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A Silent Dilemma:
The Challenges Black collegiate Women Face Disclosing Sexual Victimization

by

Lawrence W. Henry

A Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
2020

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Nova Southeastern University
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

This dissertation was submitted by Lawrence W. Henry under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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Dedication

To God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, I dedicate this body of work. Without your compassion and divine gifts, I would have lacked the knowledge to embark on this vital task and the endurance to complete this study. I am thy humble servant and thee do I serve. Additionally, I dedicate this study to the memory of my parents, Joya D. Henry (Chisolm) and Larry Henry. I am a product of your life lessons, shrouded in love, which chiefly contributed to my unyielding desire to obtain goals greater than myself. Lastly, this dissertation is dedicated to the eight most courageous people I know, the research participants of this study (i.e., "Vicki," "Jay," "Tracey," "Danielle," "Dee," " Sharell," "Alice," and "Edna). Your unfiltered accounts were more than "question and answer" periods, they were opportunities for me to look into myself and at the world we live in and assess what did I (or we) do, to contribute to the dilemmas you faced. I pray that your lived experiences not only empower those who are silent to speak, but enable the agencies chartered to aid victims of sexual assault to act in a more thoughtful and caring manner when dealing with members of marginalized communities.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge those members of my family and friends who took part not only this dissertation journey but the journey of life with me! I thank you for bearing with "Joya's son." As a teenager in high school, as I was not the best of students, and a tad bit rebellious. I thank you for bearing with "Joya's son" as a young man in college, as I, again, was not the best of students and even more rebellious. I thank you for your thoughts that traveled with me, during my military service, to some of the most dangerous places on the face of the Earth. I am confident that your prayers enabled my safe return to you. This study stands as a monument, demonstrating all of your patience and love for me over the years. Thank you!

To my dissertation committee, thank you for supporting this study. Dr. Muvingi, my dissertation chairman, your standard is excellence! I have taken several of your classes, and your emphasis placed on academic rigor always inspired me not only to examine the root causes of conflict differently but place aside the safety of conventional thinking to resolve or transform environments where conflict reside. Dr. Schwoebel, you were one of the first professors I had the pleasure of learning from during this Ph.D. program. Challenging me to examine alternate doctrines, theories, and practices, encouraged an "academic courage" that was relied on from the conceptualization to completion of this study. Lastly, Dr. Cooper, your expertise in qualitative methods, namely interpretative phenological analysis, proved to be essential as I often referred to your publication on this subject. So, thanks go primarily to you, as I now truly understand the power contained in one's lived experience.

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Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge from whence I came. To my young brothers and sisters of New Jersey's Essex and Monmouth Counties and the communities of marginalized people through the country, it is not where you start, it is where you end up. I understand your struggles because I faced similar ones. However, I have a request, I need you to always think that "your good ain't good enough," and with that keep strivin' baby…keep strivin!'

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Abstract

This study focused on Black women, who were sexually assaulted in college, and the dilemmas they faced with disclosure between 1989 to 1999. The purpose of this study was to conduct an interpretative phenomenological analysis on the experiences of how Black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college. Interviewing eight research participants, the researcher sought to identify, through one's lived experience, the factors that created disclosure dilemmas for Black women who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates. Through this effort, the researcher identified several intrinsic and extrinsic reasons and the leading cause for the participants' non-disclosure. The emergent theme, Structural Factors, with its subordinate themes, were discovered as the lead causes of the participants' non-disclosure for this study. With this information, the researcher recommended a conflict resolution practice focused on transforming environments where embedded, and protracted problems exist. The conflict resolution practice identified was Saunders' sustained dialogue. It was the intent of the researcher that with the identification of the causes of non-disclosure, coupled with the understanding of sustained dialogue that there is not only an increase of the reader's awareness of the unique dilemmas faced by Black women when contemplating disclosure, but a tool is available that could facilitate increased comfort for victims of sexual assault to discuss their experiences in a more socially receptive environment.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

In the United States, Black women are members of the largest demographic, per capita, that have attained postsecondary certificates, and associate and bachelor's degrees (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Understanding this account, Lewis (2017) suggested that one of five students have experienced sexual victimization during their time as an undergraduate. Furthermore, it was estimated that for every one Black woman attending college who has reported sexual victimization, 15 Black women have not disclosed the occurrence to law enforcement or health service officials (Lewis, 2017). Affecting their desire to communicate to formal law enforcement and health agencies are various intersecting barriers such as "systemic racism, believability, rape myths, and self-blame" (Howard, 2018, p. 13). With this understanding, the purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of Black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college. Identifying the factors attached to this group's non-disclosure enabled the researcher to recommend a conflict resolution practice to transform environments that prevented this study's sample population from disclosure. Transforming these environments could increase future disclosure rates among Black college women who were sexually assaulted in college and affect their mental and physical health. To facilitate this description, this study used a qualitative interpretative phenomenological analysis [IPA] methodology (Flowers et al, 2012).

Background

In 2011, Krebs, ,Lindquist, Crosby, Boyd, and Bogan presented study findings that accounted for data sets collected from four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in 2008 and two non-HBCU in 2005 (Krebs et al, 2009a). A purpose of the study was to compare data collected from the Black undergraduate women who attended HBCUs and non-HBCUs that experienced sexual assault (Krebs et al., 2011). The study findings presented data that revealed approximately 9.6% of Black women who attended Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and 9.5% of Black women who attend non-HBCUs experienced forms of sexual assault since entering college (Krebs et al., 2011). Although the sample sizes differed (i.e., HBCU, n=3,224 and non HBCU, n=1,108), the percentages of sexual assaults experienced by Black women at HBCUs and non-HBCUs, since arriving to college, were similar.

Table 1

Data from Kreb's, et at. Study

Type of Sexual Assault	HBCU Women $n = 3,364$	Non-HBCU Women $n = 4,994$	Black HBCU Women $n = 3,224$	Black Non-HBCU Women $n = 1,018$
Before entering college				
Any sexual assault	10.1%	11.3%	10.0%	9.6%
Physically forced sexual assault	8.3%*	6.4%*	8.3%	7.0%
Incapacitated sexual assault	3.2%*	7.0%*	3.0%	3.9%
Since entering college				
Any sexual assault	9.7%*	13.7%*	9.6%	9.5%
Physically forced sexual assault	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%	4.5%
Incapacitated sexual assault	6.4%*	11.1%*	6.3%	4.4%

Note: HBCUs = Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
*$p < .05$.

Note. From Krebs et al., 2011, p. 3653.

Understanding that there is a marginal percentage difference between Black women who attend HBCUs or non-HBCUs, is it suggested that sexual assault disclosure rates associated with Black women are low in comparison to their white counterparts (Gross, Winslett, Roberts, & Gohm, 2006; Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, Koss, & Wechsler, 2004; Rennison, 2002). While various experts in the field of study suggest that Black women's disclosure rates are lower than their White counterparts, there are contestations in the literature. Krebs et al. (2011) argued that Black women's disclosure measures of sexual victimization are higher than white women.

Although there are contested points of view when it comes to sexual victimization disclosure rates, failing to disclose to formal agencies could inadvertently prevent them from affecting or treating conditions such as, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, or post-traumatic stress disorder (Chen et al. 2010; Martin, Macy, & Young, 2011; Coulter et al., 2017). Palmer and St. Vil (2018) argued that some Black women choose not to disclose because of fear of how family members and friends may perceive them, self-blame, law enforcement agencies questioning their credibility, or retaliation performed by the accused. Although the reasons mentioned above speak to why some Black women may not disclose, these reasons are also shared by women of other races (Jacques-Tiura, Tkatch, Abbey, & Wegner, 2010). However, factors that affect Black women's desire to disclose to formal agencies (i.e., law enforcement, and health and social services) more than women of other races are, antiquated policies that govern a particular agency and insensitive interventions that are not tailored to address unique cultural, historic, and other idiosyncratic needs of Black women (DeGue et al. 2014; Palmer & St. Vil, 2018). Further, generic or inappropriate policies and interventions

discourage some Black sexual assault victims from reporting because they feel that the policies and interventions will not benefit them; in some cases, those that are charged to implement and enforce these policies and interventions scrutinize Black women's claims by denying or minimizing them (Ahrens, Cabral, & Abeling, 2009; Crenshaw, 1991; Orchowski, Untied, & Gidycz, 2013; Littleton, 2010; Peter-Hagene & Ullman, 2014; Relyea & Ullman, 2013). Feelings of marginalization could affect the victim's self-esteem and assurance in the effectiveness and integrity of formal agencies charged with protecting the health and welfare of all citizens (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). Lastly, when considering the assistance from health care or law enforcement agencies, some Black women perceive themselves as "strong Black women," therefore, they choose to not disclose and address the trauma and its associated issues in silence (Tillman, Bryant-Davis, Smith, & Marks, 2010; West & Johnson, 2013).

Although alcohol is a contributor to undergraduate sexual assaults, it is less of a factor for Black women attending HBCUs than their white peers who attend predominately White colleges [PWI] (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, & McAuslan, 1996; Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004). One can attribute Black women's lack of alcohol consumption to the fact that most HBCUs are dry campuses. Drinking liberally or underage drinking on an HBCU campus could be met with dire disciplinary consequences (Tseng, 2013). Meanwhile, sexual assaults are more likely to be reported by White college women when underage drinking led to unconsciousness and non-consensual sex (Benson, Gohm, & Gross, 2007; Boykins et al., 2010; Palmer & St. Vil, 2018). Although the proceeding accounts suggest that alcohol does not attribute to many sexual assaults taking place on HBCUs against Black women, notably sexual assaults are more likely to be reported by

Black women when the use of illicit drugs is a cause of the incident (Boykins et al., 2010).

Sexual assault victims are more likely to report their experiences of victimization when a stranger is involved and when they are injured. Palmer and St. Vil (2018) termed type of encounter as "real rape" (Clay-Warner & Burt, 2003; Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Wyatt, 1992). When real rape takes place, the victim is more likely to report the incident when there is physical violence because a weapon was involved, and the sexual assault victim feared for their life (Palmer & St. Vil, 2018). Although what one would characterize as real rape can be an issue on college campuses, incidents where the offender is familiar with the victim (i.e., a friend, counselor, member of a fraternity or sorority, athlete, minster, etcetera), are more common causes of sexual assault on college campuses (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2010; Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2005). Today, sexual assaults are less related to what is characterized as real rape and more aligned with little to no force involved, insignificant injuries, the involvement of alcohol or drugs, and the offender was an associate of the victim (Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003; Littleton, Axsom, & Grills-Taquechel, 2009). Additionally, some sexual assault victims will not admit that they were victimized because the incident was not consistent with what is consider rape or conventional rape myths (Ahrens, 2006; Allison & Wrightsman, 1993; Kahn et al., 2003; Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox, 1988; Layman, Gidycz, & Lynn, 1996).

Currently, Title IX and the Clery Act mandates that sexually assaulted victims report the occurrence to campus officials or a mandatory off-campus reporter (Farrey & Noren, 2014; Palmer & St. Vil, 2018). Although disclosure is a compulsory feature of

Title IX and the Clery Act, seemingly Black victims of sexual assault continue to underreport (Palmer & St. Vil, 2018). Although Title IX was established in 1972, the Clery Act was not created until 2011. That said, the mandatory reporting feature associated with the Clery Act was not recognized before its establishment.

Issues that some sexual assault victims have with mandatory reporting is their inability to prove that the assault took place, intense scrutiny from the campus police when determining if the allegation warrants a thorough investigation, or reprisals from the alleged assailant (Felson & Pare, 2005; Fisher et al., 2010; Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006). Walsh, Banyard, Moynihan, Ward, and Cohn (2006) conducted a study that focused on sexual assaults that occurred on college campuses and disclosure rates to health services and law enforcement officials. This study, consisting of a random sampling survey of 1,230 male and female college students who attended a public New England university, identified that 0-12% of students that were victims of sexual victimization disclosed to law enforcement officials and 15% of the sexually assaulted victims reported the incident and sought assistance from health and social services. (Sabina & Ho, 2014; Walsh et al., 2010). Refraining from disclosing sexual assault could affect one's mental health (self-esteem issues) and physical well-being, (hypertension) which could cause inter-personnel and professional conflicts (Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Hallett, 2015; Ruggiero et al., 2004; Veenstra, 2013).

Because of a sexually exploitative and demeaning history, some Black women are resistant to report sexual assault incidents to formal agencies or anyone (McNair & Neville, 1996; Wyatt, 1992). If a disclosure does take place, it may occur between three to 25 years after the incident to longtime confidants and not members of formal agencies

(Neville & Pugh, 1997; Thompson, &West, 1992). However, factors that have historically served to deter Black women from reporting sexual assaults were the barbaric treatment of Black women during slavery and Jim Crow, transgenerational laws that did not apply to Black women as sexual assault victims (Bent-Goodley, St. Vil, & Rogers, 2012; Sommerville, 2004), and the image of the "unrapable", sexual Jezebel that served to undermine Black women's sexual assault allegations (Bent-Goodley et al., 2012; Donovan & Williams, 2002; Neville & Pugh, 1997; Tillman et al., 2010; West & Johnson, 2013). Additionally, not "airing one's dirty laundry," a distrust of formal White led agencies and a perceived duty to protect Black male offenders created a silence that not only affected those impacted during slavery and Jim Crow, but today's Black college undergraduate women (Tillman et al., 2010; Washington, 2001).

Black women's transgenerational relationship with sexual assault and non-disclosure in the United States has existed since slavery, throughout Jim Crow, to most recent times. An example of the issues related to Black women, sexual assault, and disclosure was personified in 1944 when Racy Taylor, of Abbeville, Alabama while returning from church was violently raped by six White men (McGuire, 2010). When Taylor reported the incident to legal authorities despite possessing confessions from the six men, the court applied unjust historical policies and practices that showed the defendants favor (Broussard, 2013; Galtung, 1969; McGuire, 2010). The six men implicated in the rape of Racy Taylor were found innocent (McGuire, 2010). The incident and injustice experienced by Taylor was not an isolated incident and affected the manner that some Black sexual assault victims are portrayed and the manner that their claims are pursued by legal agencies (Broussard, 2013).

Problem Statement and Purpose of Study

Inquiries performed by Krebs et al. (2011) suggested that Black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, face unique dilemmas when confronted with the decision to disclose to formal agencies. Some victims of sexual assault that have withheld disclosure for over 20 years experienced low self-esteem, hypertension, or other personal and professional issues (Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Hallett, 2015; Veenstra, 2013). The phenomenon of Black college-educated women not disclosing sexual assaults not only makes them more vulnerable to future sexual assaults by the same assailant, but this silence enables the assailant to hide in plain sight, permitting them to prey on other unsuspecting victims (Krebs et al., 2011).

The purpose of this study was to conduct an interpretative phenomenological analysis on the experiences of how Black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college. The researcher sought to identify, through one's lived experience, the factors that created disclosure dilemmas in Black women who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates between 1989-1999. This study enhances and contributes to the existing body of knowledge that addresses Black women, sexual assault, and issues with disclosure. To do that, the qualitative method, IPA, which included eight semi-structured interviews from Black women who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates and never disclosed their experience to law enforcement or health services officials while in college were conducted by the researcher.

Collins (2009) posited that Black women, based on their experiences with generational social, economic, and political oppression and decades of physical, mental,

and sexual cruelty, possess alternative worldviews in comparison to those who are not Black women. This being the case, this study advanced Collins' position by suggesting that Black women who have experienced sexual assault, as a college undergraduate and did not disclose the incident to health or law enforcement officials while in college, possessed alternative worldviews as they apply to trust, sexuality, and governing systems/ structures (i.e., health services and law enforcement).

This group's alternate worldviews are in comparison to Black females who have never been sexually assaulted and their White male and female and Black male counterparts. To support this point, DeGue et al. (2014) stated that, in some cases, there are cultural disconnects that exist within some health services and law enforcement agencies when it comes to addressing the concerns of Black sexual assault victims. An example of this cultural disconnect is based on a history of barbaric treatment directed towards Black women during slavery and the Jim Crow era; historic and current laws do not apply to Black women as sexual assault victims (Bent-Goodley et al., 2012; Sommerville, 2004). There is a distrust of formal White led agencies that have culturally affected some Black women (Tillman et al., 2010; Washington, 2001). This cultural disconnect, and others, at times, serves as a barrier, which could affect Black college women's desire to disclose; yet the same culture in some cases is more inviting to their White counterparts who have experienced similar incidents of sexual assault (DeGue et al., 2014; Palmer & St. Vil, 2018). This cultural disconnect, and reluctance to disclose, can also inform the Black sexually assaulted college women's alternate worldview when it comes to trusting health services and law enforcement agencies. With this in mind, worldviews of some Black women who were sexually assaulted in college, and never

reported the incident while in college, may not be consistent with worldviews held by those that are not Black women who were sexually assaulted as a college undergraduate (Collins, 2009). Given this point of view, by this particular group, this study employed a social constructivism epistemological viewpoint. Identifying, through one's lived experience, the factors that created disclosure dilemmas in Black women who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates between 1989-1999, through information gathered from semi-structured interviews, coupled with supporting data in this study's literature review, the researcher recommended a conflict transformation practice. This practice not only identified and addressed the root cause of the disclosure dilemmas but areas that could possibly alter the relationship that Black sexually assaulted college undergraduates have with factors that prevented their disclosure.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study consisted of four theories. The first theory is the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Central to this theory is that it makes meaning of in-group and out-group dynamics and how the in-group thrives as it places "distance" (professional, academic, political, moral) between them and the out-group. The second theory is attribution theory (Weiner, 2010). This theory allowed the researcher to understand how one's 'own attributions attempt to explain their success or failures which determines their effort they are willing to exert in the future' (Sherstha, 2017; Weiner, 2010).

The interconnectedness shared between the social identity and attribution theories created space for claims of overlapping oppressive factors and discriminatory tensions. These overlapping oppressive factors and discriminatory tensions affected the research

participants' desire to disclose the factors that prevented their disclosure as college undergraduates. This environment of overlapping oppressive and discriminatory tensions support Crenshaw's intersectionality theory (1991).

The next theory that this study employed is intersectionality (Crenshaw,1989, 1991). This concept created understanding based on how intersecting identities possess oppressive and discriminatory tensions for members of a marginalized group. The final theory for this study was Galtung's structural violence (1969). This theory explained the "top dogs" deliberate use of transgenerational destructive structures and relationships to prevent a lower power group from attaining goods, needs, and interests, which were available to other groups simply because of their affiliation with a particular culture, race, identity, age, or other categories. In chapter two, the researcher will expound on the core characteristics of each of the theories aforementioned and will apply them to acquire an understanding of the intrinsic behaviors practiced by the participants of this study and the extrinsic factors that affected their desire to disclose.

Definitions

To create a greater degree of clarity and understanding, the researcher defined the terms mentioned below as they applied to this study.

Acquaintance rape: A sexual assault that occurs when the sexual assault victim knows the assailant. Most of the time, based on the familiarity shared between the assailant and the sexual assault victim, there is little to no violence, and controlled substances (i.e., alcohol or drugs) are a factor.

Black woman: A person who was born with female genitalia, whose ancestry is from Africa, and who publicly, and privately, identifies as a Black.

Disclosure: Intentional communications of a sexual assault commitment from the communicator to friends, family, acquaintances, and law enforcement and/ or health services professionals.

Divulging: Intentional communications performed by a sexually assaulted victim to a researcher for academic purposes.

Formal agencies: Off and on-campus prescribed sexual assault counselors, law enforcement, and public health organizations.

Law enforcement officials: A specially trained body which is charged to uphold and enforce local, regional, and national statues, investigate reported sexual assaults, and hold those accountable who commit sexual assaults.

Medical Service Officials: A specially trained body which is charged to provide medical and psychological support to those who have disclosed, or have been admitted to an institution, for sexual assault.

Patriarchy: White dominant and privileged men who govern systems, structures, policies, and relationships designed to advance their agendas further.

Rape myth: A story created by the patriarchy, and reinforced by society-over time, which places guidelines to what is rape and what is not.

Real rape: A sexual assault where violence, or the threat of violence, is employed to perform a sexual act with/ or on an unwilling participant. Sometimes, a weapon is used to coerce the victim to participate in the sexual act

Reflexivity

As a former leader in the United States Army's Special Operations, the researcher committed over 25 years liberating members of oppressed communities throughout the

world. The oppressed that the researcher regularly engaged suffered from intersectional aspects associated with, but not limited to, one's identity, race, culture, religion, and class. These intersectional aspects were often compounded by corrupt governments and local, and tribal, power brokers as they erected structures, created systems, and leveraged relationships that deliberately denied select groups. Often race, culture, or religion prevented certain groups from accessing needs and interests that were enjoyed by members of a reverent group. While performing activities to empower the oppressed, the researcher would often present marginalized communities' concerns and amplify their voices, by utilizing personal privileges as a senior military leader with key United States and foreign nation senior leaders to create opportunities for the forgotten. Doing this, sometimes aided in the transformation of how governing bodies addressed the concerns of the underprivileged. Given the researcher's history with liberating oppressed foreign partners and taking their interest to key stakeholders that could affect conditions that they faced daily, the researcher desired to address another group that has been historically physically, mentally, sexually mistreated, and oppressed, with hopes of creating a greater awareness of their dilemmas, amplifying their voice and possibly transforming practices to address their dilemmas. The group that the researcher aimed to help included Black women who have endured sexual assault as an undergraduate and did not disclose to formal agencies while in college. Moreover, the researcher was connected to the study by being a father, husband, son, cousin, nephew, and friend of Black women who have had their voices historically silenced. In some cases, the individuals previously mentioned were victims of sexual assault. The researcher was compelled to leverage the various privileges that they possess to acquire and carry the lived experiences of this

study's sample population to be heard in venues that they historically did not have access to.

Although there is a large body of literature that focuses on Black women's exploitation and abuse since arriving in the United States as slaves, there is little to no documentation that speaks to the topic of this study. Understanding this, given the researcher's pre-existing network of friends and colleagues who possess access to sexual assault victims that fit the inclusion criteria, coupled with the sexual assault victims' desire to voice their lived experience, enabled the researcher to identify how they understood the factors that were attached to their non-disclosure while in college. Furthermore, based on the researcher's understanding of how the research participants made meaning of the elements that were attached to their non-disclosure, the researcher examined conflict resolution practices aimed at affecting and possibly transforming the barriers that have historically discouraged disclosure. The researcher felt uniquely qualified and positioned to conduct this study.

This topic was not only potentially sensitive and emotional for the research participants but the researcher as well. Although the researcher is not a Black woman who has been sexually assaulted, they are black and have experienced bigotry and racism which has affected their ability to be heard by members of the dominant culture. Not being heard or misunderstood is a sensitive area in the life of the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher's access to Black women who were sexually assaulted, coupled with an understanding of the history of Black women and sexual assault in the United States has created biases in the researcher that could have affected the objectivity needed for this study to achieve its purpose in an ethical manner. Understanding how the

researcher's personal experience with racism and bigotry, and personal knowledge of Black women's struggles in the United States could have influenced the direction of the study, the researcher employed emotional intelligence techniques, consisting of awareness of the psychological factors associated with the historic mistreatment of Black women and the manner that this mistreatment could affect the researcher. The researcher understood personal emotional weaknesses and strengths (Malekar & Mohanty, 2008; Shearer, 2006). Advancing the theme of emotional intelligence, it is essential that the researcher possessed a degree of adaptability (Livingstone & Day, 2005; Malekar & Mohanty, 2008). This adaptability supported changing emotional environments during interviews with the research participants (Livingstone & Day, 2005). As the conduct of the research participants changed, the researcher managed that change by remaining calm, and in control of the situation (Livingstone & Day, 2005; Malekar & Mohanty, 2008). By practicing emotional intelligence techniques, the researcher reduced the possibility of personal bias affecting the collection and analysis of data and the outcome of this study.

Although remaining objective, and unbiased, was the intention of the researcher, there were times, when reflecting on personal own experience, while accessing the experiences of the research participants, became overwhelming. In this case, knowing that demonstrating an overly emotional reaction could jeopardize the integrity of this study, the researcher discretely, in addition to employing emotional intelligence techniques, recommended breaks or directed the interview down a path less sensitive that would maintain the integrity of this study. Conversely, legitimate demonstrations of care and understanding were vital to show the research participants that the researcher was

present in the moment and understood their reasons for their non-disclosure. Being mindful of the emotions harbored by the researcher and research participants and how to address those emotions during the conduct of this study was essential to the success of this study. The researcher's awareness of the proceeding environments made them well-positioned to suppress emotions and feelings that could have derailed this study.

The bodies of literature reviewed by the researcher were mainly authored by Black women or others who are not Black men. The researcher, being a Black heterosexual male who attended his undergraduate studies in the early 1990s, while simultaneously holding membership in a Black Greek fraternity, and who has led several high performing military units, arrived to this study with a worldview and biases related to sexual assault that may not be shared by authors who wrote about this study's topic in the past. The researcher's exposure and subsequent feelings toward the subject of this study, coupled with appreciation of how previous authors have articulated the challenges Black women face when deciding to disclose sexual assault, created an additional dimension of understanding regarding issues related to Black women, sexual assault, and disclosure. For this reason, the researcher of this study was well-positioned to conduct this exploration and discovery.

Significance

This study's approach (i.e., methodology and theoretical framework) was of value when addressing this study's phenomena in a broader sense of the complex problems that marginalized groups face. Furthermore, this approach delivered the lived experience of this particular category of sexual assault victims to various communities where they enjoy the privilege of never having to confront the issues that have affected this study's

sample population. The beliefs that encompass the theoretical framework were appropriate to address protracted and embedded conflicts where marginalized groups are purposefully and negatively affected by external structures and systems because of the identities that they possess. Given the application of the theoretical framework to address conflicts that fit within the parameters of this study, the manner that one chooses to capture and analyze data is a critical component of this research system.

Furthermore, what made IPA the most appropriate methodology for embedded, protracted, and complex disputes is because it allowed the research participants to tell their lived experience, given a particular phenomenon. In some cases, as demonstrated in this study, many voices of the affected were intentionally, or unintentionally, silenced. This methodology fostered a hermeneutic environment, which invited the research participants to share their experience, while they made meaning of their particular occurrence. As the research participants understood their phenomenon, the researcher gained a more personalized understanding of the information provided by the research participants, through their interpretations. Further, this methodology allowed this study's audience to acquire a more personalized comprehension of the researcher's interpretations based on their lived experience and familiarity with the study's topic. The approach of this study transcends the purpose of this study as it applies to other local and regional complex contemporary conflicts.

Summary

To acquire a more enriched appreciation of the phenomenon of Black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, and their non-disclosure of the incident as an undergraduate, chapter 2 examines several bodies of literature that directly

and indirectly support the topic of this study ranging from, but not limited to, the history of Black women in the United States, White Privilege, and aspects of the patriarchy and its effect on disclosure. Additionally, the researcher provides an in-depth illustration of theories that made up the study's theoretical framework. Chapter 2 concludes as the researcher addresses the gaps in the literature, which justified this study. Chapter 3 illustrates the distinguishing features of phenomenology and why the IPA was the most appropriate methodology for this study. Furthermore, understanding the unique manner that Black women create their understanding of the world around them, the social constructivism epistemological viewpoint will be examined. A discussion about how the researcher collected and analyzed data and determined the inclusion criteria for the study's sample population will be presented. Chapter 4 addresses this study's findings, and chapter 5 will address its various interpretations, trustworthiness, limitations, unexpected findings, recommended conflict resolution practice, and suggested future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of how Black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college. This literature review and theoretical framework assisted the researcher in understanding why the sample population did not disclose what happened to them while in college to official agencies. When exploring bodies of literature that directly supported the topic of this study, the researcher examined the history of Black women, sexual assault, and silence; White privilege; patriarchy; the Black church and sexual assault; the legal system, Black women, and disclosure, and rape myths.

