of campus safety and victimization.

Cisgender women in this study were notably more likely than their male peers to report experiencing verbal threats, sexual touching, and sexual penetration. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that women, particularly those in higher-risk environments like college campuses, are more vulnerable to various forms of gender-based violence (Fisher et al. 2000, Turchik & Edwards 2012).

Moreover, the finding that women in this study were more likely to report experiences of being followed or spied on aligns with previous research on the prevalence of stalking and unwanted surveillance targeted at women (Fedina et al. 2020, Fisher et al. 2000, Coker et al. 2011). The relatively high rates of verbal threats, unsolicited messages, and harassment reported by cisgender women are also consistent with the works of Turchik and Edwards (2012) and Wood et al. (2018), who found that women are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment and intimate partner violence. These findings suggest that the intersection of gender and power

dynamics continues to create an environment where women are disproportionately exposed to harmful behaviors.

LGBTQ+ individuals in this study also reported experiencing higher rates of threatening behaviors compared to heterosexual respondents, further supporting the growing body of literature documenting the unique vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals. LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to experience sexual harassment, stalking, and violence due to their sexual orientation, often exacerbated by a culture of heteronormativity that marginalizes non-heterosexual identities (Balsam et al. 2005). This study's findings are consistent with previous research showing that LGBTQ+ individuals, especially LGBTQ+ women, are at a greater risk of experiencing sexual violence and victimization due to both societal prejudice and personal vulnerability (Herek 2009, Rosario et al. 2009). The significantly higher likelihood of LGBTQ+ individuals reporting sexual violence—such as unwanted sexual touching and sexual penetration—underscores the heightened risks they face in university environments, where stigmatization and exclusion are still pervasive.

The intersectionality of gender and sexual orientation was a key theme in this study. The compounded vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly those who are also women, were clear in the findings. LGBTQ+ respondents, especially LGBTQ+ women, were more likely to report severe forms of violence, including sexual penetration, than their cisgender heterosexual counterparts. This supports the framework of intersectionality proposed by Crenshaw (1991), which argues that the interconnected nature of identities—such as gender and sexual orientation—shapes the experiences of marginalization and victimization in unique ways. The intersection of these identities appears to amplify the vulnerability of individuals to violence and harassment. Balsam et al. (2005) similarly highlight that LGBTQ+ people of color face heightened victimization not only because of their sexual orientation but also due to the social prejudices linked to their racial and ethnic identities.

Additionally, the higher rates of sexual violence reported by LGBTQ+ respondents in this study reinforce findings from Cantor et al. (2020), Fedina et al. (2020), and Herek (2009), who noted that LGBTQ+ individuals, especially those in marginalized communities, face distinct risks for victimization. The compounded nature of their vulnerability, arising from both their gender and sexual orientation, often results in greater exposure to intimate partner violence, harassment, and sexual assault. These findings underscore the importance of adopting an intersectional approach when considering the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly in environments such as universities, where students are exposed to a range of social and institutional pressures that can increase their susceptibility to violence.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that university settings may perpetuate a climate in which both women and LGBTQ+ individuals are at risk. The higher rates of verbal threats, stalking, and sexual violence reported by both groups emphasize the need for university administrators and policymakers to prioritize sexual violence prevention programs tailored to the needs of marginalized groups. This is especially important considering that both cisgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals face disproportionate rates of victimization, as evidenced by the study's statistical analyses. Turchik and Edwards (2012) argue that comprehensive and intersectional

prevention strategies are essential for addressing sexual violence on college campuses, and this study's findings support that argument.

In addition to gender and sexual orientation, future research should consider other intersecting identities, such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability, which may further influence the experiences of victimization among marginalized groups. For example, research by Chung and Koo (2006) indicates that LGBTQ+ women of color face unique challenges in navigating both gender and racial/ethnic-based violence. Understanding how multiple identities shape the experiences of stalking, harassment, and violence can provide a more nuanced understanding of campus safety and inform the development of more effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Finally, the study's findings have important implications for university policies and practices related to prevention of sexual violence. Cisgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals are at heightened risk for a variety of threatening behaviors, including verbal threats, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Universities must create inclusive environments that address the specific needs of these groups and foster a culture of respect and safety for all students, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. This includes implementing tailored sexual violence prevention programs, supporting bystander intervention training, and providing safe spaces for students to report incidents of harassment and violence.

## Conclusion

This study underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of victimization based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Both cisgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to experience verbal threats, stalking, sexual harassment, and sexual violence compared to their male or heterosexual counterparts. The findings highlight the importance of adopting an intersectional approach to understanding campus victimization, as the experiences of harassment and violence are shaped by the interaction of gender and sexual orientation. Addressing these vulnerabilities through targeted, intersectional prevention programs is essential for creating safer, more inclusive university environments.

