

What is Trauma?

“A normal reaction to an abnormal situation” (National Center for PTSD, 2015)

“Emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster” (APA, 2015)

“Experiences or situations that are emotionally painful and distressing, and that overwhelm people’s ability to cope, leaving them powerless... Trauma has sometimes been defined in reference to circumstances that are outside the realm of normal human experience. **Unfortunately, this definition doesn’t always hold true. For some groups of people, trauma can occur frequently and become part of the common human experience**” (Center for Nonviolence & Social Justice, 2015)

“Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as **physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.**” (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014)

“Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.” (Herman, 1997)

Resilience ... but can we critique “resilience”?

“The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress— such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences” (APA, 2016).

“The ability of an individual, family, or community to cope with adversity and trauma, and adapt to challenges or change” (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, 2016).

Secondary or vicarious trauma

“Vicarious trauma is the emotional residue of exposure that counselors have from working with people as they are hearing their trauma stories and become witnesses to the pain, fear, and terror that trauma survivors have endured” (American Counseling Association, 2011).

Also referred to as compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, secondary victimization, or the “cost of caring” (American Counseling Association, 2011).

“Continuous exposure to the trauma material of others” (Flinton, 2015).

The original CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study (CDC, 2019)

- Data collected from 1995-1997; 17,000+ individuals in California
- The specific definitions of ACEs can be found at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - These include emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; “household challenges” including witnessing maternal violence, separation and divorce, substance abuse in household, and caretaker incarceration; and physical and emotional neglect
- Physical abuse (28.3%); sexual abuse (23%); substance abuse in household (26.9%)
- Approximately 2/3 of participants experiences at least 1 ACE; 38% of participants experienced 2+ ACEs
- **(Finkelhor et al., 2013)**
 - A survey of ACE prevalence among U.S. individuals ages of 10-17 (N = 2000+)
 - ACEs added to the original ACE conceptualization: Property victimization (non-sibling); peer victimization (non-sibling); exposure to community violence; socioeconomic status; someone close had a bad accident or illness; below-average grades; parents always arguing; and no good friends (at time of interview)
 - ACEs removed from original: Caretaker incarceration; separation and divorce

Prevalence, Type, Disclosure, and Severity of Adverse Life Events in College Students (Smyth et al., 2008)

- “Across multiple studies [(N = 6,053)], prevalence rates of adverse events ranged from 55.8% to 84.5%, replicating previous findings in larger samples. In a subset of undergraduate students (n = 97) who the authors interviewed in greater depth, 9% reported symptoms of clinical PTSD and an additional 11% reported subclinical symptoms” (p. 69.)

Rates of DSM-IV-TR Trauma Exposure and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Among Newly Matriculated College Students (Read et al., 2011)

- “Matriculating students (N = 3,014; 1,763 female, 1,251 male) at two U.S. universities completed online and paper assessments. Sixty-six percent reported exposure to a Criterion A trauma. Nine percent met criteria for PTSD” (p. 148)

Table 2
Rates of Specific Criterion A Trauma Categories by Gender and Ethnic Minority Status Among College Freshmen (N = 3,014)