Completing the review of bodies of literature that supported this study's topic, the researcher explored and applied the study's theoretical framework consisting of Turner and Tajfel's (1979) social identity theory, Weiner's (2010) attribution theory, Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality, and Galtung's (1969) structural violence. The exploration and application of this study's theoretical framework created an environment for the researcher to understand why some Black college women who were sexually assaulted did not disclose to formal agencies. After examining the literature review and theoretical framework, the researcher identified gaps in the body of literature that this study sought to address.

Black Women, Sexual Abuse, and Silence

Upon arriving in North America, 'the relationship between Black African slave women and White men was one of primarily sexual exploitation and rape often with no legal repercussions' (Collins, 2009; Cramer & Godwin, 2002; Kennedy, 2003; Mtshali,

2013). A common way to cope with this type of exploitation and abuse was for Black women to suffer in silence (Broussard, 2013; Jeremiah, Quinn, & Alexis, 2017). Although the1863 signing of the Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in North America, Black women continued to suffer from physical and sexual violence at the hands of White and Black men during this period and throughout Jim Crow (Broussard, 2013; Slatton, 2009). In fact, "during legal segregation, institutionalized rape was a mechanism of social control to subordinate Black women, as they were all susceptible to rape by White men" (Slatton, 2009, p. 80). Black women's 'veil of silence during slavery and the Jim Crow era, was said to be a survival tactic as they were victims of sexual assault' (Broussard, 2013; Hood, 2019; West & Johnson, 2013). Unfortunately, this veil of silence inadvertently played a role in silencing general society laws (Broussard, 2013), which were designed to protect all citizens. The men that caused harm to Black women were protected for decades (Broussard, 2013).

In some cases, Black sexual abuse victims were silent because their family or community would blame or scrutinize them, questioning if the event took place at all (Jeremiah et al., 2017). Nevertheless, sexually abused Black women also used their silence to "protect their community, and in some cases, Black men from a system that reportedly assured them justice" (Broussard, 2013 p. 401). For example, some married Black women, who were sexually abused at the hands of another man, often found themselves in a dilemma. This dilemma consisted of either telling their husband about the incident or not; by remaining silent, this practice encouraged future occurrences of abuse (Broussard, 2013). Conversely, if a wife reported the incident to the local authorities, it could have resulted in injury, jail, or death for the husband and the wife

(Broussard, 2013). Therefore, to maintain family cohesion and reduce the risk of injury, jail, or death, many sexually abused Black wives remained silent (Broussard, 2013; Jeremiah et al., 2017). Understanding the historical accounts about why some Black women did not disclose could possibly be the reasons why this study's population did not disclose what happened to formal agencies.

White Privilege

Kendall (2002) asserted that White privilege 'is a traditional (rather than personal) advantage granted to those who, by race, resemble the people who dominate influential positions in United States or Western institutions. This tradition, in some cases, affected Black women, namely Black college women's desire and opportunity to disclose being sexually victimized. With that, a benefit that Whites enjoy is having greater access to authority and assets than Blacks; one's skin color provides opportunities that are not provided to those who are not White (Kendall, 2002). Despite the previous assertion, some White possess a common belief that daily experiences and privilege are collectively accessible to everyone, regardless of one's race (Kendall, 2002). Nonetheless, this privilege has nothing to do with being good or bad, and it is "granted by the institutions with which we [white people] interact solely because of our race, not because we [white people] are worthy people" (Kendall, 2002, p. 2.). For some Black women, who occupy the lower tier of the social, political, and economic hierarchical ladders, and do not possess the privilege mentioned may find it difficult to disclose being sexually assaulted.

White privilege is "a system in which race plays a central part − one that codifies the superiority of the white race over all others − has been in no way accidental or haphazard" (Kendall, 2002, p.3). One is born into this system of privilege, regardless if

one no longer desires to benefit from this favor (Kendall, 2002). Some individuals within this system tend to make decisions for those who are members of marginalized groups, without considering the cultural, historical, educational, or economic impacts of their choices (Kendall, 2002). Advancing this thought, White Privilege allows one to be "tone deaf" to the issues of others or silence their concerns if they do not conform to the dominant culture's perspectives and problems (Delpit, 1988; Kendall, 2002). The environment could make it difficult for this study's participants to place trust and faith in systems and structures that will not thoroughly address problems that do not conform to the dominant culture's perspective, difficulties, or agenda. This being the case, this could affect one's decision to disclose their experience with sexual assault. Kendall (2002) asserted that throughout "American history White power-holders, acting on behalf of their entire race, have made decisions that have affected White people as a group very differently than groups of color" (p. 3). Historical instances of White privilege in action are the following: (a) he writing of the United States Constitution which, in ten articles, very intentionally confirmed the holding of Black people as slaves; as property; (b) White people believe that it was their destiny to "own" the land that we all currently live, even though it required forcibly removing the native people who had lived here for centuries; and (c) the destruction of black families during slavery, sending mothers one place, fathers another, and babies and children yet another (Kendall, 2002, p. 3).

For the most part, those who exercise White privilege do not exercise it "to harm but to achieve what they believe is rightfully theirs" (Kendall, 2002, p. 3). Regardless of the intentions, the witting or unwitting employment of White privilege denies collections of individuals that do not share the same racial features as the dominant group (Kendall,

2002). Lastly, as some Whites address racial issues, their efforts are sometimes perceived as intellectual exercises where little to nothing gets resolved (Kendall, 2002). Although some Whites will aggressively address racial biases and injustices for a period, for the most part, in some cases they will move on to other issues better suited to meet their agendas (Kendall, 2002). With this assertion, it is possible that some victims of sexual assault have witnessed these intellectual exercises. Therefore, this condition could facilitate non-disclosure among Black college women who were sexually assaulted.

Patriarchy and Sexual Assault

In the United States, the patriarchy is, for the most part, invisible, and embedded into policy-making and societal apparatuses, making this male-dominated system powerful (Johnson, 2005; Szymanski, Moffitt, & Carr, 2011). Furthermore, patriarchal capitalism is an aspect of Western patriarchy that has used violence, exploitation, and sexual assault to possess Black bodies (Benard, 2016). This violence and exploitation, which facilitated the ownership of Black bodies, is a component of structural violence, which violates one's human rights (Benard, 2016).

Western patriarchies accommodate rape cultures that are enabled by media, art, music, and pop-culture, portray women of color in ways that often lend to added legal scrutiny, and self-blaming of the victim (Cusmano, 2018). The judicial scrutiny, and self-blaming impacts not only one's home or university, but influences attitudes generally held by communities in the United States toward rape (Cusmano, 2018). Yet when attempting to understand personhood through a patriarchal perspective, Rao (2001) offered that a "woman is not a legal person without a husband; [and], if she is recognized as a legal person without a husband, society and its customs ultimately belittle it"

(Cusmano, 2018, p. 510). In 1993, a husband raping his wife was not considered a crime; in fact, married women were expected always to be sexually accessible to their husbands (Cusmano, 2018). The belief that nonconsensual sex between husband and wife was not considered rape was based on the idea that women were possessions of their husbands and were obligated to provide them sex at any time (Cusmano, 2018). Even though there were laws that protected wives from being raped by their husbands, in some cases these laws are not enforced. Therefore, the act of marital rape in some cases was internal or family affairs, as opposed to external business (Cusmano, 2018). With this understanding, the implementation of dignity for some women is not respected, and crimes or human rights violations are usually only acknowledged and aggressively pursued through legal channels if they affect the patriarchy (Cusmano, 2018; Rao, 2001).

The persistent manipulation of the media and pop culture by the patriarchy created and continues to objectify and create, a perception that some Black women are hypersexual, morally lax, and diseased (Benard, 2016). Conversely, White women are primarily portrayed by the media, pop culture, and by the patriarchy as clean and marriable (Benard, 2016). With this understanding, Black women do not control their image when it comes to how their sexuality and bodies are portrayed in markets regulated by the patriarchy (Benard, 2016). Even in the adult entertainment industry, namely exotic dancing, White women, for the most part, are postured to create an environment of mystery and fantasy, where there are no touching policies (Benard, 2016; Trautner, 2005). However, when the dancer is Black, she typically performs in the middle to lower class establishments, unlike her White counterpart, who usually works in upper-class establishments (Benard, 2016; Trautner, 2005).

Black women are not seen as women of mystery but as objects of sexual exploitation, as they are often verbally demeaned and touched on their private parts (Benard, 2016; Trautner, 2005). This exploitation of Black women is the basis of pornography (Benard, 2016; Collins, 2009). Collins (2009) pointed out that the idea of sexual violence played out in pornography relates to the manner that African Women were sexually exploited by the Western patriarchy (Benard, 2016). Moreover, Cusmano (2018) asserted that the demonstration of pornography tends to reduce sensitivities related to sexual assault; therefore, some individuals, agencies, structures, and systems lose their compassion at the point where the sexual assault victim may be belittled.

Although rape is often categorized as sexual violence influenced by gender, it also lends itself to encompass aspects of race and class (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991). Patriarchal perspectives, at times, serve as barriers to fully comprehend the roles race, culture, and class, in addition to gender, play when attempting to understand the causes of sexual assault (Crenshaw, 1989, 91). Interestingly, raped bodies of prostitutes and Black women were considered undeserving of integrity; legal, social, and health systems and structures, at times, do not consider their claims of sexual assault with the same gravity as sexual assault claims made by White women who were not prostitutes (Smith, 2003). Creating the image of Black women as undeserving of integrity, coupled with racist acts of physical and structural violence directed towards them, patriarchy was the symbol of what was good and right and the protectors of White women's images (Smith, 2003).

The accepted societal perspective, which is perpetuated by destructive systems, structures, and relationships, provides patriarchy the privilege of being tone-deaf to issues that do not affect White people (Delpit, 1988; Kendall, 2002). In this case, the

intersectional aspects related to sexual assault, identified by Crenshaw, tend to fall on deaf ears because Black women's concerns are not the concerns of the dominant culture (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; Smith, 2003). Along this theme, Meyer (2003) asserted that sexual objectivity goes beyond the individual or events that encourage demeaning perspectives of minority women, and that this point of view is steeped in social and legal structures, systems, and institutions (Szymanski et al., 2011). Women who interact with patriarchal influenced structures, systems, and institutions, which they have no control over, tend to possess an enhanced vigilance concerning their exterior and their physical well-being (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Szymanski et al., 2011). The feeling of heightened vigilance and concern about one's safety could create issues such as diminishing awareness of intimate needs (i.e., sexual arousal), and self-esteem issues (i.e., comparing or not meeting social, ethnic or culture standards) (Szymanski et al., 2011).

Patriarchal beliefs within the Afro and Eastern-Afro Caribbean cultures play a significant role when determining equality between the genders, and the operations of legal and political systems and structures (Chevannes, 2001; Hood, 2018; Jones & Trotman-Jemmott, 2009; Reid, Reddock, & Nickenig, 2014). Patriarchal dominance, poverty, the legal system, and ill-defined sexual restrictions increase the risk of sexual violence directed towards Black women and could reduce their potential for disclosure (Hood, 2018; Jones et al., 2014). Family honor, possessing a fear of physical abuse and financial coercion, could prevent the sexually abused from disclosing their sexual assault accounts (Hood, 2018; Jeremiah, 2017). Along this theme, Hadeed and El-Bassel, (2007), and Jones and Trotman-Jemmott (2009) asserted that Afro and Eastern-Afro

Caribbean mothers offer their daughters to men for sex to support their homes financially. Based on the offers made by the mothers, there are unspoken cultural and patriarchal principles of silence that accompany the exchange of sex for money (Hood, 2018).

The Black Church and Sexual Assault

The two most influential institutions in the Black community are the Black Church and the Black family (Fulton, 2011; Moore, Robinson, Dailey, & Thompson, 2015). Although the Black church serves various non-standard roles in the Black community (i.e., social support network, resources sharing, and extended family), it also falls victim to sexual abuse at the hand of clergy (Barnes, 2009; Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Mahoney, 2008). This type of sexual assault "violates a person's soul, the revered conviction in someone who embodies God, the meaning of the various church rituals, and symbols, and one's belief in a God that is loving" (Moore et al., 2015, p. 6). In most Black churches, clergy are viewed as father figures who have taken vows to protect their church members; the trauma created by sexual assault initiated by the pastors and leaders within the church is sometimes more significant than if it was perpetrated by a stranger (Pargament et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2015). Regardless of the trauma, in many instances, the deliberate reluctance to report Black clergy is an attempt to not bring shame to the church family and the leader who committed the sexual assault (Moore et al., 2015).

The attempt to protect the church and the pastor creates an environment where sexual assault victims blame themselves for the incident when they should leverage their membership within a church network that encourages Black women to report sexual assaults (Kleiven, 2018; Moore et al., 2015; Navya Shree &Manjula, 2017). Although

this is the expectation of the Black church family, many members of the church may turn a blind eye to allegations of sexual misconduct within their organization (Moore et al., 2015). Like other environments where the sexual assault victim remains silent, this silence within the Black church could enable further sexual assaults that can affect the physical and mental well-being of the sexually assaulted victim (Kleiven, 2018; Moore et al., 2015).

The Legal System

The legal system and the larger society remains insensitive and unresponsive to the issues concerning Black women and sexual assault (Broussard, 2013). This unresponsiveness appears to be attributed to cultural bias (Slovinsky, 2018), rape myths (i.e., fabricating the assault or "begging for it") (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011), and a belief in real rape (Slovinsky, 2018) when addressing Black women's claims of sexual assault. In some cases, Black women are looked down upon as less than credible when they do disclose and are "blamed for their rapes" (Broussard, 2013, p. 411). Based on the preceding claims, some Black women 'are reluctant to report to the police because of a perception of the justice system being uselessness (Decker & Sherman, 2016; Navya Shree & Manjula, 2017). Furthermore, stereotypical images of Black women held by key officials in the legal system makes them less likely to pursue allegations of sexual assault through supportive agencies, which creates, and reinforces, sexual assault victims' non-disclosures (Bryant-Davis, Ullman, Tsong, Tillman, & Smith, 2010; Hood, 2019; Jacques-Tiura et al., 2010). Black women's reluctance of pursuing legal support to justify their claims of sexual assault, coupled with a knowledge of historical stereotypes of Black women (i.e., sexually insatiable, the Jezebel, welfare

cheat) tends to create barriers between the sexual assault victims and the dominant culture's judicial system (Hood, 2019). In some cases, given the setting mentioned above, some Black women (who were never sexual assault victims) possess remissive standpoints towards Black sexual assault victims (Hood, 2019; Washington, 2001;). As a result of their race, rape myths, and historic stereotype (i.e., the Jezebel and being unrapable), some Black women possess no voice when it comes to expressing their issues in a court of law, therefore, obtaining a conviction against their sexual assault assailant was, at times, a challenge (Kanyeredzi, 2014).

Another reflection on how the legal system could affect this study's sample population is that sexually aggressive men will tend to not change their attitude towards sexual assault because of a reduced probability that they would suffer any consequences (Norris, 2011). The uses of alcohol to have sex with a woman appears to be not only culturally acceptable in some circles but given the willful consumption of alcohol by both the male and female, which turns into a sexual assault could create a situation where "any kind of adjudication [or prosecution] is unlikely no matter what the circumstances surrounding the sexual assault are" (Norris, 2011, p. 6). There is a common notion that suggests that sexual assault victims, if drunk rather than sober, are held more accountable for the assault than the perpetrator (Norris, 2011). Norris (2011) reinforced this point by asserting that "when a man and a woman were depicted as drinking together, the event was viewed in the most sexual/romantic terms than in any other condition, even though the man had clearly raped the woman" (p.2).

Rape Myths

A rape myth [RM] is characterized as a set of enduring false beliefs, at the societal and individual levels, that serves to validate aggressive male sexual behavior directed towards women (Edwards et al., 2011; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; O'Connor, Cusano, McMahon, & Draper, 2018; Ryan, 2011). Some myths consist of, "women enjoy being raped,";"men cannot control themselves"; "women lie about being raped" (Ryan, 2011, p. 761); "only certain women are raped – those who drink too much, sleep around, or hang out in the wrong places" (Ryan, 2011, p. 775); and "of course she got raped because of what she was wearing" (Harris, 2013, p. 250). In addition to attributing the assault to the victim, allowing the assailant to go free, or accepting the reasoning for the sexual assault (Burt, 1980) is another challenge some colleges and society face when addressing RMs and their various distinctions (O'Connor et al., 2018). The subtleties of RMs spoken to are the movement from direct allegation when assailants, or (in some cases) legal agencies blamed the victim for the assault because of their style of dress to a more discrete manner of allegations by blaming the victims for the assault by addressing the amount of alcohol the victim consumed before the assault (O'Connor et al., 2018). The movement from direct to discrete allegations are examples of the consistent subtle changes that take place over time when identifying and addressing RMs (Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007; McMahon & Farmer, 2011; O'Connor et al., 2018; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). In addition to the ever-changing characterizations of the RM that creates environments for sexual assault, Bouffard, and Goodson (2017) advanced this theme as they claimed that "adversarial sexual beliefs, adherence to

traditional gender roles, hostility toward women, RM acceptance, sexual entitlement, and low self-control predict the perpetration of sexual violence against women" (p. 271).

Given the sustained nature of RMs, they tend to influence the manner that society and the judicial system views certain women who claim to be raped (Kennedy, 2017). Black women face intersectional, and RM issues when attempting, or contemplating disclosing sexual victimization to a legal agency (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Kennedy, 2017). The intersectional issues that are acknowledged are that the person deciding to report is a woman, who is Black and other characteristics that are not of the dominant culture (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991). Given this intersectional observation, the RM is that Black women are less likely to experience psychological or physical issues because they are more sexually experienced (Kanyeredzi, 2014). The intersectionality at play, coupled with the RM method above could create barriers between the sexual assault victim and the legal system. The conceptual framework that supports the RM theory is to "blame the victim, express disbelief that a sexual assault occurred, defend the perpetrator's actions, and say only certain women get raped" (Kennedy, 2017, p. 17). RMs not only influence portions of society, and some some legal agencies, but some sexual assault victims are also affected and influence by RMs (Kennedy, 2017). Accepting RMs create mental barriers that could impact one's ability and desire to disclose to formal college agencies, legal authorities, and health services (Kennedy, 2017). Some sexual assault victims fail to disclose because of their familiarity with the assailant; their silence is sometimes attributed to a sense of duty to protect their attacker (Johnson, 2015). However, this silence could prove dangerous as it could encourage repeat attacks and allow for the assailant to assault other unsuspecting victims (Johnson, 2015).

The manner that the mainstream media depicts and perpetuates RM shapes one's understanding of what real rape is, who commits rape, and who are rape victims (Vrushali & Purkayastha, 2015). Typically when one thinks about a rapist, they conjure up thoughts of a male that conceals their presence through the cover of darkness, who uses a weapon and employs violence, or threatens the employment of violence, to perform a sexual act on an unsuspecting victim (Vrushali & Purkayastha, 2015). Although the proceeding account depicts real rape, it does not account for marital, acquaintance rape, and rapes that occur in prisons or the military (Foster-Knight, 2018; Vrushali & Purkayastha, 2015).

The way that formal agencies react to women who were sexually victimized and the manner that women understand their sexual victimization is highly contingent upon the 24-hour news cycle, social media, and popular culture, which creates awareness and reinforces RMs (Howard, 2018; Paul et al., 2013; Tanis & Rosenda-Grean, 2014). MacKenzie and Marcel (2009) asserted "that White men, especially those that are prosperous, educated, and handsome, do not commit such crimes [rape]. Sexual violence against White women by men of color is criminal; and that the same violence directed against women of color by White men is not a crime" (p. 81). To advance this point, Fannon (1954) suggested that "the relations between a White man and a Black woman automatically became a romantic affair in the mind of Black women. The intimacy shared between the two "is a gift," [from the White man] not rape' (p. 28). One could make meaning of the issues of class and race when it comes to RMs as the hierarchical ladder still favors White men (Chigumadzi, 2018). While White men occupy the upper levels of the social, political, and economic hierarchies, 'Black women occupy the

bottom, whereas Black men and White women are in the middle regions of this structure' (Chigumadzi, 2018). To preserve this self-image, White men construct and associate themselves with favorable characteristics and attributes. These characteristics and traits are demonstrated by creating a perception of being hard-working, smart, ethical, and well-informed, (Crenshaw, 1995; Slatton, 2009). Conversely, with regards to White is good and Black is bad, Harris (2013) stated that "stranger danger" alludes to Black men who are hypersexualized, potentially violent, and are projected to assault White women sexually. The aforementioned illustration shows that RMs do not only characterize Black women but Black men as well.

Encouraging the Silence

In many environments, men experience traumatic encounters at a higher rate than women (Breslau, Chilcoat, Kessler, & Davis, 1999; Norris, Foster, & Weisshaar, 2002); however, women demonstrate higher post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), and other psychological disorders (i.e., anxiety and depression) based on the trauma experienced (Breslau et al., 1991; Hood, 2019; Kessler et al., 1995; Kucharskal, 2016; Norris et al., 2002). Nevertheless, women are more disposed to agonize from mental health issues than men who experience traumatic events, an explanation why women are more prone to suffer more is that they experience sexual trauma that tends to create more severe adverse consequences (Kucharskal, 2017). There is a feeling of social betrayal that correlates with sexual assault that could contribute to increased reports of PTSD in Black women (Kucharskal, 2017). To amplify this standpoint of betrayal, some sexual assault victims assume feelings of guilt and shame given their experience (Koss, Bailey, Yuan, Herrera, & Lichter, 2003; Kucharska, 2017; Peirce, Newton, Buckley & Keane, 2002). Kucharska

(2017) asserted that “women, who have experienced a traumatic sexual event in the previous two years, possess higher levels of depression and lower levels of self-esteem, as compared to women who experienced a non-sexual traumatic event in the previous two years” (p. 190). In some cases, women who experience sexual assault and suffer from low self-esteem, attribute substance abuse issues to their account of sexual exploitation (Szymanski et al., 2011).

Despite being college-educated and financially stable, some Black victims of sexual assault tend to isolate themselves from social engagements and keep low profiles (Easton, Leone-Sheenan, & O’Leary, 2016; Hood 2019). Some of the victims of sexual assault “experience feelings of being socially awkward and unable to identify with anybody” and “as a result of the abuse, participants saw themselves as living life on the fringes of society and never connecting to a larger community” (Hood, 2019, p. 36). Based on the experience of sexual assault, some women’s ability to mature psychologically is hampered (Navya Shree & Manjula, 2017).

Not only could the psychological effects of sexual assault lead to depression, anxiety, and PTSD, it can also encourage revictimization of assault (Navya Shree & Manjula, 2017; Whiffen & Macintosh, 2005) or to relate to the abuser conquer the results of the abuse (Navya Shree & Manjula, 2017; Pfeiffer & Salvagni, 2005). In this regard, the abused morphs into an abuser by abusing others (Navya Shree & Manjula, 2017; Pfeiffer & Salvagni, 2005).

In some instances, when the sexual assault victim musters the courage and strength to report the abuse, the psychological damage creates an enduring effect on the victim's life (Moore et al., 2015). An example of this enduring effect is silence and the

sustained impact associated with sexual assault, as it was captured in Moore's description of a Black woman who suffered from sexual assault at the hands of her stepfather.

With this in mind, Moore et al. (2015) stated:

> One day she could stand it no longer and mustered the courage to report it to her adopted mother who then confronted him and stopped the abuse. She indicated that the psychological and emotional damage of her adopted father's behavior was more far-reaching than his physical abuse. (p.2).

Although the abuse stopped, Moore's character suffered from chronic depression, lower esteem, and obesity, which were attributed to the sexual assault she experienced (Moore et al., 2015).

Historically, Black female victims are treated differently in the media as opposed to White victims (Broussard, 2013). Understanding that one may be judged differently from the dominant class may "encourage the silence of Black women because they see that their story is not worth telling and not worthy of public outrage" (Broussard, 2013, p.415). Through social media, film, television and other forms of entertainment, Black women, and those who are not Black women are reminded of Black women stereotypes that involve the overly sexualized, lacking education, and dependency on the government or aid for living assistance (Broussard, 2013; Collins, 2009; hooks, 1992; Lubiano, 1992; Painter, 1992). Not only have these mediums portrayed Black women in an unflattering light, but due to the media, Black women has been unable to tell their stories relaying their assault experiences (Broussard, 2013; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

When a White woman is reportedly raped by a Black man, or men, regardless of the evidence, or lack thereof, the media will cover this event in a more aggressive manner

(Vrushali & Purkayashtha, 2015). An example of this dynamic reporting was in the case of the 1989 Central Park jogger rape case. Although there was no physical or scientific evidence tying five inter-city minority teens to the case, the media labeled these young men the "Central Park Five" (Innocence Staff, 2019). With this labeling and the nationwide media swarm that ensued, the five teens were sentenced to five to 12 years in prison for a rape that they did not commit (Innocence Staff, 2019). Conversely, when Black women are sexually assaulted by Black or White men, there is little to no media coverage (Vrushali& Purkayashtha, 2015). On the same day that the "Central Park Five" were accused of raping a Central Park jogger, a Black woman from Brooklyn, New York was violently raped by two men and thrown from the roof of a four-story building; this incident received marginal media coverage in the local area (Laugland, 2016).

The intersectional aspects associated with Black women and sexual assault do not align with the patriarchal understanding of the gender influenced, traditional understanding of how sexual assault is characterized (Benard, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Vrushali, 2015). Black sexual assault victims are invisible, in comparison, to their white peers when it comes to media coverage (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; Vrushali & Purkayastha, 2015). The lack of media support to Black sexual assault victims enables one's silence and supports their decision to non-disclose; when cries go unnoticed, victims often stop shedding tears (Broussard, 2013).

When a family member is the perpetrator of sexual assault, it is common for the victim to remain silent to preserve and protect the honor of the family (Hood, 2018). The culture of honor emphasizes the social-ecological model of violence philosophies (Jeremiah et al., 2017). Not only does this culture of honor encourage future sexual

assaults, and allow the offender the ability to avoid justice, but it disregards the physical and mental well-being of the victim (Jeremiah et al., 2017). Faced with the circumstances mentioned, the sexual assault victim either remains silent, or relies on their determination to report sexual assault accounts (Jeremiah et al., 2017). An additional coercive aspect of silence and its relationship to sexual assault is that in some cases, their abusers are family members with financial means that the victim does not possess (Jeremiah et al., 2017).

Although some African American communities are held together by close-knit, supportive relationships, the close-knit nature of this setting could provide a sexual assault predator access to unsuspecting victims of sexual assault (Hargrove, 2014). In some cases, the assailant is familiar with the future victim and immediate family members (Hargrove, 2014). With this understanding, African American communities can utilize their close-knit nature to debunk taboos associated with sexuality, sexual assault, and disclosure (Hargrove, 2014).