## References

- Balsam KF, Molina Y, Beadnell B, Simoni JM, Walters KL (2005) Measuring multiple minority stress: The LGBT people of color microaggressions scale. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 11(3): 217–230. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.11.3.217>
- Berkowitz AD (2007) *The social norms approach to preventing school and college age substance abuse: A handbook for educators, counselors, and clinicians*. Jossey-Bass.
- Cantor D, Fisher B, Chibnall S, Harps S, Townsend R, Thomas G, Lee H, Kranz V, Herbison R, Madden K (2020) *Report on the AAU climate survey on sexual assault and sexual misconduct*. The Association of American Universities. Available at: [https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/Campus-Safety/Revised%20Aggregate%20report%20and%20appendices%201-7\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/Campus-Safety/Revised%20Aggregate%20report%20and%20appendices%201-7_FINAL.pdf)

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020) Sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence by sexual orientation, United States. *Psychology of Violence* 10(1): 110–119. <https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000231>
- Chung D, Koo H (2006) Lesbian and bisexual women's experiences of intimate partner violence: A focus on the intersection of sexual orientation and gender. *Violence Against Women* 12(9): 960–977. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801206291361>
- Coker AL, Smith PH, McKeown RE, King M (2011) Social relationships and vulnerability to intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 26(3): 432–454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510381195>
- Crenshaw K (1991) Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241–1299.
- Daigle L, Azimi A, Hancock K, Johnson LM (2024) Does college matter? Exploring college-level factors related to victimization risk for U.S. and Canadian college students. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 68(5): 488–522.
- Eisenberg ME, Lust KA, Mathiason MA, Porta CM (2017) Sexual assault, sexual orientation, and reporting among college students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36(1–2): 62–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517726414>
- Elipe P, Espelage DL, Del Rey R (2022) Homophobic verbal and bullying victimization: Overlap and emotional impact. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 19(4): 1178–1189. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-021-00613-7>
- Fedina L, Backes BL, Sulley C, Wood L, Busch-Armendariz N (2020) Prevalence and sociodemographic factors associated with stalking victimization among college students. *Journal of American College Health* 68(6): 624–630. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2019.1583664>
- Fedina L, Holmes JL, Backes BL (2018) Campus sexual assault: A systematic review of prevalence research from 2000 to 2015. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 19(1): 76–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016631129>
- Fisher BS, Cullen FT, Turner MG (2000) *The sexual victimization of college women*. National Institute of Justice.
- Fisher BS, Cullen FT, Turner MG (2002) Being pursued: Stalking victimization in a national study of college women. *Criminology & Public Policy* 1(2): 257–308.
- Ford JV, Soto-Marquez JG (2016) Sexual assault victimization among straight, gay/lesbian, and bisexual college students. *Journal of American College Health* 64(5): 374–379. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2016.1158179>
- Herek GM (2009) Heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: A review of empirical research. In: Leviton DJ (ed.) *The Social Psychology of Prejudice* (pp. 101–125). Psychology Press.
- Klein LB, Dawes HC, James G, Hall WJ, Rizo CF, Potter SJ, Martin SL, Macy RJ (2023) Sexual and relationship violence among LGBTQ+ college students: A scoping review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 24(4): 2196–2209. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221089981>
- Krebs CP, Lindquist CH, Berzofsky ME, Shook-Sa BE, Peterson KC, Planty M, Langton L (2016) *Campus climate survey validation study final technical report*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available at: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsfr.pdf>
- Krebs CP, Lindquist CH, Warner TD, Fisher BS, Martin SL (2021) College women's experiences with physically forced, alcohol- or drug-enabled sexual assault before and since entering college. *Journal of American College Health* 69(1): 1–12.
- Mengo C, Black BM (2016) Violence victimization on a college campus: Impact on GPA and school dropout. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice* 18(2): 234–248. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115584750>

- McGonigal PT, Scalora MJ (2024) Identity-driven targeted violence in a college setting: An overview of prevalence and behavioral responses. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 21(10): 1312. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21101312>
- Potter SJ, Fox N, Smith D, Draper N, Moschella EA, Moynihan MM (2020) Sexual assault prevalence and community college students: Challenges and promising practices. *Health Education & Behavior* 47(1S): 7S–16S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198120910988>
- Richardson JT, Armstrong HL, Hines DA, Palm Reed KM (2015) Out and in harm's way: Sexual minority students' psychological and physical health. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 30(17): 2837–2857. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514554289>
- Rosario M, Schrimshaw EW, Hunter J (2009) Victimization and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 21(2): 227–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720802231985>
- Smith SG, Zhang X, Basile KC, Merrick MT, Wang J, Kresnow M, Chen J (2018) *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release*. Atlanta, GA: CDC. Available at: <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/60893>
- Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC) (2021) *Stalking and LGBTQ+ individuals: Fact sheet*. Available at: [https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SPARC\\_Stalking-LGBTQ+-Fact-Sheet.pdf](https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SPARC_Stalking-LGBTQ+-Fact-Sheet.pdf)
- Steele B, Martin M, Sciarra A, Melendez-Torres GJ, Degli Esposti M, Humphreys DK (2023) The prevalence of sexual assault among higher education students: A systematic review with meta-analyses. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 25(3): 1885–1898. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231196119>
- Turchik JA, Edwards KM (2012) Preventing sexual violence in the United States: A comprehensive review of sexual violence prevention programs. *Psychology of Violence* 2(3): 110–128. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025363>
- Wood L, Hoefler S, Kammer-Kerwick M, Parra-Cardona JR, Busch-Armendariz N (2018) Sexual harassment at institutions of higher education: Prevalence, risk, and extent. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 33(5): 791–228. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518791228>
- Woodford MR, Han Y, Craig SL, Lim C, Matney MM (2018) Discrimination and mental health among sexual minority college students: The type and form of discrimination does matter. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health* 22(2): 152–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2018.1429970>