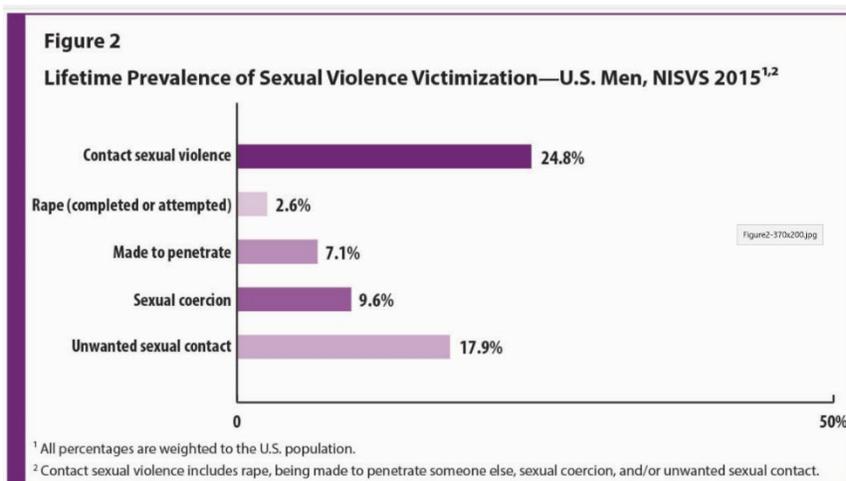
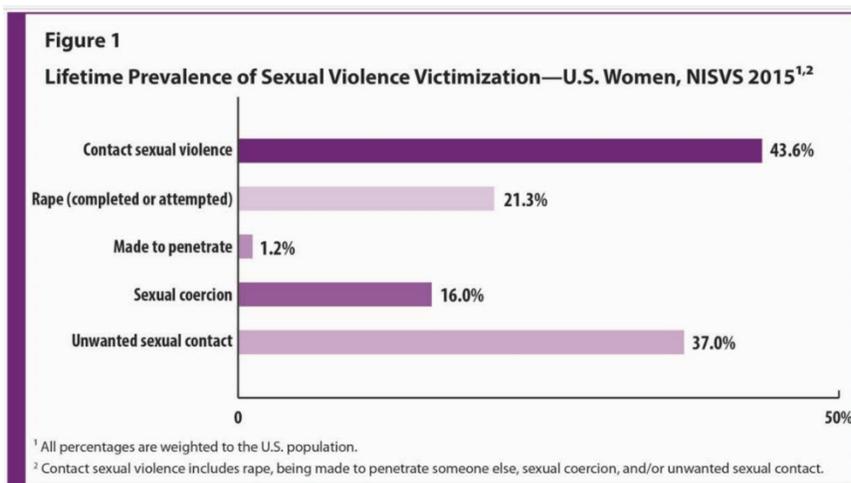
Criterion A trauma category	% (and n) for:			f	χ ² (1)	Ethnic minority	Nonethnic minority	χ ² (1)	f
	Total sample	Female	Male						
Accident/natural disaster/fire	27 (807)	32 (561)	20 (246)	0.14	55.29***	29 (220)	26 (587)	1.54	0.02
Warfare/combat	1 (17)	1 (10)	1 (7)	0.00	0.00	1 (10)	0.3 (7)	9.88**	0.06
Sudden unexpected death	34 (1,023)	42 (733)	23 (290)	0.19	110.70***	35 (266)	34 (756)	0.15	0.00
Life-threatening illness	35 (1,068)	43 (759)	25 (309)	0.19	107.70***	33 (252)	36 (816)	3.57	0.03
Physical violence	24 (714)	28 (489)	18 (225)	0.11	38.49***	32 (246)	21 (468)	38.29***	0.11
Unwanted sex	7 (224)	11 (199)	2 (25)	0.18	91.78***	10 (77)	7 (147)	9.73**	0.06
Other	20 (614)	22 (397)	17 (217)	0.06	12.07**	22 (167)	20 (446)	1.06	0.02

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Sexual Violence at Princeton

“We observe that a larger fraction, nearly 60%, of first year (G1) graduate women have experienced inappropriate sexual behavior prior to their arrival on campus (Table 29). We also find that approximately one-third of undergraduate women arrive at Princeton having experienced some form of inappropriate sexual behavior at some point their life. Our data also suggest that 15% to 18% of first-year men, undergraduate and graduate, have experienced inappropriate sexual behavior prior to their arrival on campus (Table 20)” [page 48, 2017 We Speak](#)

CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, the 2015 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)



Violence within LGBTQIA+ Communities

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Hate Crime Statistics Report (Chibbaro, 2019): 5.8% increase in hate crimes targeting LGB persons from 2017 (1,130 incidents) to 2018 (1,196 incidents). Similar increased rates of violence for transgender folks (disparities exist based on race and gender)
The CDC (Breiding et al., 2013): gay (40%) and bisexual (47%) cisgender men have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime
- The U.S. Transgender Survey (James et al., 2016) report 54% of transgender respondents experienced IPV; 47% have been sexually assaulted.

Marginalized Identities, Incarceration, & Trauma

- [The Trauma of the Incarceration Experience](#) (DeVeaux, 2013, Harvard Civil Rights Civil Liberties Law Review)
- Increased gender-based violence for incarcerated transgender individuals (2015 USTS, James et al., 2016), as compared to cisgender individuals; exasperated by race and documentation status