Greek Life and Athletics

There appears to be a gap in the body of literature that addresses Black fraternities and sororities, college athletes, sexual assault, and disclosure (Robinson, 2018). Fraternities are characterized as groups of males that share a collective experience, through ritual, tradition, and history, which creates a brotherhood. Sororities have similar experiences, but these organizations are for females (Robinson, 2018). Given the ritual, tradition, and history shared by fraternity and sorority members, bonds are created, which sometimes places sexually assaulted members in a dilemma when faced with disclosure (Robinson, 2018). Despite membership in these organizations, Robbins and Florsheim

(2015), posited that Black women, who are members of sororities, are most likely to experience sexual assault that those who are not members of a sorority. Ironically, some sexually assaulted sorority members purposefully fail to disclose because they are discouraged from doing so by some undergraduate and alumni sorority members (Robbins & Florsheim, 2015).

Additionally, Robinson (2018) suggested that the use of alcohol, coupled with one's affiliation with fraternities and sororities, increases the probability of sexual assault and affects their decision for disclosure. Further contributors to sexual assault on college campuses are climates of the university or college and student backgrounds and populations (Krebs et al., 2007). Despite the enforcement of guidelines to hold their members accountable for wrongdoings, Ray (2013) suggested that given their marginalized social status, that some Black fraternity members act more aggressively towards women than their White counterparts (Canan, Jozkowski, & Crawford, 2016). White fraternity members and Blacks who are not in fraternities exhibit more respect for women than Black men in fraternities (Ray 2013; Robinson, 2018). Ray (2013) concluded by stating Black fraternity members, after utilizing sophisticated social engagement technique to influence one for sexual acts, often discards the female. The discarding is usually met with depression, and a feeling of worthlessness, and self-esteem issues, based on a sharp reduction in communication and once familiar interface (Robinson, 2018).

Like fraternity members, some college athletes, because of preferential treatment and privileged positions, a feeling that college policies do not apply to them and a sense of dominance may create environments for sexual assault (Burnett et al., 2009; Robinson,

2018). Related is the power and control that coaches and administrators possess and their ability to leverage their power and control for sexual favors from college women (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001; Robinson, 2018). Not only does this power and control enable sexual favors, but they also could create environments for non-disclosure and repeated attacks by coaches and other student-athletes (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001; Robinson, 2018).

What Has Been Done to Encourage Sexual Assault Disclosures

Alice Walker's 1982 novel entitled *The Color Purple*, was arguably the first to debate Black women's silence when it came to their sexual abuse (Broussard, 2013). *The Color Purple*, the advent of social media illustrating sexual assault and the negative aspects associated with non-disclosure, and the presence of the #MeToo Movement, are examples of platforms that created awareness and courage for sexual assault victims, of all races, to speak out against sexual violence (Hood, 2019). Social movements, such as #MeToo, have enabled one to "put a face and a name to the abuse and the abuser, which transcends beyond celebrities and politicians, and includes fathers, uncles, brothers, priest, coaches and teachers" (Hood, 2019, p. 44). Platforms like the #MeToo Movement have provided sexual assault victims, regardless of their race, creed, or color, the courage for disclosure and face their perpetrators (Hood, 2019).

In addition to the #MeToo Movement, some historically Black churches provided resources, consisting of culturally astute medical professionals, aimed at encouraging Black women to disclose their experience with sexual assault (Moore et al., 2015). Understanding the ever-changing manner of RMs, several colleges and churches are attempting to debunk these myths through focused and evolving rape prevention

programs (DeGue et al., 2014; O'Connor et al., 2018; Vladutiu, Martin, & Macy, 2011). To encourage further disclosure, the Church of God in Christ [COGIC] denomination "oversees a social media platform, which accounts for, and posts pictures of convicted clergy members who were assailants of sexual assault" (Moore et al., 2015, pp. 6-7). StopBaptistPredators.org specializes in breaking the silence of women who have been sexually abused by the clergy (Moore et al., 2015, p. 7). On this group's website, there are accounts of sexual impropriety and pictures posted of former clergy members that sexually assaulted members of their church (Moore et al., 2015).

To the modification taking place in the church, it appears that law enforcement agencies are also changing procedures given the implementation of guidance focused in gender bias ("Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias," n.d.). This guidance calls for not only new protocols and revised training modules but incorporates mechanisms to act against law enforcement officials that have committed sexual assault and domestic violence (Decker & Sherman, 2016). This level of transparency and accountability could not only enable justice for members of marginalized groups, but it also could instill a greater sense of trust in the legal system and encourage disclosure (Decker & Sherman, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Social Identity Theory

To understand why individuals within a particular group performed in the manner in which they do, the researcher turned their attention to Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory [SIT] (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Central to this concept was that in-group members increased their self-perception by generating social distance between them and

out-group members (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Three overarching mental processes that enabled the evaluation of "us" and "them," that included "social categorization, social identification, and social comparison" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The following are the descriptions of those mental processes.

The social categorization aspect of this belief permitted one to comprehend how an individual understood themselves, and others, through group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Categorization created not only stories to reinforce one's meaning of themselves and others but generated a sense of solidarity as well. Within this space, one determined proper conduct based on factors such as culture, identity, and history of the member of a social group. Given several identity categories one may possess, these characteristics allowed individuals to transparently move from one group to another to retain in-group status (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The second mental process which enabled a group, and its members, to maintain in-group status is social identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This mental process facilitated an understanding of how one's identity created meaning for themselves, and how this meaning informed how an individual behaves in a way consistent with how the group normally acts (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1999). This conduct allowed for one to predict specific inter-group behaviors that occur between in and out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1999).

Lastly, the concept that supported the social comparison suggested that as a member of a group there are inclinations that demonstrate bias and judgment which and in some cases, belittles those who are not of one's in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Comparisons and potential belittlement of a group were ways that one defended and

increased the esteem that the individual and group enjoyed (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Once groups become adversaries, there were deliberate acts to affect access to resources, which directly impacted the individual's and group's self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). With the understanding of the mental processes that supported SIT, the researcher overlaid the concepts and made meaning of this study's sample population's aversion to reporting sexual abuse. The application of the SIT for this study provided the researcher with the ability to understand how the research participants (outgroup) perceived barriers (i.e., negative stereotypes, social media, pop culture, and standing systems, structures, and relations) to disclosure in relation to how they perceived their counterparts (ingroup), who are not black, and barriers they encountered when it came to disclosure.

Attribution Theory

Weiner's (2010) attribution theory focused on causes to "explain outcomes or end results rather than actions" (p. 558). This theory allowed the researcher to understand how one's 'own attributions attempt to explain their success or failures, which influences the effort they are willing to exert in the future" (Sherstha, 2017; Weiner, 2010). This theory was important to this study because it allowed the researcher to identify aspects that the research participant attributed to their failure to disclose, which provided reasons for their lack of effort to disclose while in college.

Anticipating one's successes or failures by exploring activities through the viewpoint of locus, stability, and controllability was the aim of this theory (Weiner, 2010). Features of locus pointed to the successes or failures that were enabled by internal or external influences (Weiner, 2010; Yough & Cho, 2015). Yough and Cho (2015) asserted that the stability aspect of this theory "referred to the consistency or variability

of the cause over a period of time" (p.176). Controllability was characterized as one's capability to exercise authority over a situation (Weiner, 2010; Yough & Cho, 2015, p.176). The casual characteristic of this theory was the degree to which the reason sums up across circumstances (Weiner, 2010). The conditions that allowed one's achievements or failures were "aptitude ability (or a learned skill), immediate and long-term effort, task characteristics (such as ease or difficulty), intrinsic motivation, teacher characteristics (such as competence), mood, and luck" (Weiner, 2010, p. 559).

Lastly, the researcher gained a more nuanced understanding of the attribution theory, by exploring factors associated with the fundamental attribution error (FAE). The FAE made meaning of the inclination for attributors to disparage the effect of situational factors and to overestimate the job of dispositional factors in controlling conduct (Ross, 1977). This theory was important to this study because it provided the researcher the ability to understand why individuals or groups who met with failure tended to attribute their failure to the actions of an external individual or group. Conversely, if the same individual or group met with success, they tended to attribute their success to their actions or the group's action. Additionally, this theory allowed the researcher to understand why individuals or groups performed unjust acts or when unjust acts were performed against them, possessed a tendency to minimize the actions so it would be more palatable for others to understand and accept.

Intersectionality

Although possessing various identities provided individuals access to select social groups, and enabled them to make meaning of themselves, the same identities, as they intersect possessed severe and discriminatory tensions for members of a marginalized

group (Crenshaw, 1989). This theory connoted the few different ways that race and sexual orientation interrelated to empower numerous extents of Black women's encounters (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). The objective of this theory was 'to illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face were not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways could not be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). Negative, and sometimes debilitating, factors associated with the persistent intersection of discriminatory pressures experienced by Black women, gave way to mental and health issues which is termed "emotional tax" (Travis, Thorpe-Moscon, & McCluney, n.d.).

Being Black and a woman did not does not simply mean racism or sexism but both (Crenshaw, 1989; Smith, n.d.). Black women are often legally represented by Black men, when it comes to race issues, and the experiences of White women are substituted, to represent Black women, when gender issues are discussed (Crenshaw, 1989; Smith, n.d.). This dynamic often exposed Black women to being invisible in the legal system (Crenshaw, 1989; Smith, n.d.).

Supporting the overarching aspects of intersectionality, Crenshaw (1991) offered three mental processes (i.e., structural intersectionality, political intersectionality, and representational intersectionality), to make meaning of how some women of color were viewed. Structural intersectionality spoke to how Black women of sexual assault and/or intimate partner violence [IPV] were treated differently by social and legal structures than White women who experience the same phenomena (Crenshaw, 1991). Crenshaw (1991)

advanced the previous claim and suggested ‘that the dominant class’ promotion of resources and information did not universally appeal to all women who were victims of sexual assault. Resources should be deliberately earmarked to address the nuanced issues and concerns of women of color who were victims of sexual abuse. Women of color face significant racial judgment within the legal system, and sexual assault laws are sometimes withheld from those who engage in non-traditional sexual activities (Crenshaw, 1991; Lafree, 1989).

Political intersectionality scrutinized policies designed to provide fair and impartial treatment to all United States citizens. The scrutiny came into play as some laws and policies had inequitably addressed acts of violence and misconduct perpetrated against Black women (Crenshaw, 1991). In the instance of abuse directed towards women of color, ‘one identified the manner that race, gender, class, and patriarchy characterized sexual violence, and how these intersecting systems undermined women of color’s experience with sexual assault during anti-rape discussions’ (Crenshaw, 1991, pp.1265-1266).

Lastly, representational intersectionality focused on how social media, pop culture, music, art, and the 24-hours news cycle characterized Black women and how this characterization has muddled Black women’s integrity, and images associated with their lived experiences (Crenshaw, 1991). The unbecoming images that are depicted to represent Black women add to the opportunity to devalue the group (Crenshaw, 1991).

Structural Violence

When a dominant group implements policies and practices that prevent members of a separate group access to resources because factors such as race, gender, age, sexual

orientation, class, and etcetera are not available to a referent group, those factors are related to Galtung's (1969) structural violence theory. Expounding on this belief, structural violence implied that violence occurs when top-tier leaders irregularly allocate or prevent the accessibility of human needs to a specific sector of society (Galtung, 1969). Essential to structural violence were transgenerational policies, practices, and structure, and their associated prejudiced distribution of resources were normal (Galtung, 1969). This approach was a method for the top dogs to preserve the status quo (Galtung, 1969). Enlisting members of the oppressed group, or class, to preserve the status quo was an objective of this concept (Galtung, 1969).

Galtung's structural violence theory was understood through six distinctions. The first distinction, Galtung, pointed out the difference between physical and psychological violence (Galtung, 1969). Galtung (1969) posited that human beings are hurt near death in physical violence, whereas, psychological violence entails lies, brainwashing, coaching of various kinds, dangers that serve to decrease mental capacity.

Negative or positive approaches to influence was the second distinction of this belief (Galtung, 1969). Based on what the influencer believed was right or wrong was how they would either distribute rewards or punishment (Galtung, 1969). The influencer's distribution of rewards or punishments was tied to how one is influenced (Galtung, 1969).

The third distinction was the ability to determine "whether or not there is an object that is hurt" (Galtung, 1969, p. 170). When no physical or biological hurt was caused, this was referred to as, truncated violence (Galtung, 1969). This type of violence (i.e., testing nuclear arms, military exercises) introduced the "threat of physical violence

and the indirect threat of mental violence, which in some cases, would be considered psychological violence since it constrains human actions" (Galtung, 1969, p. 170).

The most essential and fourth distinction was "whether or not there is a person who acts" (Galtung, 1969, p. 170). This distinction posited that "an act of violence committed by an actor was considered personal or direct; whereas violence committed where there is no actor is considered structural, or indirect" (Galtung, 1969, p. 170). Although the act of violence would be personal or structural, both forms of violence can inflict death or mutilation (Galtung, 1969). The uneven distribution of resources, synonymous with structural violence, created environments of unequal power and life chances, which was tied to one rank dimension within a social structure (Galtung, 1969). The difference between intended and unintended violence and their association with guilt was the fifth distinction of this theory (Galtung, 1969). Guilt was more aligned with intention than to consequence (Galtung, 1969).

The sixth and final distinction was between the manifest and latent levels of violence (Galtung, 1969). Personal or structural, manifest violence was observable (Galtung, 1969). On the other hand, "latent violence was something which is not there, yet might easily come out" (Galtung, 1969, p, 172). This theory provided the researcher the ability to identify and understand historic and contemporary structures, relationships and systems that were purposefully established to prevent disclosure from black college women who were sexually assaulted in college.

Summary

The information contained in the bodies of literature reviewed for this study does not significantly address the way Black women made meaning of being sexual assaulted

as college undergraduates and the dilemmas they faced when deciding to disclose to formal agencies. With this understanding, further qualitative exploration is needed to illuminate the lived experience of Black women who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates who did not disclose. This exploration could prove useful, not only within the United States where this phenomenon is present, but throughout the world where similar populations face comparable challenges as this study's participants. The findings of this study could serve to empower sexual assault victims to disclose and enable leaders of once destructive systems, structures, and relationships to self-assess. This self-assessment could lead to the reductions of barriers that once prevented Black women from disclosing to law enforcement officials and health care providers. Additionally, the reduction of these barriers could diminish some Black women's mental health and self-esteem issues, which have generated inter-personnel and professional conflicts. Moreover, the reduction of these barriers could initiate dialogues and transformative actions focused on the possible termination of transgenerational policies, and practices held by the legal and health services systems that played a role in Black women's disclosure. Understanding the limitations of this study's literary review, the researcher determined that qualitative analysis was needed to explore this study's phenomena. This study will employ the overarching research question: "How do Black women who were sexually assaulted in college, but did not report, make meaning of their experiences?" to guide the remainder of this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Methodology

This study analyzed and interpreted data to determine how Black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college. This chapter portrays the methodology employed for the study including the sampling, data collection and the analysis. A discussion of the ethical considerations relating to the research will also be presented.

The qualitative methodology chosen for this study was interpretative phenomenological analysis [PA]. Historically, IPA was employed to conduct research in psychology, but it has received more notoriety in health and social sciences (Peat, Rodriguez & Smith, 2018). The increased utilization can be attributed to the method's uses of interpretation when examining topics that are complex and emotionally laden (Peat et al., 2018). The researcher chose this method for this study because it allowed for interpretation of complexities associated with describing the experiences of how Black women, who were sexually assaulted as undergraduates, made meaning of factors that were attached to their non-disclosure. This method was most appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to focus on an occurrence, bounded by time, which spoke to the phenomenological aspect of this methodology (Smith et al., 2009; Peat et al., 2018). This method allowed for this study's participants to provide their experiences as they related to the phenomenon of sexual assault and non-disclosure (Flowers et al., 2012; Peat et al., 2018). This characteristic of IPA supports the idiographic character of this methodology. Lastly, how participants understood themselves, as it related to the sexual assault and their non-disclosure, and how the researcher understood the

participants were the hermeneutic factors of this of the methodology. The phenomenological, idiographic, and hermeneutic aspects of IPA created an environment for the researcher to comprehend the causes of non-disclosure and an appropriate conflict resolution practice that could assist in transforming environments that once facilitated non-disclosure. Moreover, when utilizing this methodology, it was important that the researcher remained cognizant regarding personal beliefs, perceptions and experiences, as they could lead to a more enriched interpretation of the lived experience of this study's research participants' (Peat et al., 2018).

The focus on the research participants' words were not only a factor for the researcher, but the research participant as well, as they both engaged in double hermeneutics. The double hermeneutics occurred when the researcher attempted to make sense of the research participant trying to make sense of what happened to them. To re-enforce the previous assertion, the focus on discrete circumstances or idiographic strings of IPA place a more prominent accentuation on a person's lived understanding of a particular event (Cooper & Finley, 2014). The preceding aspects of IPA provided the researcher with a flexible, yet systematic way to address this study's phenomenon.

According to Collins (2009), Black women have struggled against interpretations of the world by White men. Responding to this interpretation, Black feminists have identified that marginalized groups established alternate ways to define and validate themselves separate from the manner that White men have interpreted the world around them (Collins, 2009). Consequently, some Black women's points of view were informed by utilizing substitute methods of delivering and approving information (Collins, 2009). This study's sample population, which fits the criteria of a marginalized group (i.e.,

Black and female), possessed alternate ways of producing and validating knowledge when it came to sexual assault and factors attached to disclosure, in comparison to members of other racial or gender groups that have not experienced sexual trauma.

Another factor that added to this study's sample population's alternate way of producing and validating knowledge is the manner that some White sexually assaulted women were treated by law enforcement and health service officials. The way that some White women were treated differed from the manner that Black sexually assaulted women are treated by the officials (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). When disclosing sexual assaults to law enforcement and health services officials, White women are commonly treated like the victim of sexual assault, not scrutinized, and the culture of the agency attending to the victim was most often aligned with their cultural background (Crenshaw, 1991; DeGue et al., 2014; Palmer & St. Vil, 2018). Conversely, when Black women disclose sexual assaults to law enforcement or health services, their claims were sometimes minimized and questioned by law enforcement and health service officials, and often the culture of the agency attending to the victim was not aligned with this particular victim's cultural background (Crenshaw, 1991; DeGue et al. 2014; Palmer & St. Vil, 2018).

Based on the preceding passages, the most appropriate epistemological point of view for this study was social constructivism. The key to this point of view is the study's participants' alternate worldviews in comparison to those who were not Black college women who were sexually assaulted and did not disclose. Historically, Black women have suffered sexual, physical, and psychological victimization. Given the previously mentioned factors that facilitate victimization, coupled with living with the oppressive

factors identified in this study's theoretical framework, meeting the inclusion criteria for this study supported their worldviews not shared by those who were not sexually assaulted and their White counterparts of the dominate culture that were sexually assaulted. With this understanding, employing an IPA methodology, the researcher was able to rely on the participants' perspective to understand how they understood their nondisclosure. Additionally, this epistemological point of view gave a manner for the researcher and participant to build a reality that was molded by a singular encounter. When conducting this study, the research participants attempted to describe the world around them based on their experiences related to sexual assault and disclosure.

Sample Population

Given the sensitivities of this study, the researcher employed various platforms to gain access to this study's research participants. In addition to posting recruitment ads on social media, the researcher attempted to leverage church leaders, as gatekeepers, to gain access to the research participants. Although church leaders potentially possessed access to the sample population for this study, this platform provided no research participants. The researcher believes, although their intentions where honorable, that church priorities outweighed their desire to support this study. With that, utilizing social media to access this study's participants provided the best way to gain support for this study. Not possessing a pre-existing relationship with the research participants enabled them to identify themselves to the researcher without a feeling of being judged based on that pre-existing relationship.

The research participants that contributed to this study were purposefully selected. This purposeful selection considered Black college women who were sexually assaulted

who did not disclose the incident while in college in the United States. Based on the initial parameters, the research participants shared lived experiences and provided rich and descriptively deep information that allowed the researcher to achieve the purpose of this study. This purposeful selection permitted this study's researcher to focus on the following inclusion criteria: (a) identified biologically as a Black woman; (b) primary language was English; (c) 37 years old and older; (d) attended undergraduate studies in the United States; (e) sexually assaulted as college undergraduates between 1989- 1999; and (f) did not report the occurrence to formal agencies as a college undergraduate (i.e., campus police, off-campus law enforcement personnel, and health services agencies.

The reason why the researcher specified that the research participant must identify, biologically, as a woman is because if this study included men, who identified as women, the researcher believed that they would be unable to identify the essence of the lived experience of Black college women who were sexually assaulted, between 1989 to 1999, and their decision to not disclose. The purposeful selection of this sample population was critical to the execution of this research method. The researcher's and research participants' primary language was English, the English language was primarily spoken in courses and correspondence provided by the researcher's university, and socially throughout the United States, therefore, the researcher chose English as the language for this study.

In addition, the researcher chose an age range of 37 and older was because if the assault took place between 1989-1999, as traditional freshmen or seniors, it would be 20 to 30 years from the time of the incident until the time of this study. This 20 to 30 year time period, since the incident, created, in some cases, an environment where the any

painful memory that was associated with the assault would be diminished. The 1989-1999 timeframe provided the researcher with a large window to identify willing and consenting research participants throughout the United States. Not disclosing the incident to formal agencies while in college enabled the researcher to explore and identify, through the research participants' lived experiences, the factors they have attached to their non-disclosure. Finally, the research participants' desire to, in an uncoerced manner, provide the lived experience was vital to this study was vital. Although there were research participants that met the inclusion criteria mentioned above, the following were this study's exclusion criteria: (a) participated in activities that resulted in a felony conviction; (b) received therapist's advice against participating in this study; and (c) legally could not participate in this study.

Collection of Data

Understanding the sensitivities associated with discussing the topic of sexual assault with the study's sample population, the researcher utilized social media, and church leaders to gain access to this study's research participants. The researcher placed recruitment ads in three Black churches in Tampa, Florida. Although the researcher placed these ads in the churches, no participants were acquired from this source. Given the researchers experience with Black churches, which are understood to be close knit, and in some cases gossip infused. This environment was a concern of one's anonymity, which affected the potential participant's desire to participate in this study. On the other hand, the researcher believes that the ability to leverage social media to access participants facilitated the privacy needed to support the purpose of this study. The

researcher felt that not having a previous relationship with the participants of this study created a non-judgmental setting, which supported their desire to support this study.

Although the researcher could have performed an effective and appropriate phenomenological study with a population size from three to 15 research participants, this study employed eight willing and consenting research participants. Initially, the researcher received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct this study with seven participants. While acquiring participants, over seven Black women, who fit the inclusion criteria demonstrated a desire to participate by contacting the researcher after reviewing the ad on social media. However, after contacting several potential participants, some never followed through, some for unforeseen reasons. After acquiring seven participants, and proceeding with the interview process, the researcher was contacted by an eighth potential participant. The researcher requested permission from the IRB to expand the number of participants from seven to eight.

The willing and consenting research participants who shared culture, history, and identity, desired to have their voices heard as they related to sexual assault and disclosure. The researcher was cognizant that the eight research participants did not represent the reality of all Black women, who experienced sexual assault as an undergraduate and did not disclose to formal authorities. Despite a low number of research participants, the emphasis of IPA is not on large numbers of research participants but on the richness of one's expressed lived experience (Smith et al., 2009). In this case, to gain the richness of one's lived experience, and their truth, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with Black women, who were sexually assaulted as undergraduates, and did not disclose the incident as undergraduates. The number of

research participants associated with this study allowed the researcher the ability to analyze detailed accounts provided by this group to identify similarities and differences in their experiences with non-disclosure. The lived experience extracted from this study's research participants achieved the purpose of this study.

Although the research participants consented to this study by signing an informed consent form, they always possessed the right to withdraw, without notice, from this study. Acknowledging this threat to the study, three research participants, after conducting the screening questionnaire and demographic survey, withdrew from the study by not endorsing the informed consent form. In spite of the setback, eight research participants participated in this study, which enabled the researcher to meet the requirements to conduct a successful IPA to fulfill the purpose of this study.

Face to face, semi-structured interviews comprised of one meeting, lasting no longer than 60 minutes occurred. The manner that these interviews took place, provided the flexibility needed to establish a trusting relationship between the researcher and each research participant. Understanding that every research participant was different, the researcher used a general approach to the interview process.

Acknowledging the study's ad on social media and showing an interest in the study, the potential research participant contacted the researcher. Upon initial contact, the researcher allowed the potential participant to schedule the best time to conduct a telephonic screening questionnaire and demographic survey. Once contacted telephonically, the researcher read the potential participant this study's recruitment script (See Appendix C). After the researcher read the script, the researcher asked if there were any questions about the script, and then asked if they would like to proceed with the

study. The researcher facilitated the screening questionnaire which ensured that the potential participants met the inclusion criteria, followed by the demographic survey. The implementation of the demographic survey enabled the researcher to possess an increased understanding of their research participants. Afterward, the researcher asked if there were any questions and coordinated a date and time for their face-to-face semi-structured interview.

During the interview process, to access the participants' unfiltered lived experiences, the researcher had to build rapport and earn the trust of the research participants. An important step in building rapport was the interviewer's ability to ensure that the steps and potential outcomes associated with the interview process were clearly understood by the research participants. This was conveyed to the research participants through a thorough review of the informed consent. After the researcher reviewed informed consent with the potential research participants, the researcher asked were there any questions. If not, or if all questions were answered to the satisfaction of the research participant, the researcher then requested that the research participant sign the informed consent. After signing the informed the consent, the researcher and research participant reviewed the list of medical resources in the local area, in case a painful thought was encountered during or after the interview. Afterward, the researcher and the participant proceeded to conduct the semi-structured interview.

The researcher documented the interviews with a digital voice recording device. Although the researcher's primary way of documenting interviews was through a digital voice recording device, the researcher sporadically took handwritten notes, which provided a reminder to ask related questions for clarification. Based on the rapport built,

and a feature of active listening, the researcher thoughtfully and carefully conducted the interview at the research participants' pace and provided extended pauses between questions. Conducting the interviews at the research participants' pace and the implementation of extended pauses provided the participant with the ability to reconnect with memories that delivered rich descriptions of their lived experiences as they pertained to factors associated with their non-disclosure.

Before the formal interview (i.e., the four interview questions), to create a more familiar environment, and comfortable setting, the researcher asked non-abrasive questions concerning their time as an undergraduate. This tactic, in most cases, appeared to place the research participant in a more trusting environment and mood. During the formal interviews, proceeding at the pace of the research participant and the comfort created during the preliminary questions, enabled a more relaxed environment to discuss very sensitive topics. After the formal portion of the interview, the researcher guided the discussion to an area that researcher and research participant shared common experiences. The researcher utilized this tactic to lower any anxiety or stress that was present during the formal portion of this interview. Furthermore, after the formal portion of the interview, the researcher cultivated a sense of confidence and increased trust and rapport, as they reviewed the list of medical resources and the manner to contact the researcher and the researcher's committee chair if an unforeseen actions occurred that required their attention. Additionally, the interviewer provided the research participants the opportunity to review their notes and other materials related to their portion of the study. The researcher provided this opportunity, while re-iterating the confidential nature of the study, safeguards implemented for this study, procedures that the researcher would

employ if there was a need to reengage the research participant to clarify a point, and how they could obtain a copy of the study upon completion.

Research Questions

To gain a greater understanding of this study's phenomenon, the central research question of this study was: "How do Black women who were sexually assaulted in college, but did not report, make meaning of their experiences?" Although the researcher employed a semi-structured interview process for this study; initially, to create rapport and a more comfortable environment between the researcher and the research participant, the researcher engaged in mundane conversations which consist of the researcher asking the following questions:

1. What influenced you to attend the college you attended?
2. How would you best describe the student life on your campus during the time of your attendance?
3. What is your relationship with your college friends today?
4. What do you miss most about attending your college?

The questions were not only ice breakers, but they allowed the researcher to acquire a general sense of the research participant before engaging in the formal portion of this study.

Afterward, the researcher utilized a semi-structured interview process, consisting of four open ended interview questions. The intent of this process was to provide the research participant the ability to freely explore their lived experience through "unrestricted" responses.

The following are the open-ended questions that the research employed for this study:

IQ1. How did you understand yourself as a college black woman that was sexually assaulted in college and did not disclose?

IQ2. What was your experience with the factors that affected your non-disclosure?

IQ3. How did you understand your non-disclosure?

IQ4. How did you perceive, or understand, on and off campus structures, systems, and relationships that were established to encourage disclosure and medical support for victims of sexual assault?

The first interview question, IQ1, allowed this study's research participants the opportunity to provide how they understood themselves, given their various internal and external aspects associated with sexual assault and their non-disclosure. The second interview question, IQ2, provided the research participant space to articulate their experiences with the factors that influenced their non-disclosure. The third interview question, IQ3, enabled the research participants to explore meanings they have placed on their non-disclosure. The fourth interview question, IQ4, permitted the research participant the ability to voice how they viewed standing structures, and systems and their role to support victims of sexual assault. The responses provided by each research participant not only allowed the researcher access and understanding of their lived experiences but enabled the researcher to identify emerging themes, align their responses to theories contained in the study's theoretical framework, and the connection shared between their responses this study's literature review.

Data Analysis

The principle of IPA is its investigative focus towards the study's research participants' attempts to deduce their experiences (Flower et al., 2012). To ensure that this study's topic was appropriate for this method, the researcher ensured that it first possessed "heuristic clarity, point, and power to enable relative focus; additionally the material must have experiential detail, concreteness, vividness, and lived-thoroughness to ensure the analysis has substance" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 202). To advance the two conditions, the researcher demonstrated the steps of IPA.

After transcribing the digital recording through www.Rev.com, the researcher reinforced transcription with handwritten notes. The initial step that the researcher conducted was to analyze research participants lived experiences by reading and re-reading the transcripts and notes. This practice enabled the researcher to submerge themselves into the original data. The researcher's emersion into the original data ensured that the participants became the emphasis of analysis. Reading and re-reading data helped the researcher to discover common themes within the individual narratives. Lastly, reading and re-reading created an appreciation and vehicle for increased rapport and trust. Increased affinity and trust, as the researcher progressed through interviews, in some cases, facilitated richer accounts of data provided by the participants.

During the next step, step two, the researcher conducted making initial notes. The transition between the first two steps were the most time consuming. The time spent on this step was particularly focused on writing notes from the transcripts as they were read. By doing this, the researcher was able to produce complete and thorough notes and comments on the data. As the researcher identified aspects of the transcript, it started to

align with the descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments contained in the transcripts. The manner in which the researcher distinguished the comments on the transcripts was that they italicized and colored the font blue, which distinguished this comment as a Descriptive Comment. Next the researcher bolded and colored the font red to distinguish a comment as a linguistic comment. Lastly, to illustrate a conceptual comment, the researcher underlined black font statement. The researcher utilized the "new comment" feature in Microsoft Word to have comment in the margins of the transcript to identify subsequent stage comments. Figure 1 gives an example of how the researcher made notes in the transcript.

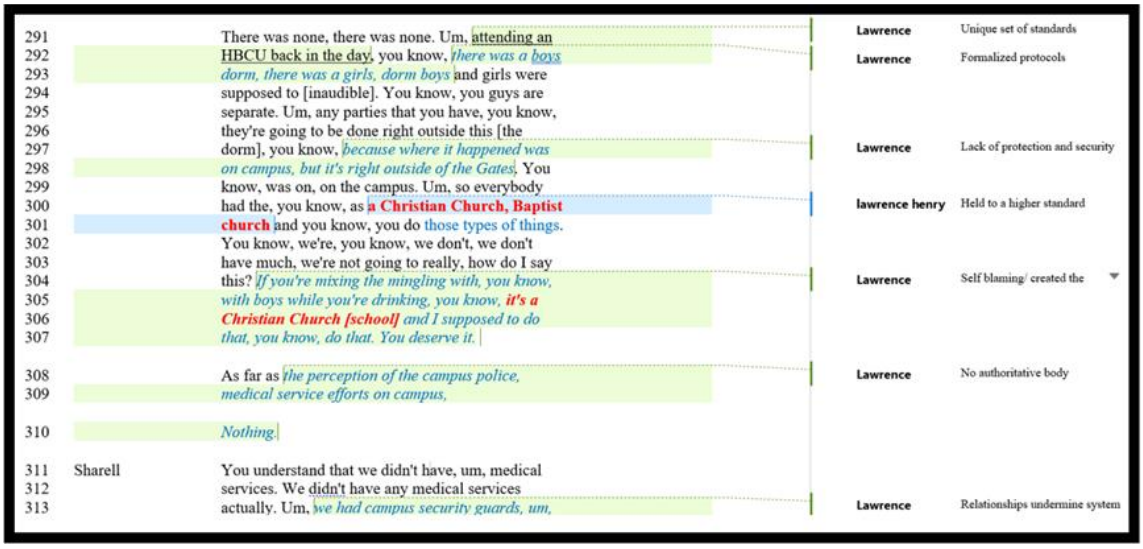

Figure 1. Example of Transcript Notation.

During the third step, the researcher developed emerging themes where they managed data changes, while overseeing the quantity of detail, preserving complexity, while plotting the interrelationships, connections, and patterns between exploratory notes. During this step of IPA, the researcher reorganized data and break up the flow of an interview to identify emerging themes. An important task during this evolution was to

transform notes into themes which involved attempts to produce a simplification of ideas that create concise statements identifying the importance contained in the numerous remarks within a section of the transcript. Figure 2 gives an example on how themes were identified.

Research Participant **"Sharell"**	Descriptive Comment: Keywords, phrases/ experiences/ figures of speech/ descript.	Linguistic Comments: **Purposeful repetition/ Stressed Articulation/** Metaphors	Conceptual Comments: identity, time	Themes	Sub-Theme
	Attribution (locus) Harbored feelings of shame and blame Self-blame/ Deserving of the assault Delinquency Tarnished perception of self Shame, guilt Guilt and shame prevented action Prepared for the assault	Overwhelming feeling of guilt Attribution (locus) Purposefully placed themselves at the seen Self-blame informed actions	FAE: minimizing	Self-blame	Should have known better: appearance and drinking, naïve; prevented action
	Common Practice Hunted Hunted the inexperienced			Exploitation; manipulation;	Experience, history

Figure 2. Theme Identification.

Step four involved the researcher searching for connections across emergent themes which created opportunities for themes to be created from the transcripts in the order they were identified. This technique of identifying themes provided the researcher with the ability to chart in a manner that is an appropriate fit for this study. Not all themes identified during this step where integrated for investigation; this stage of IPA is

not prescriptive, and the researcher's innovation drove the analysis of the identified themes. There are various ways to 'recognize configurations and the manner that they relate to developing themes, such as contextualization, polarization, and function. With this understanding, the researcher employed the abstraction method to evaluate the pattern between emergent themes. When implementing abstraction, the researcher clustered this study's themes to create pithy singular themes. These pithy themes, which encompass the universal nature of this study's theme, are called super-ordinate themes.

During the fifth step of moving to the next case, researcher repeated stages one through four for each case. This tactic ensured that the researcher identified the themes critical to progress to the bracketing stage. It was essential to treat every new case with a renewed perception as if it was one's first time encountering the case. By bracketing the new cases, a researcher placed greater emphasis on the current case's lived experience. Emphasizing the current case's lived experience maintains the IPA's idiographic concentration.

The last step in the IPA process required that the researcher looked for patterns across cases to identify reoccurring themes. As the researcher identified thematic relationships in the cases, this environment enabled the maneuvering and renaming themes. By doing this, a researcher transitioned their efforts by migrating to a level that was more theoretical. Reconfiguring, relabeling, and consolidating themes reduced the number of sub-themes contained in this study. Given the previous practices mentioned, the researcher created superordinate themed which illustrated the personal experiences of the research participants in a nonconcrete and more common manner since the findings of

this study could be applied to Black women, outside of this study, who have faced, and currently face, the dilemma associated with sexual assault and non-disclosure.

Research Ethics

Ethical considerations were continuous throughout the research process. The researcher remained cognizant of any relationships of power that might have placed the participants in harm's way. With this understanding, it is critical that the researcher was aware of the power dynamics that exist between the research participant and themselves. Given the researcher's status as a Ph.D. candidate, it appeared that this status carried an expectation, or power, that the some participants felt that they needed to support. An example of this was, at times, participants would, after responding to a question, ask the researcher, "Did I answer that correctly?" as if the researcher was looking for a "correct answer" to this study's open-ended questions. The researcher was cognizant of being a Black male and in all cases the assaulter of the participants of this study were male and possibly Black. With that, the researcher was aware of the power dynamics between the assaulter and this study's participants that created the environment for sexual assault and in some cases, their non-disclosure. The effects of an imbalance of power, could have negatively influenced the manner that research participants performed during interviews.

To address this potential asymmetrical issue of power, when reviewing the informed consent with the research participant, the researcher outlined the ground rules governing the interviews to ensure there were no misunderstandings. The employment and validation of the study's ground rules reduced the potential of asymmetrical issues of power that could be have present between parties involved in this study's interview process. Also, the researcher minimized their status as a Ph.D. candidate, through the

establishment of rapport and a comfortable interview setting and being viewed less as a someone who possibly resembled their assailant but a person who possessed a valid concern to amplify their voice. The techniques were the way that the researcher impacted the power dynamics associated with this study.

When attempting to receive Nova Southeastern University's approval to conduct this study, via the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) process, the researcher addressed how they were going to create and maintain an environment that took the research participants' well-being into consideration along with ensuring that they were treated justly, respectfully, and void of impartiality. After receiving approval from the university, the following ethical considerations were kept in mind by the researcher when conducting this research.

Before engaging in interviews with willing research participants, they consented to the interviews by signing an informed consent form that summarized the roles of the researcher, research participants, and afforded the research participants the opportunity to conceal their identity through the use of pseudonyms. Given the sensitivity associated with this study, pseudonyms were important because it allowed the research participants to remain anonymous. This anonymity encouraged the research participants to provide richer, and unrestrained accounts when discussing their lived experiences without fear of their unfiltered accounts negatively affecting their personal or professional lives. Although the researcher employed pseudonyms to create a more unrestrictive environment, the extent to which simply talking about sensitive issues would evoke hurtful memories of the study's research participants was constantly evaluated. Although a research participant acknowledged and signed an informed consent form, they always

reserved the right to withdraw from the study without notice. The researcher would provide breaks and "check-ins" to gain sense of how the research participant was handling themselves during the interview. With that, it was imperative that the researcher, and research participants reviewed contingencies before an interview started (i.e., actions taken if the research participant encountered a hurtful memory during and after the interview). Reviewing contingencies enabled all parties involved in the interview to understand the prescribed steps that all would take if the research participant encountered an overwhelming painful memory during the interview.

The researcher acknowledged the sensitivity of this study and the potential for encountering overtly sensitive topics during an interview. The researcher deliberately chose research participants who experienced the study's phenomena between 20 to 30 years ago. Although some effects of a sexual assault remain 20 to 30 years after the incident, the employment of the carefully worded questions, coupled with the time that has elapsed since the incident established a more suitable environment for a willing and consenting research participant to discuss their lived experience without it affecting them psychologically. Final measures that the researcher employed to create and maintain a safe and productive research environment for the research participants was a listing of local available mental health hotlines and resources, to address any unforeseen hurtful memories that were evoked during, or after, the interviews. When a research participant encountered hurtful memories during interview, the researcher employed mundane conversations, to redirect the discussion, and reviewed the resource listing to stabilize environment. Additionally, the researcher, at the end of the interview, reviewed and provided the research participants a copy of the listing as a precaution, to address any

painful recollections. Lastly, before and after the interviews, to create and re-create a sense of cordiality, relaxation, and stability, the researcher engaged in mundane conversations, not related to the interview questions, to reduce any stress associated with participating in this study or acquired during the interview session.

The researcher stored all research related materials in a fire retardant safe in their home office, and will destroy these materials, by incineration, 36 months after the completion of this study. Information obtained during this study is confidential, unless required by law to disclose research related document to legal agencies. The dissertation chair and committees, IRB, and regulatory agencies are the only bodies that possesses access to the research materials for this study. Lastly, the informed consent form illustrated how the research participants could gain access to the completed dissertation and its distribution plan. Given the clear understanding of the interworking of this study's methodology the researcher is will reveal the findings in chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

To determine how this study's participants understood their non-disclosure, this chapter will provide an analysis and interpretation of their lived experiences. The researcher utilized semi-structured interviews to enable the study's research participants to share reasons for their non-disclosures. This chapter contains a summary of the descriptive data, the collection and analysis of data, and this study's outcomes.

Descriptive Data

Eight Black college women who were sexually assaulted, during the period of 1989-1999, participated in this study. During the recruitment process, several Black college educated women demonstrated an interest in participating in this study. However, given the purposeful factors of this study, three withdrew from participating without providing reason or notification, after being administered the screening survey and demographic questionnaire. The researcher employed a sampling method, which adhered to the following inclusion criteria: (a) identified biologically as a Black woman; (b) primary language was English; (c) 37 years old and older; (d) attended undergraduate studies in the United States; (e) sexually assaulted as college undergraduates between 1989- 1999; and (f) did not report the occurrence to formal agencies as a college undergraduate (i.e., campus police, off-campus law enforcement personnel, and health services agencies). The exclusion criteria for this study was the following: (a) participated in activities that resulted in a felony conviction; (b) received therapist's advice against participating in this study; and (c) legally could not participate in this study.

The inclusion criteria served as the basis for the screening survey. Additionally, the researcher implemented a demographic questionnaire to acquire an understanding of the similarities and differences that existed between research participants, and to initiate the interpretative and idiographic aspects of this study. Before the potential research participant consented to the study, the researcher assigned them code numbers, which reinforced the study's confidentiality posture. Below are the questions and findings of the demographic questionnaire used in this study.

Table 2

Results from Demographic Questionnaire

Code #	**901**	**902**	**903**	**904**	**905**	**906**	**907**	**908**
Age	41	48	42	45	44	44	43	44
Years attended	1997-2000	1989-1994	1994-1998	1992-1994	1994-1998	1996-2000	1993-1998	1993-1997
PWI or HBCU	HBCU	HBCU	HBCU	HBCU	PWI	HBCU	PWI	HBCU
State	TX	FL	NC	GA	MI	GA	PA	FL
Sexually assaulted before college?	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Parents Marital status (time of incident)	Not Married	Married	Married	Not Married	Widowed	Divorced	Married	Married
Awareness of roles of campus police and health service when it came to sexual assault?	Yes	Yes	Undec.	No	No	Yes	No	N
Class standing (time of incident)	Fresh.	Fresh.	Soph.	Fresh.	Fresh.	Fresh.	Fresh.	Fresh.

Member of a team, sorority, etc.	No	Sorority, after incident	Sport team Mngr.	No	No	No	No	No
Disclosed this incident to anyone? member, etc.)	No	Yes, friends	Yes, friends	Yes, Friends	Yes, Friends	No	Yes, Friends/ Family	Yes, Friends

Once the potential research participant signed the informed consent, the research participant and researcher agreed upon a pseudonym. This pseudonym represented the research participant during the semi-structured interviews and the data collected for this study. Based on the responses provided by the research participants during the preliminary interview, the following are the research participants' accounts of their time in college/ university, during the period of 1989 and 1999.

Research Participant 901, "Vicki," attended a southern HBCU where many of her family members were alumni. Although she applied to several colleges and universities, based on the family connection with two southern HBCUs, serious consideration was never entertained about colleges and universities. Vicki described her time in college as fun, as it was located in her hometown. Vicki portrayed fun as having access to a family-oriented college environment. Although Vicki's friends were not her family, the relationship that existed between Vicki and her friends created a sense of security and trust. This security and trust was amplified based on the southern hospitality extended to her on several occasions by fellow classmates and members of the surrounding community. Although Vicki enjoyed her college, she did not keep in touch with her friends after leaving the school. In addition to the southern hospitality, Vicki misses the culture and southern cuisine.

Research Participant 902, “Sharell,” attended at Southeastern HBCU. The college she attended was not her first choice. As a result of a recent loss of a close family member and related financial issues, she was compelled to attend an HBCU close to home. As a child, Sharell was raised in a home with strict rules, however, she described her time in college as fun and lively. Her independence and possessing a network of close friends made her time in college enjoyable. Today, Sharell maintains a relationship with friends she met while in college and regularly attends her college’s homecoming and other social gatherings with a handful of her friends. What Sharell misses most about her tine in college is being young, possessing career options and the freedom of not having the responsibilities of an adult.

Research Participant 903, “Edna,” attended a Mid-Atlantic HBCU. Although she attended this college, it was not her first choice. A Key factor that influenced Edna’s college decision was her parents. Edna’s parents did not want her to move far away from them, therefore, she attended a college in the town that she lived in. Having said that, Edna spent her first year in college as a commuter student. During her second year of college, her parents, grudgingly, allowed Edna to move on campus and live in the dorms. Edna enjoyed “the best of both worlds.” She lived on campus; yet, was close to home. Edna’s father, a professor at her college, provided her the comforts of home; while she enjoyed the freedom that living, unsupervised, on campus provided. Currently, Edna remains close to friends that she made in college and attends college functions and homecomings regularly. What she misses most from her college experience was the lack of “real responsibility;” not having to be an adult. As a college student she did not have

to worry about paying bills and working every day. Additionally, she misses the carefree environment that her college community provided her.

Research Participant 904, "Danielle," attended a southern HBCU. At the time of her enrollment, this college was the only school that she could afford. She described her initial experience in college as "chaotic." Upon her arrival, the majority of Danielle's administrative support and financial aid was in disarray, which forced her and several other college women to live in a hotel room during the first few weeks of school. Although she does not remain in contact with any of her friends that she made in college, she does miss the college parties. Danielle, being from a small southern town, who attended private schools for most of her life, enjoyed meeting new people at college parties. She described the parties as a mixture of college students and party goers from a city not too far from the college. However, an aspect that she did not like about the college parties was the aggressiveness that some men displayed towards her. The aggressiveness came in the form of convincing her to drink alcohol, "to loosen up," because she was not a drinker. Also, men at these parties often invaded her personal space.

Research participant 905, "Jay," attended a Midwest PWI on a scholarship. While in school she was active in several organizations and was considered a campus leader. She was the third Black homecoming queen in the university's history, a peer advisor for all students of color, a peer mentor, an academic tutor, and a member of a sorority. Jay remains close with several friends she made during her enrollment, especially the Black men. Her interest in her Black male friends comes from the challenges that they faced. Despite enjoying going back to her college for annual

homecomings, and re-connecting with friends and sorority sisters, Jay does not miss college at all. She felt betrayed by the very institution that offered her a scholarship. While in college, Jay was arrested for shielding a Black male that was being beaten by the police. She was one of two Black students who lived in a dorm of 400 students. She felt like the school, given her participation in defending an unarmed Black man against the police, tried to make her an example by threatening to strip her of her scholarship and expelling her. After graduation she returned to the campus not only to reminisce with old friends, but to show the college administration that she is a success.

Research participant 906, "Tracey," grew up in a rural area of the south and attended a southern HBCU. Tracey, after graduating high school, enlisted in the United States Army; afterward, she went to college. Tracey described her college experience as fun, engaging, and supportive. While attending college she enjoyed seeing people who looked like her [Black people] who were instructing and attending the college; while members of the administration encouraged her to pursue her academic goals. Although she enjoyed her college experience, the relationship shared between her and the friends made in college is challenged. Despite former acquittances attempting to contact Tracey, she rarely connects with them, and attributes the failure to connect to herself. One of the few times that Tracey will connect with old friends is during homecoming. Ironically, what Tracey misses most about college was the ability to be naïve about the world around her. Additionally, she misses the sense of protection that she felt while in college. She found security in the group of people who shared similar interests and values.

Research participant 907," Dee," attended a northeastern inner-city PWI, an institutional leader in the performing arts. The urban disposition of this campus provided

access to buildings and other structures, for college students and non-students, which created an unsafe environment. Dee did not maintain any friendships from college. She feels that she isolated herself after the sexual assault incident that took place in college. This isolation affected her desire to maintain friendships after college, and she does not miss anything about the college she attended.

Research participant 908," Alice," attended a southern HBCU. The reason why she attended this institution was because it had one of the best business schools in the country and many of her family members and friends are alumni. While in school, she enjoyed not only the activities of the student body, but the freedom to become familiar with new experience that had little to no financial or long-lasting consequences. She made lifelong friends who she currently communicates with often and has shared many of life's ups and downs with. She compares her relationship with the friends that she met from college to a "village." This village of friends was built on trust and candor between its members. Alice considers the members of this village as her "A-Team," which could be always depended on to provide support when needed. One of the biggest things that she misses from college is the ability to see her friends daily.

After the preliminary questions were asked, the researcher presented the purpose of this study and addressed the primary research question, through the use of the four interview questions which were as follows.

IQ1: How did you understand yourself as a college black woman that was sexually assaulted in college and did not disclose?

IQ2: What was your experience with the factors that affected your non-disclosure?

IQ3: How did you understand your non-disclosure?

IQ4: How did you perceive, or understand, on and off campus structures, systems, and relationships that were established to encourage disclosure and medical support for victims of sexual assault?

These questions focused on extracting the unfiltered lived experiences of how the research participants understood their non-disclosure. Informed by IPA, step one, the researcher read and re-read the transcribed accounts, then began to perform initial noting. These initial notes supported the supplemental demographic information and formed a base to support future interpretations. As the researcher continued to re-read the cases, the identification of the descriptive codes (focused on keywords, phrases, experiences, figures of speech and descriptions), the linguistic codes (focused on purposeful repetition, stressed articulation, and metaphors), and lastly the conceptual codes (focused on identity and time) occurred. To reduce the potential of being influenced by information captured in previous cases, the researcher placed the cases in numerical order (i.e., 901-908). The researcher started with case number 901 and identified the descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments in that case. Afterward, the researcher followed the same format for each subsequent case. The researcher performed bracketing, which reduced the potential of information from a previous case influencing the analysis of another. Once all the transcripts were coded, the researcher identified the emerging themes and grouped identical or similar codes under a theme. When identifying the themes, the researcher identified their intrinsic and extrinsic properties.

These intrinsic and extrinsic properties enabled the researcher to categorize themes, subordinate themes, or sub-themes and superordinate themes in a manner to

refine the researcher's ability to understand how this study's participants understood their non-disclosure. The researcher's rationale for introducing intrinsic and extrinsic categories was based on the internal (i.e., intrinsic) or external (i.e., extrinsic) factors identified in the participants' testimonies, which facilitated the emergence of this study's themes. The establishment of these categories not only enabled the researcher to organize large sums of data in a more refined manner for analysis but enabled the researcher to address issues with non-disclosure in a more direct manner within the recommended conflict resolution practice. With this in mind, the intrinsic factors which affected one's desire to disclose was characterized as aspects internal to the participant that influenced their desire to disclose their sexual assault. In most cases, these intrinsic factors were learned behavior, based on the effects of extrinsic factors, and internalized over time. The extrinsic factors which affected one's desire to disclose characterized as external systems, policies, relationships or structures, which wittingly or unwittingly, created an apprehension for disclosure. With this understanding, the intrinsic factors which affected the non-disclosure of the research participants were self-blame, avoidance, and vulnerability themes. The extrinsic factors which affected the non-disclosure of the research participants were distrust, betrayal and structural themes. Figure 3 illustrates the intrinsic and extrinsic emergent themes and sub-themes, which provided understanding on how participants involved in this study understood their non-disclosure to formal agencies, during the period of 1989 to 1999.

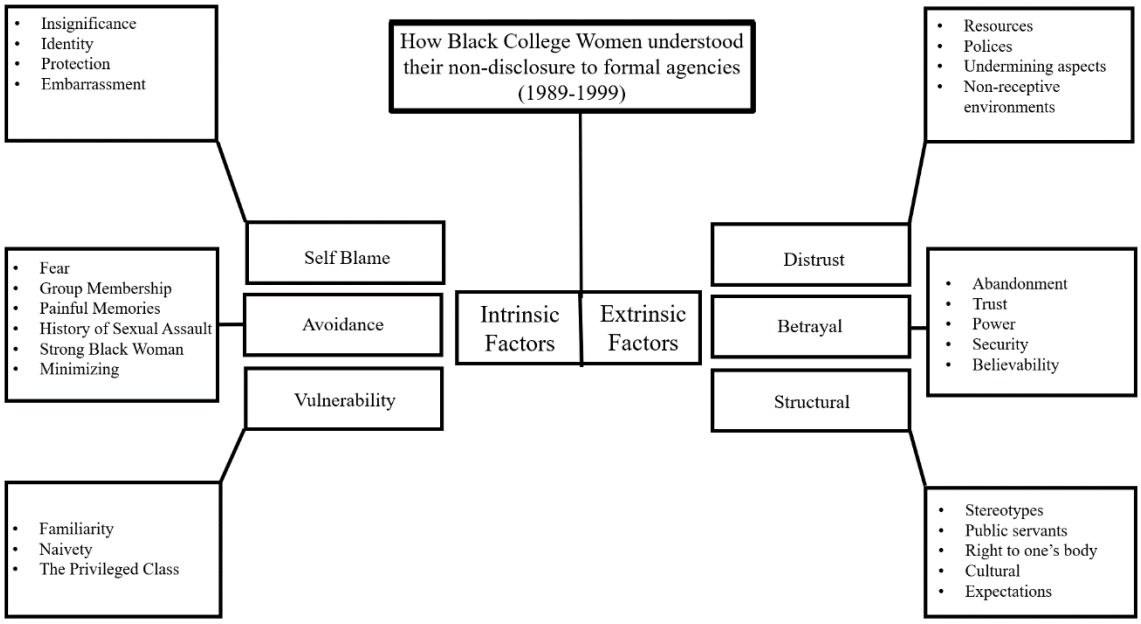

Figure 3. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Emergent Themes and Sub-themes.

Intrinsic Factors

Self-blame. An intrinsic theme that emerged from these unfiltered accounts was sense of self-blaming by the participants of this study. An example of the self-blame spoken to in this study was Sharell's account speaking to why she did not disclose while in college.

> I just kind of accepted what happened. I kind of blame myself because I felt like if I wasn't drinking [you know] at a frat party and [you know], all the freshman girls, [you know], were there. Looking back now that I realized this, there's just a lot of blame and a lot of shame, [you know], and anger… wearing tight dresses, you're at a frat party, [you know], you're drinking regardless if you were, [you know], just having fun and not flirting with everybody, it doesn't matter- you were there. You were there, and you looked like that, [you know], you're going to get

> it basically, or you deserve it. Should I say "you deserved it…she came dressed for it"… If you're mixing the mingling with, [you know], with boys while you're drinking, [you know], it's a Christian Church [college] and I [knew I was not] supposed to do that, [you know]. You [the research participant speaking about themselves] deserved it (Interview, January 2, 2020).

To reinforce the intrinsic theme of self-blame, Vicki offered the following account to facilitate how she understood her non-disclosure and its relationship with taking responsibility.

> I think I put the blame more on myself in the situation I put myself in… I don't know, if I dwelled on it [the incident of assault] too much. [I] took responsibility for my own actions…I made a decision to walk out the doors. So, you know, don't walk out the door next time and that's how I rationalized it [her non-disclosure].

When understanding how she made meaning of her non-disclosure, Alice spoke about a time when she drank too much and passed out, while in a motel room with some of her girlfriends and guys that they met from the town that the college resided. Alice blames herself for placing herself in a situation where she was sexually assaulted. Her comments below amplified this assertion.

> I drank to the point where I passed out, which is a problem [be]cause I shouldn't [have] been drinking in the first place. Um, that's a consequence of my bad behavior. What happened is a consequence of a bad behavior. [Be]cause when you engage in things that you shouldn't be engaged in, there's a consequence… When you engage the bad behavior growing up, engaged in bad behavior, there's

> a consequence. So, there was a consequence for my bad behavior. And because there was a consequence, probably subconsciously I did not report it because again, I go back to, I blamed myself because I engage in behavior I shouldn't be engaging in, in the first place…I blamed myself so much…Had I not drank to the point where I passed out then he would not have had the ability to do what he did was the way I rationalized it.

While attending a college party, Danielle was sexually assaulted. Danielle's account suggested that she blamed herself because she was not smart enough to identify signs that pointed to an environment that was unsafe. According to Danielle, who was sexually assaulted before entering college, by placing herself in a position to be assaulted she allowed the assault to occur. Danielle's perspective is further illustrated by her comments.

> When it happened, this particular time I felt like I allowed it to happened because I think I could have stopped it if I would have [you know] just been smart enough not to go to a party like that. But, once, once it started happening, I had just, I didn't understand what was happening. I understood what was going on, I just didn't understand my level of my thinking of how I'm supposed to stop it. So, I just kind of just laid there and let it happen. I closed my eyes, blocked it out, said It'll be over soon. So that was the level of understanding I had at that time about, that particular situation.

Because of a previous romantic and current working relationship shared between Edna and her assaulter, she blamed herself for putting herself in a position where sexual assault occurred.

> It was mainly because in my mind I'm thinking like you put yourself in a position to be assaulted. And then too, we're all like supposed to be friends, [you know], team, family, whatever you wanna to call it. So again, you're like, well what did I do to put myself in the position...my behavior should have been different to not have been in that type of situation. So I guess I just kept looking at what I could've done differently to not have had any of that happened and that probably was just me trying to, [you know], rationalize and kind of make sense of [the assault].

After examining the participants' testimonies, most of them held themselves totally responsible for placing themselves in a position to be assaulted. Only one research participant, Alice, alluded to a common practice in which society holds the sexual assault victim to blame for their assault and not the assailant. However, in Alice's case, she stated that she not only put herself in a position to be assaulted by drinking with strange men she did not know, but that she also participated in underage drinking. Underage drinking, one's style of clothing, and not being "smart enough" to identify the indicators of a pending assault were ways this study's participants understood their non-disclosure.

Insignificant. Accompanying this self-blame, some participants described a feeling of being insignificant, or disposable, after being sexually assaulted. This internal feeling of being insignificant created the environment for some of the participants' non-disclosure. Supporting this claim, Jay discussed her previous experience with sexual assault and the way she felt when she was a child, in comparison to when she was assaulted as a college woman.

> I lost a part of me when I was six, and so when things happen to you, when you have trauma that's not fully healed, when you have an incident similar in nature, it takes you back to that first incident….It takes you back to a child. I went back to being a child who just didn't matter. And so what I felt was like, who cares; and it's my fault. I just internalized all of it. I just didn't understand myself. I think I've just felt marginalized and I felt like I didn't matter. And my thing was like, just shut up. You took it as a six year old.

Aligned with this topic, Danielle's feeling of insignificance manifested itself as she felt "…very disgusting. I was very disgusting…"

She continued along this sub-theme of feeling insignificant by stating:

> Because even if I wanted to report it, I didn't know who to report it to and I felt embarrassed, felt helpless, nothing I can do. I mean I just had my hands tied behind my back and I just had to deal with it. Like I dealt with everything else in my life.

Related to Danielle's feelings, Dee spoke to the authority some may claim over women's bodies, which creates a sense of insignificance. She articulated this feeling when she asserted, "That as an African American female that others had a right to my body and I did not have a voice at that time." In addition to the authority one may attempt to possess over Black bodies, Alice pointed to how society attributes sexual assault to women and not their assaulters, which is in most reported cases are men. This sense of authority over Black women's bodies and the manner that society attributes sexual assault to women supports the sub-theme of insignificance.

Alice asserted:

> There's nothing that should make you feel that you have authority over someone else's body such that you feel that's appropriate because she's passed out that you take advantage of that situation…from a societal, the expectation was that if I did report it, the focus would not be on the on who the perpetrator, but on me. And I don't know if that's based on movies or just based on, not that I don't think I ever had anybody in my friend friend's circle that, um, indicated that had been sexually assaulted, but perhaps they had it was just something that we never talked about.

The participants' comments, coupled with the emotions demonstrated during the interviews, allowed the researcher to feel their pain and identify a degree of hopelessness with some participants. The researcher assessed that those who were assaulted on multiple occasions before their college incident, spoke to not possessing ownership over their bodies and that their stories did not matter. Therefore, the participants did not bother telling their stories. Comments regarding "feeling disgusted" conveyed to the researcher a sense of worthlessness and self-hate to a degree. When Jay mentioned that 'she reverted to a child' when she was sexually assaulted enabled the researcher to recognize the enduring damage on one's self-esteem.

Identity. This study's participants provided instances where their identity of being black and being a woman, who was sexually assaulted, influenced their desire to disclose. It was perceived by the researcher that the intersecting factors associated with being black and being a woman, and other oppressive factors created settings where disclosure was not an option. As a Black woman, Vicki, mentioned that, "I just didn't think it [reporting sexual assault] applied to me [because she was Black, her economic

class, her history with violence and neighborhood]. When speaking about practices of the African American community Danielle, asserted that "being in the Black community, we are taught to you kind of keep things to yourself and deal with it." Dee advanced this concept below as she examined her experience with sexual assaults, being a member of an African American community and its relationship with sexual assault and non-disclosure.

> So I believe that one of the things that impacted me is the secrecy of sexual abuse in the African American community…I think the secrecy with the [her] early molestation contributed to the fact that I wasn't in a position to disclose after victimization had taken place on a college campus. So in my case, um, there were three different instances… As an African American woman, um, in our society, um, I don't believe that we are valued. I believe the whole notion from the dominant culture is that we are less than and that we don't have ownership to our bodies, even in the school systems. I believe we are undervalued and underappreciated, and I believe that all of that intersectionality of my subjugated style is to the ability to speak up for myself to disclose. I wasn't empowered to do that, as an African American woman in our society.

The oppressive intersectional factors associated with the participants' identities appeared to play unique roles in their desire not to report their assaults while in college. The researcher analyzed comments that spoke to participants' feelings of being undervalued and underappreciated because they were black and women which are characteristics not aligned with members of the dominant culture. Because of the unique identities possessed by the participants, and their feelings of being underappreciated,

there was a sense that policies that governed sexual assault did not pertain to them. These feelings appeared to affect their self-worth. Because of the additional identities that the participants own and their desire to not disclose, the researcher detected a practice of 'keeping things to themselves and dealing with it.' The practice of keeping things to themselves is a characteristic of the strong Black woman persona. The researcher will acknowledge this persona later in this section and its role in the participants' non-disclosure.

Protection. With a history of witnessing Black men falsely imprisoned, lynched, and murdered, some Black women have assumed a role to protect them from systems, and structures aimed at destroying or weakening Black men. Although sexual assault is a hideous crime, some of this study's research participants felt that their non-disclosure provided protection for their assailants, and unwitting members of their family. When interviewing Alice, she recalled one of the reasons for her non-disclosure was not to protect the assaulter, but the men in her family, namely her father, a prominent lawyer in the south.

> I remember[ed], um, we talked about factors in terms of why I didn't report it, um, and me potentially protecting my father. And I remember that my cousin was sexually assaulted in college her freshman year, I believe-and we're three years apart, two years apart. And I remember the reaction of my uncle and my dad and my uncle's frat brothers, um, [so] when she reported it and how they "possied up." I just remember that anger and the angst and their reaction and response and so probably subconsciously in an effort to protect my father, [be] cause I know who my dad was and I know fundamentally who he was as a person. He was a

> lawyer, but my father was from the south, just [a] country boy…he absolutely would have gathered his posse together and probably sued the school.

Commenting along the lines of protecting family members, Dee stated:

> I think as African American Women, we tried to protect others. So in some way I felt that if I did disclosed the incident to my family, my brother and my father would have ended up seriously bringing some type of bodily harm to someone, maybe that would impact their lives as well.

Unlike the examples above, where the participant's non-disclosure was focused on protecting a family member, Jay spoke about a guilt that she would have assumed if she reported her assault to law enforcement officials.

> It was a Brother, so I know there was a part of me that was very protective of [you know] this Brother on campus, I don't want to be the reason he is arrested, another Brother in prison. So there was a part of me that wanted to protect, as strange as it sounds, I probably wanted to protect him…if I would have went to the police, he would have been arrested, kicked off the team, blah, blah, blah. Even though he did it, we know that accusation alone is enough to lose everything. There is no pending process. Well, I, I assume that it was like that then- I don't know…I'm guessing, I'm guessing I'm going by what happens today. If a person is accused, they are immediately kicked off the football team, but for me, I thought then he's going to be arrested. That's another brother in jail or in prison. Another brother who's without a college degree. And I would've felt like it was my fault, but I caused all of that.

When discussing the factors that affected Edna's response, she spoke about protecting not only the assaulter or family members, but those who she shared an indirect relationship with, such as the college basketball coach, staff and members of the administration.

> My father worked there [her college], he was a professor. So, I definitely didn't want to do anything or say anything that would bring him any kind of displeasure or shame [like], …this is your kid! and [you know, like] What is she doing and [you know]? or "How did this happen? I just feel like with him working there and then when my connection to the team then that was other faculty members involved too. Because like when we're traveling on the road, like you're [the coaching staff] responsible for us.

As Edna recalled the actions of her assaulter, she attributed the attacker's actions to a dependency on alcohol.

Her comments spoke to how she understood his behavior towards her:

> I don't think the person's [the assaulter] intent was to be malicious, if that makes sense. So, at that time I'll say that that person really did have, a problem with alcohol. And so, in most of the events, they were very much inebriated…I don't think that they were a bad person; and I don't think that their intent was to be hurtful. I don't think that that's the type of person that they were. I don't even really know if they remember; I don't know if they do…We've never had a conversation to that effect.

As stated in the literature review, Black women have historically strived to protect not only the Black family, but some Black men who were perpetrators of multiple forms

of violence directed towards them. Throughout the researcher's life, there have been instances when Black women, who were family, and friends of the researcher, protected their assailants by not pursuing charges with legal authorities. With that, not wanting to send another Black man to prison, or jail, compelled some of the participants not to disclose. Further, protecting the integrity of one's family name and a cultural expectation of how women should act in public compelled some participants to assume a position of silence. The researcher feels that the sense of protection that the participants had for their Black assaulter was a learned behavior. This learned behavior derives from centuries of witnessing Black men (i.e., their sons, husbands, brothers, and uncles) being treated unjustly by white led legal systems, which, in some cases, has led to severe punishments and untimely deaths of the wrongfully accused. For these reasons, the researcher asserts that unjust legal systems contributed to several Black women's, to include this study's participants, primary reasoning for their non-disclosure.

Embarrassed. A feeling of humiliation was experienced by some of the research participants of this study. This humiliation, or embarrassment, was created based on how the participant believed they would be received if they disclosed the assault. An aspect of Sharell's embarrassment came from her underage drinking, which created the setting for the assault.

Sharell explained:

> That's where the shame came in because I felt if I would not have been drinking, it would not have happened. I felt like, if I wasn't drinking, it wouldn't have happened, and I didn't want to tell people that I was drinking. I didn't want to tell people because of the blaming [you know]. I can hear people saying, well, if you

> wouldn't have, this wouldn't have happened or that wouldn't have happened. So, and I know if I wasn't drinking, it wouldn't have gone that far. It definitely wouldn't have gone that far.

Like Sharell, Alice attributed her embarrassment to underage drinking and the compromising position she found herself in after regaining consciousness.

Alice stated,

> I probably drank too much, passed out. And when I woke up, his penis [the assaulter] was inside me and I knew it was wrong. So, I jumped up and went to the bathroom stayed the bathroom until everybody else woke up and then we left…which is why I never reported.

Allowing her guard down and not being in control of the situation is what Tracey attributed to her embarrassment when it came to the sexual assault and the reason for her non-disclosure.

She further illustrated the reason for her embarrassment:

> I was more so embarrassment. I have grown to always be in control of situations, that's my, that's always my go to. Deep down that's not who I am, that's just my way of protecting myself and I just to know that I'll allowed myself to let my guard down to a level that would put me in a very vulnerable position. It was more embarrassing; I should've known better. So, I am taking part responsibility in what happened...ultimately the short version is more so embarrassment for allowing myself into a position where I should have been in control.

Jay associated her sense of embarrassment to not only placing herself in a situation to be sexually assaulted, but a feeling of guilt. This feeling of guilt appeared to

consume her because of follow-on assaults that her assaulter performed on other unsuspecting victims.

> So I don't want to say anything because the first thing they're going to do is say, why would you drinking? Why were you this? And I didn't want the embarrassment. You know, I didn't want the, the circus and the embarrassment that comes with knowing that to some degree I put myself in that situation. I didn't understand it. I mean, I was actually, I was filled with guilt. I didn't understand it at all. I didn't know how to process it. I was filled with guilt when I found out this same individual went to prison for raping someone else because I felt like if I said something maybe I could've stopped it [future rapes]…I felt there's guilt, there's guilt, but there's also guilt from a kid not saying anything because I'm sure there were other victims then. In fact, I know there were other victims and for whatever reason you just continuously beat yourself up. If I would just have said something that maybe I could've protected someone else.

Most of the participants demonstrated a sense of embarrassment or shame, which was related to one's self-blame. Several participants attributed their embarrassment to underage drinking that created environments for their assault. Given the embarrassment of being sexually assaulted, the participants chose to be silent and not create a "circus [like environment]" as one participant stated. Therefore, the researcher posits that shunning the circus-like environment that could accompany disclosure was the participants' way of reducing the possibility of being scrutinized by their peers and remaining in the in-group that they possessed membership.

Avoidance. Another reoccurring intrinsic theme that appeared to contribute to this study's research participant's non-disclosure was their purposeful avoidance of thinking about or discussing the incident. Making a purposeful decision not to discuss the incident is how Tracey made meaning of the avoidance associated with her non-disclosure in the statement below, "It's me making the decision to not move forward with, um, um, [not] sharing what had happened. That's, that's it. There's nothing deeper than that. It's just not sharing."

Dee, a victim of sexual assault as a child and teenager, characterized her avoidance by saying:

> I've got to say, I didn't even think that thought at the time [disclosure]. It was just something that I was accustomed of doing [non-disclosure]. It was a part of what had already taken place in my life and I had already built up this barrier.

Like Dee, having been exposed to sexual assault before her experience in college, Danielle spoke about her previous experience with sexual assault and the manner that she avoided thinking about it:

> I really didn't understand myself to be honest with you. Um, it wasn't the first time that it happened. When the first time it happened, I was young and I kind of learned how to shut it off and move on and put it in the back of my mind… I got through it. I put it [the assault that took place on campus] behind me and keep it moving. It was a dark period. I think it lasted maybe I want to say by two weeks.

Vicki described how she did not entertain the idea of discussing the assault with anyone and left the town which the assault occurred, which enabled her to create a new identity:

> I never thought about telling nobody. I never thought about calling the police. I never thought about anything, honestly... And so, I don't even remember what I did. I don't remember what I did afterwards. I honestly, I just know I didn't disclose it. I didn't talk to anybody about it I just, I don't remember. I don't, I just, I remember that part…that summer I decided I'm going to join the military. And so, I finished school out and I just went [to the military recruiter's office], and I didn't tell nobody…I just decided it was time for me to leave my hometown, so I went to the recruiter's office…I just went in, signed the paperwork and they said I could leave in 30 days. By the time my mom found out about it, it was too late, she was crying. She was upset, but I had already made my decision. I already had my leave date, and I left. And so, I left my hometown and that whole memory of that behind me. I haven't been home since.

Sharell described the feelings she possessed, knowing members of the assailant's fraternity possibly knew about the assault and her desire to avoid or place the incident out of her memory:

> I think all of them [fraternity members] played the same maybe equal parts in me not wanting to tell. I would rather have just swept it up under the rug like I did [you know]. I just felt like if no one knew, then things would be better for me. Even if I thought, my God, the guys may be talking about me. I wanted to act like it never happened…It didn't happen to me. So, that's a reason why I didn't I disclose. I think after the guilt and the shame… I tried not to think more about it. I didn't think much about why I didn't disclose; I wanted to pretend that didn't happen. I just, I just wanted it to go away. You know, I just wanted all to go away

> and start all over, you know. I knew what to do, but this is something that I did not want to talk about. I did not want to talk about.

To do nothing, or to assume a status quo position, is what the researcher gathered from some of the comments made by the participants of this study. A willingness to do nothing conveyed a desire to not highlight the crimes committed against them. Several participants expressed that they just wanted to move forward or place the incident behind them. In other circumstances, where the participants who were sexually assaulted prior to their experience in college, the researcher identified a learned behavior demonstrated by this group. This learned behavior was their ability to dismiss or place barriers between them and painful memories of the assault to achieve goals. After her assault, Vicki's act of leaving her hometown was an attempt to redefine herself and a return to normalcy. The researcher estimates that returning to a sense of normalcy, through avoidance, was the objective for some of the participants of this study, which supported their non-disclosure.

Fear. During the interviews some participants demonstrated an apprehension to disclose while in college. This apprehension, in most cases, was fueled by a perception that the participant would be the target of an unpleasant action or feeling. This fear facilitated some of the participants' avoidance, which created an environment of non-disclosure. Vicki's fear of how her family would scrutinize her enable aspects of her non-disclosure, as described in the following passage.

> I'm like 19. So I felt like me calling the police will transfer to me having to tell my family and I think I was more afraid of my family than I was in the bully…I don't need everybody talking about Vicki was assaulted. Vicki, Vicki had this

> going on… Vicki, Vicki, Vicki, I don't need that… I just don't want to be judged. I don't want to have nobody ask me no questions; my family are very upfront people- we don't sugar coat anything…And so that, that fear of having sit down in front of all those women and kind of go through this explanation all over again.

Like Vicki, in addition to not wanting to be judged, Sharell's non-disclosure was an attempt to maintain a status quo environment on campus and not create any undue attention:

> …Just not, not wanting to be looked at as that girl, because I was daddy's girl…that girl that has, that had been touched [you know], in that way, raped basically…being the quote unquote-as they used to call it- new meat, the new meat. The guy, the predator, being in the, the largest fraternity on our campus at the time. I did not want to make any waves. I just, I just did not, I didn't, I didn't want to make any wave. I was afraid, definitely afraid-just afraid.

As an athletic manager, Edna had to comply with rules and regulations of being assigned to this position. One regulation was, that there was not to be any intimate relationships developed between the basketball players and supporting staff. With initial consensual sexual activities, which led to sexual assaults, Edna feared reprisals from the coaching staff if they became aware of her previous encounters with the assailant. Culturally, Edna was concerned about how her family would react, after they attempted to persuade her from living on campus, if she disclosed the sexual assault.

Edna elaborated her concerns:

> One of the young ladies had actually been involved and gotten pregnant…We weren't supposed to be involved in anyway, so, [you know], you couldn't hide

> that. So that fact had already come out [you know] so we already had that conversation one time, so I didn't really want to be on the end of that conversation I come from my family's from the West Indies, so…you don't want to appear to be like you're loose and out there and you know, so I think those factors probably they came into play as well...if you do report this and say that this happened to you, then like what questions are going to be asking you. "What were you doing there?", "Why were you there?" When I graduated high school, I graduated a year early. I was like 17. And so, in my mind I'm like, okay, I'm leaving my hometown, to attend a college in a neighboring city. And my parents were like, no, you're too young. It's too far. You know, you gotta stay here…I'm home my first year. The second year my parent let me go on campus; and then this happens...So I guess I didn't want it to kind of backfire and blow up in my face like me going on campus instead of staying home…making poor decisions puts you in a position to have X, Y, Z happen. So maybe just more afraid than anything else.

Similar to Edna's preceding account, Danielle's spoke about the fear she possessed to be scrutinized by a family member, her mother, if she was to disclose:

> I can just hear my mom telling me that you shouldn't have gone to that party and you shouldn't have been stupid enough to drink alcohol and you didn't know these people. And I just didn't feel like being victimized again with that disclosure on that because that's what I felt it was going to happen. I think the thing that prevented me from disclosing it was, um, was how people were going to perceive and think about me. And even to this day [considering what] goes on with

> women as of now, a lot of women, they don't disclose things because-we think it's our fault.

Like the previous accounts provided by Sharell and Danelle, Alice feared potential scrutiny that she could have received from her family, and possibly re-victimized by systems or structures designed to facilitate disclosure:

> The concern that I would be blamed for [the sexual assault]. I couldn't tell you what this man looked like. I don't remember anything about him; other than the fact that I woke up and he was penetrating me. Other than that, I don't remember what he looked like. I don't know his name. I couldn't tell you anything like that…I'm going to only say that it probably is just my belief that based on my observations about how things like that have been handled, not necessarily at my institution, but just in general in the broader scheme of things that reporting it [the sexual assault], either one, nothing was going to happen or two I be blamed and challenged in terms of what I did that created the situation versus the focus being him and what he did…maybe disappointments from my parents, because we went up there with a certain set of expectations, but when I went to school, and not wanting to disappoint this me and my own internal guidepost didn't want to disappoint them.
>
> I remember recently told my mom and my mom was shocked. I never said anything; my father never knew. I never told my dad. My dad's just been deceased. It'd be 10 years this year. So, he did, he never knew before I, before he died, I recently told my mom and she was like, well, why didn't you say anything? And it's in the Black community just as something you talk about… if I think hard

> enough about, and maybe one of the reasons I didn't disclose this, cause I didn't want to have to also tell my parents, cause you reported and you got to get your parents involved. And then there's questions, well, blame what were you doing and why were you doing that and why were you drinking? Um, and not wanting to disappoint my parents, not because of the assault. Well, because I was engaged in behavior that I knew that they weren't going to be pleased with, one of the reasons I did not report it, um, and he never knew was because I was engaging in behavior that I knew he would. My dad and my mom would frown upon. It was not becoming of the, um, the expectations and morals and values that they had instilled in me growing up. Um, and not maybe subconsciously I thought that I'd be, you know, they would look at me differently...My parents would be disappointed if I found out. I'm just going to keep this to myself.

Possessing apprehensions to disclose because of a concern about negative feedback that the participant could receive from the environment was a factor that influenced their avoidance that affected their non-disclosure. Pressure to live up to family expectations appeared to be defining factors that created feelings of fear within some of the participants. Potential derogatory perceptions held by their peers, concerning how victims of sexual assault were viewed, was a concern that several participants owned. Considering the researcher's observations mentioned above, a determination was made that the notion of losing one's status with family members and peer groups fueled their fear, which sanctioned their non-disclosure.

Group membership. Seven of the eight research participants were first year, or freshmen, when the assaults took place. Given the researcher's experience, as a

freshmen, many college students look to fit in and become members of an “ingroup.” Remaining a member of an ingroup, and not face ostracization because of their disclosure, influenced the act of non-disclosure. Yet not wanting to be classified as a victim and the potential treatment that a victim receives, Vicki stated, “I don't want me to be nobody's victim. So, I'm like, no, that's, that's not me. Sharell explored her reasoning for her non-disclosure. She spoke about being a member of an ingroup (i.e., a popular girl on campus) and being accepted by another ingroup, the largest fraternity on campus. Be that as it may, she did not want to make any one mad at her, or have her popularity affected because she disclosed the sexual assault.

When discussing what influences a sexual assault victim’s desire to remain within a particular in-group by not disclosing, Alice recalled an unwritten policy which applied on her campus:

> We just didn't report it for [you know] risking being ostracized if you report something that happened in a frat house-you're just not gonna report that, because you don't want to be ostracized on campus. If a popular fraternity member, a popular person on campus did something and everybody knew about it, no one's gonna report that, because you don't want to be ostracized.

As Alice thought back to her experience with sexual assault, she recounted how she was cognizant of the activities that occurred around her, and how they were not aligned with the expectations of her parents and the values they instilled into her. However, possessing a concern of not being accepted by the group, Alice participated in activities that led to her sexual assault:

> My parents had just left. I turned 18, and my girlfriends took me out. Some guys picked us up that I did not know, which is, number one I knew in my back of my mind…this is probably not something I should be doing.... They took us to the grocery store to by MD 2020 [a cheap wine], which is the worst liquor. They purchased it for us in my back of my mind-okay, that's number two-this probably shouldn't be happening. But, um, I don't want to break up the fun. Everybody else's enjoying themselves. Let me just kind of sit back and let things go.

Participants' silence enabled them to retain their status within various groups that they possess membership. Not being ostracized was a prevalent theme alluded to by several participants of the study. Seven out of eight participants were first year students when their assault occurred. With this in mind, the researcher feels that as first year students, the participants' desire to be accepted by their peers, outweighed their right and duty to report that they were a victim of a crime.

Painful memories. There was no singular condition that created painful memories for this study's research participants. Although some of the research participants did not explicitly provide comments that supported their painful memories, the researcher asserts that the sexual assault incident in which they were involved with created a painful memory that affected the them in various ways. These painful memories have contributed to the participants' desire to avoid thoughts, discussions, and settings where the participant could be reminded of the incident. That said, Danielle provided a description of her home life and her relationship with her mother before going to college, are illustrated below.

Danielle's stated,

> When I went to college, the home I left to go to college…wasn't home. Home is where your heart is at; and my heart wasn't there. My father raised me up in Jersey, then the state of New Jersey took me away from him and I got placed in a foster home, which eventually they [unknown family] adopted me. My mom fought to get me back to come to Georgia. When I went back to Georgia, she didn't have her stuff together and we were moving from place to place; it was like I became her parent. So, it was a lot of emotional, verbal abuse going on. I got pregnant at an early age and I didn't want to be, I didn't want to turn out like, like her, I wanted to do something different. So, I knew once I left, I couldn't go back because home just wasn't home for me. You know, it wasn't a place where, you know, home is where you're supposed to feel safe. I was never safe at home, so that's why I always worked. That's why I always did after school activities and kind of just stayed away from home as much as I could**.**
>
> My mom, my mom she wasn't a drinker, she wasn't on drugs, but she did have her own demons that she had to fight. She was a young mother as well; so she didn't know. She didn't know the pressures of how to raise three girls. And then you have two girls with two babies, she just didn't know. She didn't, she didn't know how to be a proper parent. I mean, she did the best she could with what she, what she was taught and what she had, but, um, she could've done a little bit better in my eyes. She just wasn't, she was very emotionally detached from us, very, especially me. I think I was a child that nobody really wanted. I just came and, you know, my dad was a man enough to step in and say, I will take care of her.

> But he was wrestling his own demons. So, she was very emotionally detached and it was no pleasing her, you know, I worked and helped out with the bills and did, try to do nice things that a child should do to gain the love and affection from my mom; and it just, it was never enough. And there I was, I was, I was ready to move on.

The researcher feels that the painful memories associated with this study are aligned with a sense of betrayal felt by the participants. The researcher acknowledges that there are various degrees of pain related to the memories held by all the participants of this study. However, the spoken lived experience of the participants pointed to a disloyalty and deceit not only demonstrated by their attacker, but in some cases, members of their families. In this environment, the researcher feels that participants that harbor overwhelming painful memories, as they relate to members of their family, assume a sense of hopelessness. This hopelessness created opportunities and justified avoidance, which facilitated non-disclosure.

History of sexual assault. Several research participants were victims of sexual assault before entering college. Given their familiarity with assault before college, and an avoidance posture assumed prior to the incident taking place in college, some of this study's research participants reverted to previous behaviors that supported non-disclosure.

Dee recounted her dealings with sexual assault before college:

> So thinking back as an African American female. I particularly believe that nondisclosure, on the college campus took place from an earlier victimization within my life because that was not the first time that I had experienced sexual

> victimization or sexual trauma…The first incident was with friend of the family. Then it was with a high school student. This incident was with a person that who I knew and trusted and then there was the incident on the college campus-so, there were very distinct incidents. And I think I, I developed a pattern of secrecy about, um, the sexual victimization…I started being molested at the age of three years old, it was a family friend. It was a secret that only I am supposed to keep with the perpetrator and if I told anyone in my family me would be mad at me, then my friends would be mad at me. So, this is how this whole secrecy element came into place. I remember it was just our secret.

Jay, a previous victim, of sexual assault spoke about sexual victimization in a more general sense as she discussed sexual assault and those impacted before entering college:

> We come to college with a good percentage of us come to college with a history of sexual assault…It was a part of what had already taken place in my life and I had already built up this. We don't talk about it…the secret… because that's what I was told as a child. This is the secret. This is not something that you just did not disclose.

When Danielle was eight years old, she was not only sexually assaulted, but disclosed the incident. This disclosure created the setting for Danielle's assailant (her mother's boyfriend) to be tried in court over her claim. She was also met with scrutiny from her mother as she questioned the validity of Danielle's report. Based on the testimony provided by Danielle during the interview, the scrutiny received from her mother, at eight years old, affected her desire to disclose as a young woman who was sexually assaulted in college.

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It appears that a culture of secrecy and the threat, or implementation, of coercive power served to affect some of the participants desire to disclose. The aforementioned features established conditions for repeated sexual assaults perpetrated against some of the participants of this study. Interestingly, in addition to operating within an environment of secrecy and fear, participants that had a history of sexual assault stated that did not understand themselves as victims of sexual assault. With this comprehension, the researcher attributes the participants to not understanding themselves as having their innocence taken from them at an early age, possibly again as a teenager, then again as a college young adult. These repeated acts, sometimes occurring in secrecy and within a context of an imbalance of power between the attacker and the participant contribute to an environment of confusion for the participants. Given this state of confusion, the researcher feels that by avoiding the memories associated with a history of sexual assault, participants were able to take greater control of their lives, as time progressed.

Strong Black woman. Throughout slavery and the Jim Crow era to present day, many Black women were forced to be strong Black women in face of adversity. This characteristic was not lost on a few research participants of this study**.**

Understanding the culture of her family, Vicki illustrated why she had to demonstrate strength, as disclosure was not an option:

> I come from a huge family and so, um, I didn't want to feel embarrassed or ashamed or weak… what would give me that feeling that I'm weak is because I put myself in a [bad] situation. I've been taught to take responsibility for my own actions. And so in a sense, I felt like I would be weak because, I was assaulted and I did not foresee myself or the person [did not foresee the indicators that an assault may take place]…I didn't tell anyone because I did not want them to think I didn't have control and that's probably what it is. I wasn't in control of the situation completely and now that was a weakness that I allowed to happen…I didn't want to appear weak or not in control. That's the biggest part [the reason for her non-disclosure] at that time.

Pushing through the painful memories associated with being a victim of sexual assault is how Tracy demonstrated being a strong Black woman.

When the researcher inquired about how Tracey understood herself as a Black college woman, that was sexually assaulted in college and did not disclose, she responded:

> To be honest, I don't have any answer for that question because I really haven't thought much about it afterwards. I never talked about it. Um, it's just one of those things that you just create a suppressed memory, um, and you just learn to

> push past or at least try to push past…[I tried] not think about it, not talk about it. Um [and], carry on as if it didn't happen.

To add to this discussion, Dee provided information that supported her ability to take care of herself after the assault and not include others. Her desire to take care of herself, and not request assistance from family members, law enforcement, or medical professionals was how she demonstrated her strong Black woman persona.

Dee stated,

> Being a strong Black woman was being able to take care of myself, so I didn't need to disclose to anyone else because the impact of the sexual trauma, sexual abuse. So because I was able to handle that, I was able to endure. Um, and then, um, kind of got practice that I don't need my dad or my brother to handle this for me because I, I can take care of this myself.

Some participants' desired to deal with their adversity, as strong Black women, by deliberately concealing their pain. Demonstrating a strong Black woman persona allows one to maintain their social status and membership in a group without scrutiny. However, it is the researcher's understanding, based on the contents of the literature review, that demonstrating a strong Black woman persona, could lead to physical and mental health issues. Despite this possibility, the researcher feels that expressing this persona was a way that some participants regained control of an area of their lives that was unlawfully affected. Furthermore, the primary manner that the Strong Black woman persona was demonstrated during this study was their willingness to endure the pain of sexual assault in silence.

Minimizing. A few research participants, during their interviews, attempted to diminish the seriousness and severity of the sexual assault by minimization. In fact, based on the lived experiences provided by some of the participants, their worry was not the sexual abuse, but if they were pregnant, or received a sexually transmitted Disease (STD). These concerns were on Danielle's mind, opposed to the sexual violence that took place, as she discussed the incident with a medical care professional. Like Danielle, Vicki, during our interview, appeared to be less concerned about being a victim of sexual assault and more concerned with the possibility of contracting an STD or becoming pregnant.

Vicki stated,

> I felt like I was alive. I was alive, I wasn't pregnant, and I don't have any diseases. I'm alive. The bruises will heal. Um, and so I don't have to let this [lay] upon me. Honestly. I was so refreshed that situation is over with and I made it home for me. Just move forward.

Pointing at the college culture is the manner that Alice minimized sexual assault as she added, "And I'm sure that it happens [sexual assault]. It's college. I'm still sure that it [sexual assault] happens on more than one occasion, you're in the club and someone grabs your butt."

The researcher feels that the act of minimizing is a component of the strong Black woman persona. One hand, some participants discussed how important it was to be a strong Black woman. An action that was consistent with being a strong Black woman persona, as interpreted by the researcher, was their ability downplay the sexual assault incident during the interview. On the other hand, some participants that demonstrated a

strong Black woman persona also pointed out fear that they possess and a feeling of insignificance. Participants personifying a strong Black woman persona, may also have fear and a feeling of worthless that supports a conflict of positioning within some of the participants.

Vulnerability. As the participants' provided their lived experiences about sexual assault and the issues they faced disclosing the incident, a theme of vulnerability emerged from their testimonies.

Supporting this claim, Vicki stated:

> I can't control the information…I can't control other people's perspective. And so… I don't know. I don't know why I think that's weak, but in my mind, I just don't. I just think I [was] vulnerable at the time that the assault had happened. I had no control and it was all up to me that that's the weakness part of it.

Edna further validated this theme by saying, "I just felt like I just wasn't taking care of me and I felt like I put myself in a position to be vulnerable. So, then I guess that was really the reason why I never really said anything.

Tracey, who was in the military before entering college, blames herself for being vulnerable to a sexual assault. In her following statement, she made reference to understanding the resources available to sexual assault victims and her time in the military, which should have facilitated a greater degree of vigilance. She also was aware of the services one could leverage if they found themselves as a victim of assault.

> I knew all the resources were there and had it been anyone else I would have encouraged and pushed them to do so. It's different when it's you. Um, again, I

> had been in the military prior to going to undergrad. I was an adult. Um, I had been involved in a number of different trainings, tactical exercises. Um, you're always on guard and you're always thinking about what's the next move. So again, to allow myself to be vulnerable at any point in time for me, that was my fault.

Being young and not wanting to disrupt the fun that the group was having, Alice identified that her presence, in a questionable environment, created a sense of vulnerability:

> I've blamed myself because I put myself in a vulnerable position, and I've since from that moment on, I can tell you that probably it didn't even, probably, I know that it dictated how I maneuver for the rest of the time I was in college, so I was never put in, I never put myself in a situation where I was left in a vulnerable state where that could happen again.

The participants' inability to dictate the terms of the environments where they found themselves during their assault was emblematical of the subordinate theme of vulnerability. Most of the participants attributed their vulnerabilities to a lack of control during their assault. The researcher suggests that participants regained control of their lives through their non-disclosure. Taking a chance and disclosing to potentially culturally insensitive agencies, chartered to support victims of sexual abuse, could create conditions for additional loss of control and an increased state of vulnerability.

Familiarity. In some situations, the study participants' previous association with their assaulter created an environment of vulnerability. Given the fraternity's international, national, and local popularity, Sharell felt that she understood the culture

and acceptable behavior of the organization and its members. The pre-existing relationship shared between her and the men in her family created a trust that worked in concert with the familiarity she possessed about this fraternity. When Sharell was sexually assaulted by a member of this fraternity, the comfort associated with this familiarity was lost, which played a role in her non-disclosure.

In Jay's case, the assailant being a popular member of the college's football team, was known to Jay given his status on campus. This status created a familiarity with Jay, which resulted in her vulnerability for sexual assault. Vulnerability, in some cases, resembled the participant "letting their guard down." That was the case during Vicki's assault. Jay's familiarity with the assaulter, his family, and having a feeling of comfort around him created the environment for the assault.

Jay stated,

> He was active in the church and in college. So, I thought I can go out a couple times with you. I met his family, met his mom, so I thought I made a good decision with this particular guy… it's just like, oh my God, he's like, it's like a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. It is like one way he looks like this person who's the choir guy who plays a piano and can sing all the gospel music…to you are absolutely a monster.

Advancing this topic of familiarity, Edna recounted the familiar environment that she shared with her assaulter, a college basketball player, when she was an equipment manager for a college basketball team.

Edna stated:

> We traveled with, basketball team, so me and like three other females were managers, statisticians or whatever. So, we spent a lot of time together on the road, in practice, out of practice, whatever the case may be. So, there were times where we were just all together, for whatever reason-so it seemed like a normal type situation…we had we had an encounter before…that was consensual prior to any of this. So maybe that led you [the assaulter] to believe that, you know, it was okay [to assault Edna].

The researcher asserts that acquittances and degrees of trust facilitated settings where some sexual assaults took place. The researcher feels that familiarity created a sense of security. This sense of security was alluded to in Vicki's testimony as she admired and trusted her assailant, before the incident, as she was conversant with the attacker's family and the attacker's connection to the Black church. It is the researcher's understanding, that in some Black families, meeting a boyfriend's or girlfriend's family is a sign that a relationship is relatively serious and it is worthy for family members to invest their time in their child's partner. Additionally, a strong demonstration in a faith shared by one's partner creates familiarity because of the common focus on objectives applied to that particular religion. Possessing admiration and trust for one's attacker, before the incident, enabled the setting to create vulnerability. The researcher believes that some participants feelings of exploitation, highlighted their vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities played a role in their non-disclosure.

Naivety. The transient nature of rape myths, and defining what is rape, created confusion and naivete in some of the research participants. In some cases, their

confusion made them vulnerable to further sexual assaults. Edna's relationship with her assaulter created a disbelief that facilitated her inability to label what occurred to her as sexual assault. This disbelief served was a component to her non-disclosure.

Edna recalled the factors that affected her non-disclosure:

> Honestly, it took me some time to kinda connect the dots I guess, or make the realization that hey, this is what just happened. I guess I knew, but because I knew the person and we were connected every day through our activities. And so, I was kinda second guessed myself, like, or maybe I felt like I put myself in that position. So, it took me some time to make the realization and connect the dots. Like even though you knew this person and were considered friends, it still wasn't right.

Before entering college, the males in Sharell's family where respectful to the women that they encountered. Additionally, her family felt that college was a place where one could go to experience life and not be too concerned with the realities of life when it came to sexual assault. Not having discussions, which spoke to the unlawful aspects of college, such as drugs, alcohol and sexual assault, was a demonstration of naivety captured in Sharell's comments below.

> I felt like no one would take advantage of me…it's a bunch of guys, they'll, they'll protect me-maybe I was that naive going into the situation. I was that naive type thinking, growing up I guess because I was always so protected. Again, sheltered, it wasn't a conversation that I had like with my mom or something that that's, I don't remember ever [having] that conversation, but my mom… my mom's naive

> thinking also that, you know, college is a great place cause it's a safe place. Colleges, you know, all fun, and games.

On a separate aspect of naivety, Danielle's and Jay's accounts spoke to the naivety of them not understanding themselves after being sexually victimized. Not understanding one's self could create the environment for future assaults. Danielle stated,

> I really didn't understand myself to be honest with you. It wasn't the first time that it [sexual assault] happened. So, when the first time it happened I was young and I kind of learned how to shut it off and move on and put it in the back of my mind.

Advancing the concept mentioned in this section of this study, Jay spoke about how her previous assault played into her non-disclosure and the views of her mother supported a naïve perspective when attempting to understand sexual assault.

> I didn't [understand herself]. You know, I wish we would've had a #Metoo, because I was assaulted. I mean, I think I told you before, I was already…I came to college with the history of sexual abuse because I was molested for several years by a family member. And I never said anything, Oh, so I already had this very toxic feeling… And I think my mother's comment was, well, if certain acts didn't happen, then it's not rape. But my mother was also 70 years old. These concepts are, you know, then I was pissed, but I did understand it came from a place of sheer ignorance and not, you know, insensitivity.

The fluid nature of rape myths could facilitate confusion in the mind of the sexual assault victim. Alice's recollection of the sexual assault incident, in her mind, did not

meet the sexual assault criteria, until she shared the incident with her friends 10 to15 years later.

Alice stated,

> I never went to, um, I think I went to the doctor just as irregular course of things, but I never went to get tested or checked out or anything. I don't think I identified it as a sexual assault until I was grown like within the last 10, 15 years is what I put two and two together. Like, oh, there was nonconsensual and I'm a lawyer. So, it's not that I didn't recognize what the definition was and then I kind of probably put it, put it to the back of my mind and my subconscious. It didn't really think about it, um, until I was, we were some girlfriends were talking about, and I mentioned my experience and they say you are sexually assaulted. So, I don't think I really thought about it until probably the last 10 to15 years. And in terms of classifying my experience as that. I never thought that deeply about it, but I think, I think I can tell you that mine, I knew it was wrong. I knew it was problematic. Um, the very first thought that came into my mind was I drank too much. I shouldn't have drunk too much. I don't know who this dude is. I went in the bathroom, got back to the dorm, never told anybody, took a shower, scrub myself and then just proceeded as if nothing happened.

The researcher posits that given the agile, and sometimes, uncertain nature of how sexual assaults where characterized, it was difficult for the participants of this study to determine if they were assaulted. Based on the comments provided by some of the participants, it was apparent that some of them were unaware of being sexually victimized. This study demonstrated the confusion that could accompany attempting to

understand sexual boundaries when it comes to welcomed or coerced sexual activity. This confusion did not begin and end with the participants, but some members of their families were not aware of what constituted assault. The researcher believes that the naivety associated with understanding characteristics, in some cases within this study, was related to an understanding passed from one generation to another supporting sexual assault. Transgenerational acceptances of what characterized assault enabled one to understand their non-disclosure.

The privileged class. Some sexual assaulters possessed status on campus that, at times, gave the perception that laws did not apply to them. Within this environment, there were many that are vulnerable to sexual assault. In some colleges, athletes, members of a fraternity, and high contributing college donors openly violate school statues with no consequence. Given Sharell's testimony, not only was she assaulted by a member of the largest fraternity on her campus, which possessed a unique degree of privilege, but this fraternity [and Sharell's assaulter] shared am unfiltered and influential relationship with the college's security guards and members of the faculty. The relationship shared with the leaders on campus, coupled with the status of the fraternity and the assaulter on Sharell's college campus accounted for a portion of the reason why she did not disclose.

Jay was sexually assaulted by a well-known football player, given his privileged status on campus, she did not disclose.

Jay stated,

> I was assaulted by actually an athlete, one of the best athletes on the football team, who actually, as crazy as it sounds, he would go later go on to go to prison

for raping a woman. It's been exacerbated by a particular protected class like the athletes… they're a protected class.

Because of the historic popularity, prominence, relationship that they had with the campus administration and campus security and size of a particular fraternity on her campus, Sharell did not disclose her assault. Lastly, Edna provided her account, which was facilitated by an all-star basketball player on the university's team. Given the responses provided by the participants of this study, to identify the lead intrinsic cause of the participants' non-disclosure, the researcher utilized graphs to illustrate how the participants' comments coincided with the emergent and subordinate themes of this study. Moreover, the researcher complimented the data contained the data in the figures by providing their interpretation to substantiate the primary intrinsic cause of nondisclosure for the participants of this study.

Incidents where the assaulters possessed privilege, through athletics or by being a member of an organization, appeared to create added dilemmas for the participants when it came to disclosure. The additional dilemma confronted by some of the participants, was either a believability issue because of the stature of their assailant. Additionally, some of the participants' assailants enjoyed relations with authoritative figures on campus (i.e., administrator and faculty) that could undermine sexual assault claims provided. The attacker, who potentially had access to these two environments, wittingly, or unwittingly enabled an atmosphere where this study's participants were reluctant to disclose.

Although the participants of this study, in various ways, physically and mentally personified each aspect of the emergent and subordinate themes of this study, the

research utilized the figures to illustrate the participants' explicit statements that supported the emergence of this study's themes. Additionally, if the researcher acquired an implicit understanding of a participant's comment, which was aligned with a theme, the researcher indicated as such on the figures below. The graphics represent the findings of the intrinsic experiences, which supported the participants' non-disclosure.

Table 3

Results from Intrinsic Theme self-blame

Participants	**Self-Blame**	Insignificant	Identity	Protection	Embarrassment
Vicki	x		x		
Sharell	x				x
Edna	x			x	
Danielle	x	x	x		
Jay		x		x	x
Tracey					x
Dee		x	x	x	x
Alice	x	x		x	
Total	5	4	3	4	4

Table 4

Results from Intrinsic Theme Avoidance

Participants	**Avoidance**	Fear	Grp Member.	Pain Mem.	History of Sexual Aslt.	Strong Black Woman	Minimizing
Vicki	x	x	x			x	x
Sharell	x	x	x				
Edna		x					
Danielle	x	x		x	x		x
Jay					x		
Tracey	x					x	
Dee	x		x		x	x	
Alice		x					x
Total	5	5	3	1	3	3	3

Table 5

Results from Intrinsic Theme Vulnerability

Participants	**Vulnerability**	Familiarity	Naivety	The Privileged Class
Vicki	x	x		
Sharell		x	x	x
Edna	x	x	x	x
Danielle			x	
Jay		x	x	x
Tracey	x			
Dee				
Alice			x	
Total	3	4	5	3

Intrinsic Findings

Although several participants comments supported the theme self-blame, and the sub-theme of naivety, the information provided on the diagrams above pointed to the theme of avoidance and the sub-theme of fear as lead intrinsic causes of this study's participants' non-disclosures. Although the quantitatively responses of the participants support the intrinsic lead cause mentioned above, the researcher also considered the intangible, and interpretive aspects of this study. With this in mind, considering the linguistic, descriptive and conceptual comments, in addition to the culminative responses by the participants, the research feels that in addition to fear being an intrinsic lead cause to non-disclosure, the subtheme of insignificant and strong Black woman determined as lead causes for this study's participants' non-disclosures as college undergraduates.

Extrinsic Factors

Distrust. As participants provided their lived experiences about sexual assault and the issues, they faced disclosing the incident, a theme of non-disclosure transitioned

from intrinsic to extrinsic properties. The theme that emerged from their responses was attributed to external factors related to distrust. As the researcher collected data, participants of this study spoke about the manner that institutional policies, from 1989-1999, did not compel the participants to disclose to authoritative agencies. Based on the information gathered, it appeared that a distrust for law enforcement was a reoccurring sub-theme during this study. Dee demonstrated her distrust when she stated, "I would say one factor [which affect her non-disclosure] was a distrust in the legal system. As far as I am concerned, there would not have been any punitive actions from the college or the university."

Vicki recalled, as a child, the distrust that her family possessed when it came to how her family viewed law enforcement:

> I mean, we did they call the police for anything. I don't remember my mom picking up the phone, or something happened to bring the police to our house. No one called the police…I come from a place where there's such a large police presence, they're not coming around because they're there to help. So, we didn't grow up in an environment where you would reach out to the police just because something happened- you just deal with it and you move forward.

Jay, as she reflected on her reasoning for her non-disclosure, spoke about her impressions of the police and their perceived intent to harass Black men and women:

> Growing up in an environment in which you saw individuals being stopped being harassed for no reason…going to a college campus party, we were referred to as "you people"…my mother was very much involved in the civil rights movement. And just hearing her talk about some of the stuff she went through. So, things I

> saw with my own eyes…I think that fostered a sense of distrust… I was in a mid-western town; and it about as white as it could be. So, you know, all white campus, all white city, not the most welcoming environment for a person of color.

Based on the data collected, the researcher feels that some participants have a distrust of white led organizations that possess coercive or influential power. These feelings are consistent with passages contained in this study's literature review. The threatening presence of a law enforcement officer patrolling and harassing Black youths contributed to their distrust and their willingness to disclose. Also, being a minority on a PWI campus where its culture is inconsistent to being Black and being a Black woman, after one has been sexually assaulted, can produce a feeling of isolation. This isolation, coupled with a perception that views on-campus services as being tailored to the dominant culture could create generate distrust which could give rise to non-disclosure.

Resources. During this study, when asked about the structures, systems and relationship designed to encourage disclosure, was the lack of resources available to encourage and support disclosure as a common sub-theme identified. Because of possible re-victimization, unwanted scrutiny and cultural issues, Dee said, "[I] knew I could go to the hospital, but that wasn't something that, and I was willing to do." Given the lack of focus and resources provided to college sexual assault victims, Sharell responded with the following, "As far as the perception of the campus police, medical service efforts on campus [there was] nothing." Like Sharell, Edna and Alice were unsure if there were resources, on or off campus, to address one's sexual assault. Tracey knew that there were resources available to support victims of sexual assault, however, she chose not to utilize them.

Reflecting on her time at a southern HBCU, Danielle discussed the unsuitable conditions and resources provided at her college:

> I'd be honest with you, it [her college] was not the best college and the resources were very limited. I mean you couldn't even get a band aid if you wanted one… it was so bad that the nurse practitioner…encouraged us to go out and sign up for Medicaid. So, we didn't have to come through her for anything or the clinic on the campus, we'd go off [to] the clinic…we didn't have the best resources there.

When discussing this matter, Vicki understood that there were resources available for those who were sexually assaulted. However, she felt that those resources where not for her [because she was a Black woman]. Having said that, this reality played a role in her disclosure. The perspective that she had for police was not one that supported people in her neighborhood, let alone a young Black woman who was sexually assaulted. Vicki stated,

> Where I come from, there was such a large police presence. They [the police] did not come around because they're there to help , you know, most time again seeing what these ghetto kids are up to…They must be up to no good…we, did not call the police for anything….No one called the police…I grew up in an environment where you don't call the police . I mean, that's just the [entire] community. The whole community environment, you know, we grew up in poor ghetto areas.

Lastly, given her previous engagements with law enforcement officials, which included getting arrested for shielding a Black man from being beaten by police, coupled with her parents being involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Jay

possessed a natural distrust for the police. This natural distrust significantly affected her desire to leverage the police as a resource to report her sexual assault.

The researcher's interpretation of the participants' comments, as they related to resources and their access to them as Black women who were sexually assaulted, conveyed a sense of reluctance that supported the emergent theme Distrust. Sparse medical resources within Black communities and participants' views on how law enforcement elements treated residents that lived in Black communities hampered their desire to request or leverage services and support assets. In some cases, resources were deliberately withheld or disproportionately distributed to Black communities. In some cases, in the same communities, these areas were historically "over policed" creating an environment of intimidation for Blacks who lived in these communities. Appreciating the factors, the researcher posits that the management of resources in the communities that some of the participants lived in were applied in a structurally violent manner. This type of violence promoted a sense of hopelessness; after which, some of this study's participants decided to not disclose.

Policies. Standing and antiquated policies created settings of distrust, which enabled non-disclosures of college women who were sexually assaulted. While on an away basketball game, Edna was sexually assaulted by one of the players. This basketball player assaulted her before. At one time, she and the basketball player shared a consensual sexual relationship, before the assaults. Nevertheless, the university's policy was no intimate relationships were to be shared between players and athletic support personnel. Not adhering to this policy, created a distrust in the coaching staff. Although Edna was sexually assaulted, she did possess, at one time, a consensual sexual

relationship, which was a violation of the policy. This environment created distrust in Edna. Blacks making up 2% of the college student body of a Mid-western PWI, Jay felt that the policies on campus that supported victims of sexual assault were culturally insensitive to Black students. Dee's assessment of the policies at her college was that they were antiquated. Dee pointed out the absence of a system which supported sexual assault victims on her college campus. The absence of these systems created a distrust and supported her non-disclosure.

Dee stated,

> Even to this day, I wouldn't be able to tell you what those systems were at that particular university, it was never talked about. It was never, it was very different culture than we live in today where, you know, you have seminars about these things and it's fairly open. Um, back in, in [19] 94 [19] 95, there weren't really any of those conversations going on my college campus anyway. Um, so even if I thought about seeking help, I don't think I would have known where to go on a college campus to get the help that I needed, um, and probably as far as medical attention. Yeah. I mean, I, I knew I could go to the hospital, but that wasn't something that, and I was willing to do.

A concern that played a role in Danielle's distrust was the underage drinking that she participated in, at the party where she was assaulted. A term of her scholarship, which funded her schooling, was that she would not engage in any unlawful activities (i.e., underage drinking).

Danielle talked about the dilemma she faced when she considered disclosure:

> I think I was I was too afraid to go and tell someone cause…number one, I didn't want to lose my scholarship. And number two, I didn't want to um, get kicked out to school, for underage drinking and going against certain ethics I had signed upon going to the school for the sport that I was picked up for. So a lot of it, I just kind of, I didn't want to…lose my education.

The effects of policies on the participants of this study played a significant role in their nondisclosure. Reviewing the data, there were several cases of underage drinking that attributed to the participants being sexually assaulted. In one instance, the participant did not disclose because if it was found that because she was drinking, she could have lost her scholarship. A condition of the participant's scholarship was that they did not engage in any unlawful activities. The participant's willful compromise of a term on their scholarship placed them in a dilemma, which caused them not to disclose. Throughout this interview process, it was mentioned several times that the college policies that governed sexual assault and harassment were either unclear or non-existent. Similar to the participants that broke the college policies, being unsure of policies design to protect victims of assault placed participants of this study in a dilemma as well. These environments contributed to the participants' lack of desire to disclose.

Undermining aspects. Factors that supported the emergent theme of distrust were participants' comments that scrutinized the role of college's/ university's governing bodies when it came to sexual assault and disclosure**.** In Danielle's case, she felt that the college was more concerned with maintaining its good name and credibility, and not addressing sexual assaults, and risk placing a blemish on the school's reputation.

Additionally, the security guards at Sharell's college possessed a strong relationship with not only the fraternities on campus but the individual that raped her. To illustrate the undermining aspect present on Sharell's campus, she provided an account of a security guard, who because she violated a policy, sexually propositioned her in exchange for not reporting it to administration.

> He [a security guard] said, you can give me what I want, and I will give you what you want. The first thing in the morning, my boyfriend and I were reported, and we went to the Dean's office…. I was scared. I was afraid. I thought I was going to be kicked out of school because again, that guilt of, you know, knowing that I shouldn't have been somewhere, you know… I told the Dean [about the security guard's sexual proposition] and she was, she was not surprised… Nothing. Nothing was done.

The researcher believes that the willful compromise of principles and the integrity in which an agency exposes, leads to an erosion of trust. In the case of this study, participants placed trust and confidence in institutions and people because of services those institutions and people were chartered to do. Unfortunately, outside motives, which appeared to be self-serving, interfered with authoritative bodies' desire to provide their support. Identifying the self-serving aspects that influenced the authoritative body to not perform their duties, for some participants, reinforced preconceived unflattering beliefs they held concerning that agency and adversely impacted some of the participants' desire to disclose.

Non-receptive settings. Given a cultural or historic perspective of some colleges and universities, Black college women who were sexually assaulted either were not

comfortable or did not trust the system to disclose the incident. In Edna's case, she felt that her college setting would be, not necessarily non-receptive but, inappropriate for disclosure because her father was a professor at the college. It was interpreted by the researcher that, if Edna disclosed, she felt that she would have professionally and personally embarrassed her father and family. Additionally, when Sharell confronted her college's leadership about being sexually propositioned by a security guard, and they took no action, it was a sign that this environment was not receptive to deal with the sensitivities of sexual assault. As Danielle, recollected about her time in college, she felt that her institution was more interested in maintaining their good name, opposed to addressing allegations of sexual assault. In Jay's case, she attended a Mid-Western PWI where there were not many Black or students of color. Below is her account of the non-receptive academic setting which enabled an aspect of her non-disclosure.

Jay stated,

> I remember coming home after it happened, um, coming back to my dorm and there was a resident assistant who, um, he, he sensed something because I'm sure I look off and he's like, Are you okay? Are you sure you're okay? I just wouldn't say anything. But the only thing I knew is that I probably could have told a resident assistant in the dorms, but that would require some sort of rapport, I didn't have that rapport because again, I'm one of two black girls in a dorm of 500. So that, in itself, creates somewhat of a hostile environment, it least it felt that way the entire campus was 2% Black. So, you are so busy just trying to meander through a sea of people that don't look like you, so you don't pay attention to some of the services that they offer. Yeah, you can always call the

> police when something happens to you. But I don't even think-there's a natural- I had a natural distrust of police anyway, so I just didn't, I just shut down.

Although Alice attended a southern HBCU, her experience was similar to Jay's when it came to non-receptive academic settings for sexual assault disclosure. The following passage pointed out issues which made it difficult to disclose.

Alice stated,

> So, I knew that if a crime occurred, you reported to the police. But I don't have a specific recollection of anybody, any service, on campus. Like during freshman orientation, there were conversations with students in general about if you are sexually assaulted this is where go. I don't recall anything more specific than that. I know they do it now, but I don't recall at that time that being a conversation.

Based on the proceeding data, participants found themselves in several environments where it appeared to be unreceptive to disclosure. College cultures at PWIs were not conducive to addressing the concerns of marginalized populations, and protecting the reputation of the college made the environment uninviting for disclosure. This uninviting atmosphere served as a barrier between students in need of assistance and an agency that could provide that assistance. On a more intimate note, it was pointed out that what made an environment unreceptive was having a personal connection with the college that could cause shame or discomfort for that personal connection. In the cases of this study, it was the connection between Edan and her father who was a professor on her college campus. Edna felt that her disclosure would injure her father's professional reputation on campus; therefore, this environment was non-receptive to her disclosure.

Betrayal. As the researcher collected the participants' lived experience for this study, one emergent theme that was evident was betrayal. It appeared that in some cases, a condition that facilitated one's non-disclosure was an act of betrayal. Although not explicitly stated, the researcher believes that Alice felt betrayed after waking up from passing out from drinking alcohol and finding a man's penis inside of her. Not only did the male who penetrated her betray her, but the group of young ladies [her friends] that were with her in the hotel, based on Alice's tone during the interview betrayed her by allowing this incident to occur. Moreover, with regards to an inexplicit manner of suggesting that the sexual assault was a form of betrayal, was Edna's sexual assault experiences with a college basketball star. With a pre-existing relationship between Edna and the college athlete, which was at one-time sexually consensual, yet later turning into more of a cordial relationship, Edna's mannerisms during the interview spoke to a degree of betrayal performed against her by the college athlete. In more explicit terms, Vicki commented on how moral and ethical her attacker appeared to be because he was well mannered, versed on religious matters and regularly attended church. Vicki and her attacker were familiar with each other's family, therefore, she felt that she had no reason not to trust him. Nevertheless, below is Vicki's account supported a theme of betrayal. Vicki stated,

> Yeah, I knew the person for a minute…He was active in the church…So I thought that I could go out a couple times with him. I met his family, [I} met his mom… I'm thinking, well, I probably made a good decision with this particular guy…but at the same time, it's just like, Oh my God, he's like a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. It is like one way he looks like this person who's the choir guy, who plays a

> piano and can sing all the gospel music, to an absolute monster. You know, like at a switch of an eye, you're a monster.

Additionally, Danielle, when she spoke about her mother questioning the merit and truth behind her claim that her mother's boyfriend sexually assaulted her, was interpreted as a form of betrayal. While Danielle was providing her account, her non-verbal communication suggested that her mother possibly applied pressure for her to rethink her desire to disclose. The participant's comments below further illustrated Danielle's feelings the day at the courthouse.

> I went back to that time when I was in the courthouse in an empty room and she asked me was I sure that her boyfriend did this to me and I didn't want to go do that again. I didn't want to go with people staring at me because I made a stupid mistake and I put myself out. So, I just didn't want to deal with that at the time.

Not only were Danielle's comments interpreted to support the emergent theme of betrayal but based on the researcher's assessment of the claim mentioned above, it also alludes to a sense of abandonment. The researcher will address the sub-theme of abandonment in the following section. Nevertheless, the reliance Sharell placed in the men, before going to college, created an environment of betrayal. As she reflected on how the men in her family treated women, her reflections created an expectation of how men in general should act around women. This expectation was for college men, like the men in her family, to protect her and not take advantage of her. Additionally, Sharell, during a separate case, felt betrayed by not only a security guard after they requested sex in exchange for not reporting her for breaking a school policy, but the colleges administration deepened the betrayal by not taking action against the security guard after

she reported the immoral proposition to the college's leadership. To understand Sharell's betrayal, she posited, "I told the Dean [about the security guard's sexual proposition] and she was, she was not surprised that all of this happened. Nothing was done. Nothing. Nothing was done." Given the multiple demonstrations of the betrayal directed towards the participants of this study, the researcher asserts that these betrayals played a role in the non-disclosure of this study's participants.

The researcher believes that the act of sexual assault is inherently an act of betrayal, no matter if the participant was acquainted with the attacker or if the attacker was a stranger. However, in this study betrayal came from not only the attacker, but in some cases, family and members of the college administration. Although sexual assault is a terrible act, ration actors feel that terrible people (i.e., sexual predators) do terrible things (i.e., perform sexual assaults) and with those terrible things come degrees of trauma. Compounding this situation, if one is betrayed by a person or an agency that is supposed to offer support or protect the participant, this condition increases the complication of the dilemma that Black women face when they are considering disclose.

Abandonment. In the proceeding section, the researcher, when analyzing Danielle's account spoke to emergent theme of betrayal, acknowledged that her account spoke to an aspect of a sub-theme of abandonment. The pressure provided by her mother to rethink her desire to disclose created a feeling of desertion within Danielle. This scrutiny applied by Danielle's mother, not only, like other themes and sub-themes of this study, address more than one aspect in this section of the study. Participants' comments that overlap themes are common when utilizing IPA as a methodology. As Vicki spoke about being a strong Black woman within a family of strong Black women, this persona

was the expectation. With this in mind, she felt that if she disclosed, her disclosure would be viewed as a sign of weakness. Given this weakness, she thought that she would have had to endure sporadic badgering by the older women, the leaders, in her family. In addition to the badgering, she felt that the older, and more respected women in her family would have withdrew, or abandoned, their implied support to her by treating her differently. Given the unique and intimate setting of HBCUs, both Sharell and Alice made mention of one being ostracized if one was to disclose.

The researcher inquired about how disclosure could have affected her popularity, Sharell provide the following response:

> I would rather have kept it [the sexual assault] under the rug and no one ever said anything about it and act like it never happened. Then to bring it up and make a big deal, you know, and get people involved because he was in a fraternity. So I didn't- it was one of the biggest fraternities on our campus, so I just didn't want to sit through that. I didn't want to feel [the fraternity member stating]. "You made this trouble for us. You started this trouble for us. Now everybody is after you. I didn't want that.

On a broader sense, Alice spoke to an unwritten principle, of non-disclosure or suffer ostracization, when it came to a particular fraternity house and alleged sexual assaults that occurred.

With this understanding, Alice provided the following account:

> You're just not gonna report that [sexual assault]. Because you don't want to be ostracized on campus. If a popular fraternity member, a popular person on campus

> did something and everybody knew about it, no one's gonna report that, cause you don't want to be ostracized.

The participants' exposure to abandonment facilitated a sense of worthlessness and disposability which affected their desire to disclose. Questioning the validity of a claim, as observed in Danielle's testimony, facilitated feeling not only abandonment, but not wanting to be viewed as "stupid." Abandonment could produce a feeling of isolation, making one vulnerable to future physical, psychological, or sexual attacks. Disclosure could result in the removal, or addition of a group that one does not desire to belong to. This movement from one group to another was illustrated in Vicki's account, as she compared disclosure to being viewed as weak, and the women in her family would have treated her as a weak Black woman as opposed to a strong Black woman. The researcher feels that her placement into the weak Black woman's group would have made her feel disposable, therefore, this belief affected disclosure.

Trust. While collecting the lived experiences of this study's research participants, some voiced that they possessed a trust in men from their upbringing and had no reason to not trust them in college. However, as more was revealed through one's lived experience, their trust was betrayed which was possibly facilitated by the sexual assault. One such case was spoken to by Sharell as she recalled the manner that men where portrayed in her family. The men in her family possessed a sense of integrity and respect for women regardless of their condition.

Sharell discussed growing up and the trust she has historically placed in men:

> I'm the only girl, I have three older brothers. Um, my dad, uh, you know, I've always been around, you know, men, whether they are my uncles, whoever, you

> know, they've always treat women with respect, you know, um, some of them had many girlfriends, but still they treated them with respect, you know. So, for me to be in that type of situation, I couldn't come home and say, oh, this happened to me, you know. Um, and then, um, so that, that was, you know, one part of the shame.

Given Sharell's and Tracey's lived experience of sexual assault as college undergraduates that did not report the incident to formal authorities, both viewed campus life as a place of safety, fun; and a place where one would be protected because they were surrounded by "their own" (HBCU). The setting of the HBCU exemplified an environment of trust. Unfortunately, in their cases, the setting that they placed their trust in are the places where they were sexually assaulted. In another instance, Vicki placed her trust in the institution of the church, which her assaulter was heavily involved with. The man that she placed her trust in appeared to be a man of God. However, this trust was the platform that her attacker exploited, which resulted in Vicki's sexual assault. Another platform of trust that was exploited by a sexual assaulter, was the team, "family-like," created by the college basketball team that Edna managed the equipment. Finally, the trust that Alice placed in her friends to protect her, when they were engaging in underage drinking with some young men that one of the young ladies knew was compromised, which led to her sexual assault.

The trust that the participants had for their attackers, before the assaults, were based on familiarity. This familiarity was founded on levels of comfort cultivated over years and a set of codes that represent morality. In one case, it appeared that the demonstration of particular codes that influences one's moral conduct, as "bait" to

acquire a degree of unfiltered trust from an unsuspected victim. Nevertheless, in both cases, the researcher asserts that the participants that were assaulted, due to a breach of trust, are now overly scrupulous of environments that possess similar characteristics to the ones that facilitated their assault. Based on the comfort that familiarity provided the participants, the researcher believes that the participant felt, to a degree, susceptible and assumed some of the blame for their assault; this positioning speaks to their non-disclosure.

Power. Contained in the participants' accounts where indications of power that was employed to facilitate not only the sexual assault, but the non-disclosure that followed the occurrence. That said, the researcher identified two types of power within the accounts of the participants. The first power, coercive power, was utilized against Danielle by her mother when she questioned the validity of her claim that her mother's boyfriend sexually assaulted her when she was eight years old. Danielle's understanding that her mother possessed the ability to punish and has historically employed that punishment served to influence Danielle's decision to disclose. It was assessed that this application of power influenced Danielle, as stated during the interview, her later in life when she was sexually assaulted in college and did not disclose.

The second type of power employed, which aided in Vicki's sexual assault and her non-disclosure was referent power. Because of his role in the church, the assaulter's integrity initially demonstrated, gained Vicki's admiration and respect. This admiration and respect created the setting for Vicki's sexual assault.

Vicki described the assailant before and after the incident:

> He was active in the church…So I thought that, I could go out a couple times with him. I met his family, [I} met his mom… I'm thinking, well, I probably made a good decision with this particular guy…but at the same time, it's just like, oh my God, he's like a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. It is like one way he looks like this person who's the choir guy, who plays a piano and can sing all the gospel music, to an absolute monster. You know, like at a switch of an eye, you're a monster.

Related to the referent power is the international, national, and local respect and appeal of the fraternity on Sharell's campus. The referent power possessed by this fraternity, because of the Black leaders that are members of this fraternity, tacitly demanded respect from not only members of the student body, but faculty and staff members alike. Given Sharell's pre-existing admiration for men, and the referent power possessed by the fraternity on her campus, coupled with underage drinking, created an environment for her sexual assault. The demonstrations of power mentioned above were factors which influenced participants' nondisclosure to health care professionals and law enforcement officials.

The researcher believes that the coercive power exercised by Danielle's mother against her was transgenerational learned behavior. Danielle's mother applying this type of power to convince Danielle to reconsider their position, was probably a tactic used against Danielle's mother when she was a child. Like the learned behavior of employing coercion to receive a desired outcome, Danielle's response to her mother's actions, an act of compliance, was consistent by how some Black women have reacted in the face of intense pressure and adversity. Danielle's reaction to her mother's acts in the court room

influenced her to not disclose then and not to disclose when she was assaulted as a college student.

Structural factors. The manner that constructed entities affected the way that the participant saw themselves, placed value on themselves, and how they viewed disclosure supported an emerging theme, structural factors. The sub-themes identified, within the emergence of the structural theme are betrayal, stereotypes, authoritative bodies, objectified, and culture. The structural factors that affected the study's participants' desire to disclose was a feeling of not being a member of a group that is afforded the ability to disclose, this feeling was possessed by Vicki. Based on Sharell's disclosure of a sexual proposition made by a security officer, in exchange for a favor and the administration taking no action when they became aware of the incident, is an example of a structure that did not welcome disclosure of a victim of sexual assault. Similar to Sharell, Danielle felt that the reputation of the school was more important than investigating claims of sexual assault. The manner that the dominant culture had little to no regard to the needs of minorities on their campus, were structural issues that Jay and Dee faced, played a role in their non-disclosure. Lastly, not having a clear understanding of processes and procedures one should take if they were a victim of sexual assault is a structural inefficiency which influenced Alice's desire to disclose.

Believability. As the researcher acquired the participants' lived experiences, it appeared that statements provided by the research participants, which supported the sub-theme of believability, resided in the emergent themes, betrayal and structural. With that, what was felt in some of the testimonies provided was a sense of disloyalty. This

disloyalty came in the form of authority figures scrutinizing their claims of assault. The environments contributed to the participants' lack of desire to disclose.

Danelle's recalled the first time she was sexually assaulted and disclosed to her mother, as an eight years old child:

> I didn't, I didn't understand it because um, the very first time I had reported being assaulted, I was eight years old and a lot of people didn't believe and one of them was my mom because it was her boyfriend. People were telling me that I was brave for reporting it and going on the witness stand at eight years old to tell that man assaulted me…I was at the top of the courthouse in an empty room and she [Danelle's mother] asked me was I sure that her boyfriend did this to me, and [speaking about the incident in college] I didn't want to go do that again. I didn't want to people to stare at me because I made a stupid mistake and I put myself out [exposing herself to scrutiny]. So, I just didn't want to deal with that at the time…So that's why I kinda of backed from disclosing the information of what happened.

Dee discussed the potential consequences for not being believed if one were to disclose:

> There are factors that suggest that people may not believe me, or my claim may not be taken seriously. So why would I put myself out there if someone may not trust what I'm saying that has truly happened…were people gonna take me seriously? Was there anything going to happen?

Because of a history of unjust treatment directed towards Black women, which include their claims of sexual assault were either heavily scrutinized or considered invalid; the researcher believes this mindset was an obstacle that affected the participants'

desire to disclose. Institutionally, participants felt that their claims of sexual assault would not be taken seriously by law enforcement and health care providers. This barrier influenced their non-disclosure. Being scrutinized by friends and family also established barriers that the participants of this study were not willing to negotiate. That said, these conditions played a role in their non-disclosure.

Stereotypes. The following comments made by the participants of this study were grounded stereotypes that speak to Black women are insatiable and unrapable. Therefore, some of the some participants of this study may have consciously or unconsciously allowed this stereotype to affect their desire to disclose. During Sharell's and Alice's testimonies they both made statements that alluded to 'bad girls get raped and good girls do not". Sharell made a separate comment related to the belief that the manner that Black women who dressed a certain way [i.e., tight mini-dresses] invited sexual assaults. Feeling that disclosure was not something that Black women did, Vicki demonstrated her feelings:

> So I knew there was a structure. I knew that it [sexual assault] was wrong. I knew that you're supposed to report things, but that didn't apply to me. I don't know why reporting didn't apply me. It's like your voice, you just feel like your voice is either, going to be unheard.

Authoritative bodies. The lack of sensitivities demonstrated by authoritative bodies was another sub-theme articulated by the participants of this study. In Jay's college dormitory, the two Black students among 400 White students who lived her dorm, was a microcosm of the PWI Mid-Western college campus that she lived on. Jay felt the culturally insensitive policies that primarily considered the concerns of members

of the dominant culture. This structural aspect could have played a role in deterring Jay from disclosing to formal authoritative bodies on campus. Growing up in a deep South, in a lower income setting, Vicki's family had a distain for law enforcement officials because of their persistent intimidating presence in their communities. Sharell not only validated her distrust in the governing structure of her college, but her reason for her non-disclosure. In the excerpt of her testimony, it details the campus leadership actions after hearing about the security guard's sexual solicitation.

Sharell stated:

> He said [the Security Guard], now we can do, we can handle this one of two ways. And he pulls out the bag that he had gotten from the store and he had condoms in the bag…he said, "You can give me what I want, and I can give you what you want."… So first thing in the morning, and my boyfriend and I went to the Dean [to report the incident with the Security Guard]-[when] I told the Dean, she was, she was not surprised…nothing was done. Nothing. Nothing was done.

When Dee reflected on the medical support available at her college, she stated the following, " I knew I could go to the hospital, but that wasn't something that and I was willing to do." When asked about why she was not willing to go to the hospital, she alluded to possible unwanted scrutiny, cultural insensitivities, and an inability to take action against the assailant.

A participant feeling that reporting sexual assault was not for them [because they were Black women], could be related to the stereotypes that Black women are unrapable, insatiable, or are able to handle pain better than White women. Additionally, 'bad girls get raped, and good girls do not' subconsciously alludes to a common belief that has been

promoted by the media, popular culture, and the entertainment industry. This common belief suggests anything Black is bad and anything White is good. The researcher feels that Black equated to bad and White equated to good, and the potential scrutiny one may receive if they were to disclose, affected their desire to report the incident while in college.

Objectified. As the researcher acquired more accounts that created meaning from the participants' non-disclosure, the sub-theme, objectified, was identified within the large amount of data the researcher analyzed for this study. Narratives that addressed the ownership of one's body was mentioned several times during this study. When Dee spoke to this issue, she understood her non-disclosure and its relationship to the objectification of Black women.

Dee stated,

> As an African American woman, in our society, I don't believe that we are valued. I believe that the, the whole notion from the dominant culture is that we less than, and that we don't have ownership to our bodies. Even in the school systems, I believe we are undervalued and underappreciated.

To amplify this point, Alice added the following perspective, "…there's nothing that should make you feel that you have authority over someone else's body such that you feel that's appropriate because she's passed out that you take advantage of that situation." Not as explicitly articulated as the previous participants, Danielle spoke to the manner that young men at her college often invaded her personal space and were outwardly aggressive toward her in a sexually badgering manner. Even more discretely but it fit within this sub-theme was the sexual offensive behavior demonstrated against Edna.

Based on Edna's experience with the college basketball player, it appeared that he had no regard for Edna's opposition to having sex.

Edna recalled her assaulter's disregard for her body:

> Yeah, most instances you [her attacker] held me down and I'm telling you, move, get off, stop whatever. You're forcefully keeping me there... You know, your strength [the attacker] is stronger than mine. So, you're put me in situations where I had no choice…Instead of you seeing that I've just told him three times no, I'm not going with you. No, I'm not going with you. And you're [the assaulter] like literally pulling me down the hall. Almost every time somebody else was around. So it was not like we were ever alone hanging out just the two of us.

A feeling that the researcher harbored after analyzing the participant's comment was that the men who assaulted them felt that their victims of sexual assault had no worth, and they were treated in an exploitive, and disposable manner. Having feelings of being undervalued, underappreciated, and not possessing ownership of one's body was not only facilitated by their attackers, but by societal narratives that were reinforced by the media and entertainment industry. Being sexually assaulted in an environment where images and messages support objectification of Black women aided some of the participants' desire to not disclose.

Culture. Although various themes and sub-themes were identified in this study, this project would be incomplete if the narratives that enabled the detection of the sub-theme culture were not discussed as an aspect that affected one's disclosure.

Edna discussed her culture:

> My family is from the West Indies, a really big West Indian Family-that cultural thing. And so you don't want to appear to be like you're loose and out there. So I think those factors probably came into play as well [regarding Edna's desire to disclose]…If I reported this, and said this happened to me, I would have been asked questions like, "Why, what were you doing there?"

Akin to Edna's reasoning for not disclosing, as it related to the culture of her family, the culture in Vicki's family spoke to strong Black women that did not tolerate weakness. Vicki felt that disclosing would have identified her as weak, therefore, she chose not to disclose. Turning to the Black community, Dee felt that the culture of the Black community was one that promoted silence and secrecy. With this understanding she asserted, "I believe that one of the things that impacted me [her desire to disclose] is the secrecy of sexual abuse in the African American community…I think the secrecy with the early molestation contributed to the fact that, um, I wasn't in a position to disclose."

When examining Sharell's case, a cultural aspect for her family, and other Black families is that Black men are the protectors of Black women. Under this impression, Sharell, although she engaged in underage drinking with members of a fraternity and some of her college female friends, she fully expected to be not sexually assaulted. As she provided her lived experience, Alice spoke about the cultural inequalities that exist regarding how Black and White women are viewed as victims of sexual assault. She went on to state that, "Black women aren't seen as victims or have the ability to be

victimized. And if we do speak out against it, it's always what did we do when White women are victimized, are victims of trauma."

The researcher believes that the cultural barriers identified in the passage mentioned above played a role in the participants' desire to disclose. When examining the family influences that promoted the construction of the barriers mentioned, it appeared that there was an expected standard of conduct that was culturally aligned with some of the participants families. Admitting that one was sexually assaulted would have gone against that standard of conduct, suggesting that they were either "loose women" or weak. Additionally, a culture or silence and cultural inequities, when it comes to supporting sexually assaulted, have also served to reinforce the barriers that some Black women face when considering disclosure.

The researcher asserts that all the participants of this study, in various ways, physically and psychologically personified each aspect of the emerging and subordinate themes of this study. However, the manner that the researcher accounted for their participation in the subthemes provided in the figures below, was if the participant explicitly stated that they demonstrated a particular theme in the recorded experiences as they align with the emerging and sub-themes above. If the researcher acquired an implicit understanding that a participant's behavior was aligned with the emerging and subordinate theme mentioned above. Below are the findings of the extrinsic experiences, which supported the participants' non-disclosure.

Table 6

Results from Extrinsic Theme Distrust

Participants	**Betrayal**	Abandonment	Power	Security
Vicki	x	x	x	x
Sharell	x	x	x	x
Edna	x			x
Danielle	x	x	x	
Jay				
Tracey	x			x
Dee				
Alice	x	x		x
Total	6	4	3	5

Table 7

Results from Extrinsic Theme Betrayal

Participants	**Distrust**	Resources	Policies	Undermining Aspects	Non-Receptive Environments
Vicki	x	x			
Sharell		x		x	x
Edna			x		x
Danielle		x	x	x	x
Jay	x	x	x		x
Tracey					
Dee	x	x	x		
Alice					x
Total	3	5	4	2	5

Table 8

Results from Extrinsic Theme Structural Factors

Participants	**Structural Factors**	Stereotypes	Authoritative Bodies	Objectification	Culture	Believability
Vicki	x		x			
Sharell	x				x	
Edna	x			x		
Danielle	x	x	x			x
Jay		x		x	x	
Tracey					x	
Dee		x	x	x	x	x
Alice	x	x		x		
Total	5	4	3	4	4	2

Extrinsic Findings

When examining the extrinsic causes for non-disclosure among the participants of this study, although the emergent theme of betrayal appeared to be a lead external cause, the researcher determined that given the various subthemes that comprise of the structural factors that this theme played a more significant role in one's non-disclosure. Furthermore, after reviewing the participants' linguistic, descriptive, and conceptual comments enabled the researcher to make a clear determination that supports structural factors as the lead extrinsic causes for non-disclosure. Moreover, examining the lead intrinsic themes, the researcher believes that given the effect that extrinsic factors had on the intrinsic aspects of one's life, the researcher concluded that the extrinsic factors, were the overall lead cause that facilitated the participants' nondisclosure during the period of 1989 to1999. The researcher feels that if the structural factors, and its sub-themes, are addressed with the appropriate conflict resolution practice, it would possibly provide opportunities to explore how these themes affect one's intrinsic reasons internal and external to this study.

At the completion of analyzing this study's findings and identifying the leading causes for the study participants' non-disclosure, the researcher identified patterns across several accounts that allowed them to acknowledge themes from one lived experience and their ability to illuminate similarities in other participants' testimonies. The researcher identified thematic relationships in the cases, this environment enabled the researcher to reconfigure and relabel themes. Reconfiguring, relabeling and consolidating themes reduced the number of sub-themes contained in this study. This

reduction in sub-themes created the environment for the development of intrinsic and extrinsic superordinate themes.

After analyzing and understanding the intentions of the emergent themes and their associated subordinate themes, the researcher created a singular pithy statement which encapsulated the meaning of each of the participants' comments, as they were interpreted. The superordinate theme is how the researcher transitioned from the participant to the abstract or universal nature of this study.

Although the data in the tables above supported the emergent theme, avoidance, and the sub-theme, fear, as the lead intrinsic aspects that facilitated non-disclosure among the participants, through additional analysis of the participants' comments (i.e., descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments), the researcher considered additional themes as lead causes for the participants' non-disclosure. The first factor, within the emergent theme, avoidance, is the sub-theme of strong Black woman. Additionally, the researcher accounted for the emergent theme, self-blame, and its sub-theme, insignificance, as a lead intrinsic cause for non-disclosure. Understanding the various themes associated with the lead intrinsic cause of this study's participants' non-disclosure, a phrase that summarized their essence was the super-ordinate theme of *Conflicted positioning*.

Dimension of→Emergent Theme→Subtheme→Super-ordinate Theme→Non-disclosure

Figure 4. Intrinsic Super-ordinate Theme Development.

Reflecting upon the strong Black woman sub-theme, the researcher determined that this aspect of non-disclosure was something the participants where taught. This learned behavior was passed down from generation to generation within the Black family and encouraged by one's peers. Since arriving to North America, where they were subjected to constant physical, sexual and mental abuse, many Black women felt that it was required to demonstrate physical, mental and emotional strength for their survival. The personification of the strong Black woman trait was essential for this study's participants to cope and survive the aftershock of being a college student who was a victim of sexual assault. A clear demonstration of this trait was when several participants spoke to sweeping it (the incident) under the rug, not thinking or speaking about it, or living life as if it (the incident) never happened.

The sub-theme, fear, reflects the feeling of the participant, which were introduced and enforced by one's personal understanding, family members, college peers, entertainment industry and the media. All the participants of this study possessed a fear of disclosing the assault. A concern of how family members would react to receiving information about their daughter, sister, or cousin being sexually assaulted supported the

avoidance aspect of their non-disclosure. In some cases, their concerns that retaliatory actions, taken by family members, against the assailant or the college, would (professionally or personally] negatively affect the family members acting. The potential negative effect impacted some of the participants' desire to disclose. In other cases, participants' fear ranged from being perceived weak to being ostracized fueled their apprehension to disclose.

Insignificance reveals the participants' worth that they felt after being sexually assaulted. This feeling of worthlessness played a role in their non-disclosure. Four of the eight participants explicitly stated that they felt insignificant after their assault. Ironically, these participants also experienced sexual assaults before the incident that took place in college. When the researcher asked participants, "How did they make meaning of themselves as victims of sexual assault that did not disclose?", their responses alluded to them not understanding themselves when it came to the assault. Although there may have been degrees of insignificant feelings among all the participants of this study, there appeared to be a connection with this study's participants when it comes to the feeling of insignificance and their experience with several incidences of sexual assault.

When considering the extrinsic super-ordinarte theme, the researcher's understanding of data provided in the charts above, coupled with their analysis of the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments, supported the emergent theme of structural factors' sub-themes of stereotypes, objectification, authoritative bodies, cultural aspects, and believability. These themes were identified as the lead extrinsic causes of the participants' non-disclosure; therefore, this study's super-ordinate theme is *Structural factors impede one's pursuit of justice and seeking remedial service and support.*

Dimension of→Emergent Theme→Subtheme→Super-ordinate Theme→Non-disclosure

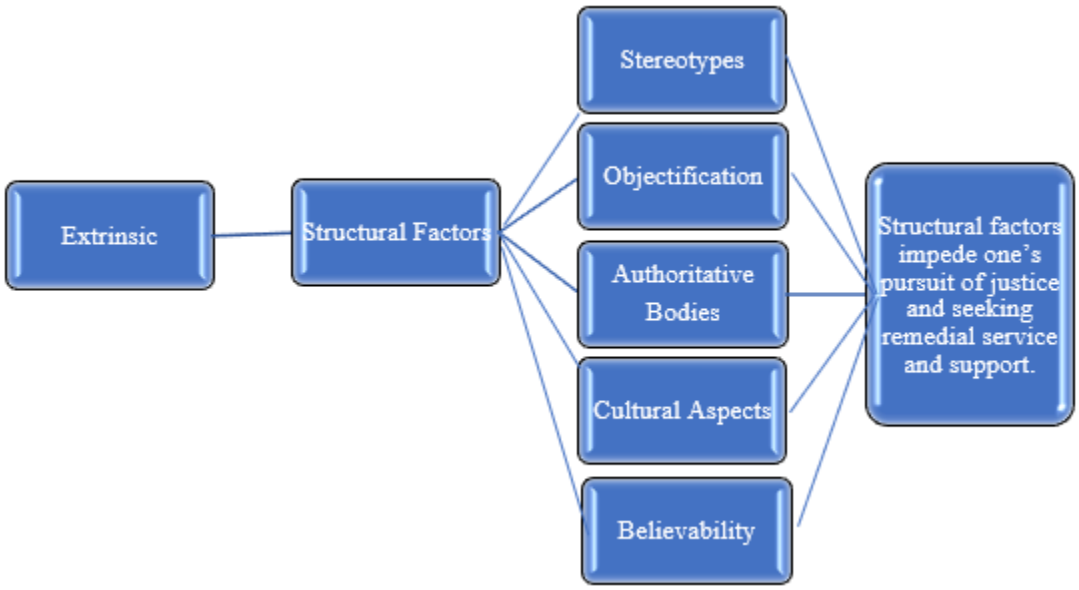

Figure 5. Extrinsic Super-ordinate Theme Development.

The sub-theme, stereotypes, recognized within the structural emerging theme illustrated a unique influence that this extrinsic factor possessed on the participants. A feeling that "bad girls get raped and good girls do not," was a feeling possessed by some of the participants of this study. This belief was created to generate additional stress and separate this group from those who are not Black women who were sexually assaulted. In some cases, being Black, being a woman, and being a rape victim conveyed a feeling for the participant that they deserved to be raped because of the intersectional aspects of oppression that were constantly possessed. Another belief that was created to make the Black victim of sexual assault even more offended was a feeling created by the dominant culture that, because of who she was [a Black woman], reporting sexual assaults was not for her, it was for those who were not Black. Also, the manner of how one dresses

invited sexual assault further shamed the participants of this study that were sexually assaulted.

Viewing and treating the participant as “a thing” to be used and not a human being supported the sub-theme, objectification. This sub-theme was identified within the large amount of data the research analyzed for this study. Narratives that addressed the ownership of one’s body was mentioned several times during this study. When participants spoke about this issue, they understood their reasons for their non-disclosure and its relationship to the objectification of Black women in the following manner.

> As an African American woman, in our society, I don't believe that we are valued. I believe that the, the whole notion from the dominant culture is that we [are] less than, and that we don't have ownership to our bodies. Even in the school systems, I believe we are undervalued and underappreciated.

To amplify the point above, Alice added the following perspective, “there's nothing that should make you feel that you have authority over someone else's body such that you feel that's appropriate because she's passed out that you take advantage of that situation”. Not as explicitly articulated as the previous participants, Danielle spoke the manner that young men at her college often invaded her personal space and was outwardly aggressive toward her in a sexually badgering manner. Even more discretely but fits within this sub-theme was the sexual offensive behavior demonstrated against Edna. Based on Edna’s experience with the college basketball player, it appeared that he had no regard for Edna opposition to having sex.

Edna recalled her assaulter's disregard for her body and desire not to have consensual sex:

> Yeah, most instances you [her attacker] held me down and I'm telling you, move, get off, stop whatever. You're forcefully keeping me there... You know, your strength [the attacker] is stronger than mine. So, you're put me in situations where I had no choice…Instead of you seeing that I've just told him three times no, I'm not going with you. No, I'm not going with you. And you're [the assaulter] like literally pulling me down the hall. Almost every time somebody else was around. So it was not like we were ever alone hanging out just the two of us.

Believability illustrated a feeling in the participants that their claims of sexual assault would not be believed based on issues societal impressions formed about Black women when it came to their sexual behavior. Participants understood that disclosing their encounters with sexual assault would be met by inaction. This inaction, possibly fueled by stereotypes, historic narratives, and rape myths, created an environment of inaction of authoritative bodies chartered to protect and support sexual assault victims. Participants acknowledged believability issues arose when family members or close friends of the family sexually assaulted them. The believability issues came into play when the participant disclosed to a parent or a relative, and their disclosure was met with scrutiny and disbelief.

Although all the subthemes did not play a role in the development of the superordinate themes mentioned above, below are the remaining themes that were identified during this study. When analyzing the subordinate theme, protection, it

revealed that this act was an active and passive act performed by the participants of this study. The way that the researcher characterized active and passive protection was, if the participant spoke to active measures to protect someone or something then those statements were categorized as active protection. If the participant did not mention their active role to protect someone or something but came to the realization during the interview that they inadvertently protected someone or something with their non-disclosure or the researcher interpreted that their non-disclosure provided protection to someone, or something, then these actions where categorized as passive protection. Therefore, some participants remarked that a factor that affected their disclosure were possibilities of negative ramifications would be inherited by family members (i.e., imprisoned, loss of certain accreditations, or put through unwanted scrutiny) , as a result of actions taken against the assailant or the university that failed to protect their child against sexual assault. Passively, although participants did not explicitly speak to protecting one's image given the participants' comments, the researcher interpreted that their non-disclosure was inadvertently aimed at protecting themselves. Additionally, some participants came to the realization, during the interview, that their non-disclosure protected their assailants.

The sub-theme, embarrassment, encompassed the participants shame for "allowing themselves" or "placing themselves" in a position to be sexually assaulted. The participants of this study shared a feeling of embarrassment, which affected their desire to disclose. Based on the assessment of the researcher, the participants' embarrassment stems from various degrees of trust placed in particular people, organizations, and environments, which resulted in their assault. Perceived ideas about

how they would be received by family members and members of the student body created an environment of non-disclosure to prevent the possibility of embarrassment. Additionally, embarrassment was attributed to one's inability to trust their instinct based on previous formal training venues and meaningful discussions with their parents.

Dissecting the sub-theme, minimizing, the researcher identified segments within some of the participants' data that appeared to trivialize one's sexual assault and its aftereffects. Comments such as "when you're in the club and someone grabs your ass, it is expected," or "we [female college student] all knew that you did not go into the basement [during parties] in that frat house [because there was a possibility of being assaulted]", or "I am just lucky to be alive, I survived [the sexual assault]," or "I was more concerned about being pregnant or catching something [a venereal disease]," inferred that the act of sexual assault was not as traumatic as one would think. It was interpreted by the researcher that if thoughts of the assault made their way into participants' mind during the interviews, some would dismiss them by undermining the event by making statements similar to the comments mentioned above.

The sub-theme, history of sexual assault, was uncovered through testimonies provided by four of the eight research participants. This history spoke to sexual assaults that occurred before the assault that took place in college. What the researcher detected through the four participants' accounts was a sense of worthlessness, which was spoken through comments contained in the emergent theme, self-blame. The researcher identified that this history of sexual assault created a feeling within the participants by not having an understanding of themselves.

The sub-theme, painful memories, was uncovered through testimonies provided by the participants. The participants varied in their demonstration of the pain associated with the assault during the interviews. Although all participants volunteered, and understood the parameters of this study, the pain associated with the event that took place 20 to 30 years ago, for some, remained a prominent aspect of their lives. Approaching this study, the researcher was cognizant of the painful memories that could still have an effect on the participants' ability and desire to proceed with the study once there was a progression to the open-ended, semi-structured portion of the interview process. Some participants demonstrated their pain through crying, long pauses, cursing, and taking breaks. Others demonstrated their pain by sharing the experience of their pain, how the experience made them feel by "reliving the incident." Given the participants' response, which demonstrated this subordinate theme, the research attached this sub-theme to the emergent theme, avoidance.

The sub-theme, familiarity, embodied a social intimacy shared between the participants and their attackers, or a particular environment. Although this social intimacy created environments of vulnerability for sexual assault, some of the study participants, unwittingly, participated in the cultivation of the social intimacy shared between the attacker and the participant. In three cases, the participant discussed their relationship with the assailant before the assault. One participant was familiar with the organization that the assaulter possessed membership. Lastly, a regular at college parties, the participant was familiar with the environment, and aggressive behavior demonstrated by some of the male patrons. This familiarization served to lower one's awareness and vigilance, which increased the potential for sexual assault.

The subtheme, the privileged class, illuminated extra ordinary considerations, which enables one to purposefully overlook standing laws and policies to acquire what they desire with little to no consequence. With this understanding, some participants felt that their voice would not be heard because of the prominence of their assaulter. Two cases featured two high profile college athletes, and another case involved a senior member of a popular college fraternity. In the case which identified the fraternity member as the assaulter, the members of the fraternity enjoyed special relationships with the campus police and select members of the faculty of the college. Given this dynamic, the participants of this study felt vulnerable to not only future assaults, but not being provided support from her college if she disclosed the event. With an understanding of how the intrinsic sub-themes were analyzed, the researcher proceeds to the analysis of the extrinsic subthemes below.

Non-receptive environments serving as a sub-theme, allowed the researcher to illustrate the structures and systems that wittingly or non-wittingly affected the trust that is normally placed in them by victims of sexual assault. Many testimonies provided by the participants of this study asserted that the college infirmaries where not equipped to support claims and provide services to sexual assault victims. In fact, one participant mentioned that they were advised to enroll in Medicaid and use the free clinic downtown to support their feminine needs. On the other hand, given generational systems have historically promoted negative narratives, stereotypes, and a low self-image of Black women. A participant in this study believed that because she was Black, the environment was not receptive to her disclosure. These non-receptive environments enabled distrust

among the population that was sexually assaulted. Consequently, this distrust affected their desire to disclose.

The sub-theme, resources, allowed the researcher to identify the lack of legal or medical support that facilitated a sense of distrust in the structures and systems charged to serve sexual assault victims. Several participants stated that they understood that their colleges should have been equipped with the proper assets and expertise to address their sexual assault. Although this was their expectations, their schools were not equipped to address their assaults. There were some participants that were aware of the resources available at their institutions to address their needs. However, due to a lack of culture awareness and sensitivity, the participants chose to not leverage those resources. On both accounts, the lack of medical resources and possessing a cultural sensitivity, as a resource, created distrust that affected some participants' willingness to disclose.

The sub-theme, trust, revealed a sacred relationship that the participants possessed in a person, group, organization or entity, which facilitated their sexual assaults. In some cases, participants of this study placed their trust in their friends, an environment of a party, preconceived ideas of how men should act, and conduct of a "Man of God." The manipulation of the trust, performed by the aspects mentioned above, to enable sexual assault was the basis for the participants' feeling of betrayal. The researcher feels that this sub-theme, coupled with assault could have created a degree of post traumatic syndrome in the participants' trust for others. Although the researcher is not in the medical field, there is an awareness, given their access to the combat veteran community, of the symptoms and signs of this disorder.

The manner that the sub-theme, power, was personified during this study was the manipulation of respect and reverence by a member of an organization that was greater than themselves (i.e., a man steeped in the word of God and the member of the largest fraternity on campus). The researcher identified coercive power as a possible factor that created the setting for future non-disclosure as a child that was sexually assaulted. This effect of the coercive power applied to the participant as a child and had an enduring effect on their desire to disclose when assaulted in college. In each instance, the exploitation of one's power set the conditions for the betrayal felt by the participants of this study. Figure 7 shows the relationship shared between the intrinsic, extrinsic and superordinate themes that influenced this study's participants' non-disclosure

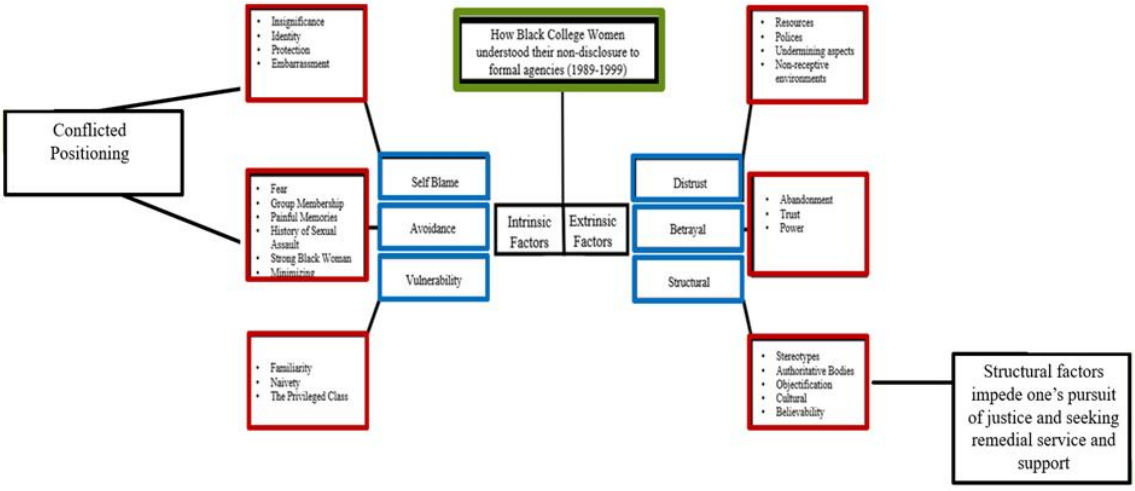

Figure 6. Non-disclosure Theme Relationship Diagram.

Summary

The researcher's deliberate compliance with the interview protocols created the proper environment where they could gather data needed for analysis to determine how the participants understood their non-disclosure. A pivotal element, when acquiring the

needed information for this study, was the rapport established during the preliminary engagements between the researcher and research participants. This engagement facilitated open dialogues between the researcher and participants that resulted in acquiring their descriptive data and producing a relaxed setting for the primary interview. The data collected during the interviews enabled the researcher to identify the intrinsic and extrinsic causes of the participants' non-disclosure. After examining the emergent and subordinate themes of the lead causes for non-disclosure, the researcher developed two super-ordinate themes (i.e., (intrinsic) conflicted positioning and (extrinsic) structural factors impede one's pursuit for justice and seeking of remedial services and support).

In chapter five, the researcher distinguishes the connections the emergent, subordinate, and super-ordinate themes enjoy with the theoretical framework and literature review. As well, the researcher exhibits trustworthiness components and the study's unexpected findings. The highlight of chapter five is the recommended conflict resolution practice, Harold Saunders' (2011) Sustain Dialogue. Although two super-ordinate themes evolved from the researcher analysis of the participants' testimonies, the primary focus for the recommended conflict resolution practice is on transformation with manner that the participants are affected by aspect of the extrinsic super-ordinate theme. The reason why the primary focus on the extrinsic super-ordinate theme is because there are several clinical approaches, outside of this field, that would be better suited to address participants' intrinsic concerns. After which, the researcher culminates this study with suggested future research and conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The aim of this research was to identify the causes of this study's sample population's non-disclosure, as it pertained to sexual assault. Based on the data and the analysis conducted, this research not only adds to the body of literature focused on Black women, sexual assault and disclosure, but fundamental work that addressed the dilemma Black college women faced when deciding to disclose sexual assaults to authoritarian figures. Although there were several intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contributed to the participants' willingness and desire to disclose, the lead reason for their non-disclosure was the extrinsic emergent theme, structural, and its lead sub-themes, stereotypes and culture. The researcher feels that by addressing the extrinsic lead causes of the participants' non-disclosure, it could possibly create environments where one's intrinsic reasons for non-disclosure, possibly the lead intrinsic cause of avoidance (sub-theme, fear) could be addressed and dealt with. Additionally, the researcher's development of a more universal, or abstract, manner of understanding the themes enable the development of super-ordinate themes. The researcher will employ the sub-ordinate themes associated with the lead emergent theme, structural, to serve as an anchor for the recommended conflict resolution practice spoken to later in this chapter. To further illustrate the interconnectedness of this study, the researcher aligned participants' testimonies against the theoretical framework and literature reviews to show the relationship between theory and concept, in comparison to the lived experiences of this study's participants.

Connection with Theoretical Framework

When evaluating the super-ordinate theme, c*onflicted positioning* against the theories contained in the theoretical framework, the researcher determined that the social identity and attribution theories and intersectionality were best suited to make meaning of this theme. The conflicted positioning that the participant found themselves in aligned with their desire to remain in the ingroup or maintain the status quo. Nevertheless, as victims of sexual assault, they were cognizant that disclosing was the appropriate action to take. However, taking this action could place them in a position of being labeled, ridiculed, retaliated against, or loss of status. Based on the potential outcomes for one that discloses, the participants' non-disclosure was predictable. The researcher understood the participants' actions through the employment of the social identity theory.

Some participants saw themselves as insignificant, worthless, and fearful, a yet strong Black woman, this conflicted positioning served to affect their desire to disclose while in college but attribute their non-disclosure to themselves. The preceding actions are aspects that fall within the attribution theory. Based on the researcher's analysis of this study's literature review and the data collected, it appeared that possessing conflicted positioning was a consent trait shared between the participants of this study and other Black college women who were sexually assaulted in college and did not disclose. Although some of the participants' positions were conflicted, their non-disclosure was a way to manage their positioning positively. In this sense, the participants' non-disclosure made meaning of the controllability aspect of this theory. Lastly, given the participants' conflicted positioning, although they acknowledged the severity of the sexual assault incident, some tended to minimize its severity with comments such as, "at least I am

alive," or "I was more worried above catching something or getting pregnant." Similar comments were examples of the fundamental attribution error related to this theory.

Analyzing the lived experiences of the participants of this study, it was apparent that one's identity of being Black, being a woman, being insignificant, being a strong Black woman, and other identities acquired by the participants created an environment for conflicted positioning. Given positioning, the researcher posits that unidimensional solutions do not work because of the multiple factors affecting Black women are equally conflicting. Multiple factors affecting Black women that are equally conflicting support Collins' (1990) intersectionality theory. This theory enabled the researcher to understand the participants' conflicted position that affected their non-disclosure.

When examining the extrinsic aspect of non-disclosure, testimonies provided in this study, suggest that *structural factors have impeded this study's participants' pursuit of justice and seeking remedial service and support. Structural factors enabled the obstruction of the participants' pursuit of justice and seeking remedial service and support.* These structural factors were consistent with political and structural intersectionality. These two categories of intersectionality still work along the principle that unidimensional solutions will not work because of the multiple factors impinging on Black women are mutually conflicting. With that, a feeling, because of the participants' intersecting biological identities, and in some cases, their economic status, that laws, protocols, and policies did not apply to them. This feeling possessed by the participants, of being treated differently for those who were White women, facilitated through, but not limited to, the media, the entertainment industry, transgenerational stereotypes, is a clear example of the obstruction that affected the participants' pursuit of justice and seeking of

remedial service and support. Their non-disclosure was influenced by political intersectionality.

Many of the participants declined to disclose because of common perceptions held by the members of the dominant culture. These perceptions consisted of, by not limited to, Black women are welfare cheats and mammies, and those raped were Jezebels or "asked for it" because of the way that they dressed. These perceived notions, held by members of the dominant culture who occupied positions within law enforcement and the medical profession, impeded this study's participants' pursuit of justice and seeking remedial services and support. The participants of this study felt that they would be treated differently from White women who experienced similar experiences. The environments described above are consistent with structural intersectionality.

As the researcher identified the external super-ordinate theme, *structural factors have impeded this study's participants' pursuit of justice and seeking remedial service and support;* there were elements of this theme that were affiliated with structural violence. From the testimonies, the researcher felt that the dominant group, wittingly or unwittingly, implemented policies and practices that impeded this study's participants' pursuit of justice and seeking remedial service and support, which are typically provided to White college women. An example of this was, some participants, who attended HBCUs, experienced an irregularity or, in some cases, a void in medical and law enforcement support that was present at PWIs. This environment hindered one's pursuit of justice and seeking remedial service and support. Ironically, as the researcher acquired data from the participants, then later reviewed the data, it appeared that the structural factors that impeded their pursuit of justice was a common to them as the air that they

breathed, and generally expected as a condition that Black women who were sexually assaulted in college faced. The participants' unwitting acceptance of this super-ordinate theme supports the status quo, which is a characteristic of structural violence. Galtung (1969) posited that "…indoctrination of various kinds, served to decrease mental potentialities" (p. 169). With this understanding, the participants of this study possess or understand a history that speaks to scrutiny, possibly derived from the legal system, medical professionals, or family members. This scrutiny, directed towards Black women who have disclosed their sexual assaults in the past, is a learned behavior that has impeded one's desire to pursue justice and seek remedial service and support.

As the researcher examined this study's emergent and subthemes, the theoretical framework, consisting of social identity theory, attribution theory, intersectionality, and structural violence, enabled them to understand behaviors and environments that influenced the participants' behaviors and attitudes towards their non-disclosure. These theories permitted the researcher the opportunity to identify how the participants understood themselves, what, or who, they attributed their non-disclosure to, the complex nature of those who possess various identities and policies and procedures that affected their desire to disclose. The understanding of this study's theoretical framework enabled the researcher to possess an increased understanding about why the participants behaved in the manner that they did when it came to disclosure.

The social identity theory (SIT) assists with understanding why people or groups perform in a manner that they do. Observing the manner that groups, or people, place social distance between themselves and what is considered an outgroup is essential to this theory. Throughout this study, the manner that the participants understood themselves as

victims of sexual assault and did not disclose, where aligned with aspects of the SIT and its mental processes (i.e., social categorization, social identification and social comparison).

The feeling that the participants had after being sexual assaulted came with an identity that the participants of this study did not want to personify. They did not reveal their sexual assault out of concern that their disclosure would serve to identify them as victims of sexual assault. The act of non-disclosure served to place distance between the participants' identities they possessed before being sexually assaulted and the identity of being a victim of sexual assault.

The application of this theory, with regards to the emergent theme, avoidance, created an understanding of the participants' behavior as they demonstrated a need to remain in the ingroup. This ingroup consisted of those who were not sexually assaulted. To remain in this group, the participants, wittingly, or unwittingly, avoided discussions, actions and thoughts needed to maintain their social status on campus. This aspect of the SIT is aligned with its social identification mental construct.

Sub-themes, fear and the strong Black woman persona possessed by some, fueled silence demonstrated by some of the participants. This silence allowed the study's participants to move out of the category of being a victim of sexual assault and into, or remain, in the category of "a regular college student," "a sorority sister," "a college team equipment manager." The ability to move or remain discreetly to maintain one's ingroup status, coupled with the participants shared similar culture, identity, and history are factors that support the social categorization mental process of this theory.

Additionally, the research participants that desired to remain in the "ingroup" did not disclose to law enforcement, medical service personnel, and in some cases, friends or family until three to 25 years after the assault. Nevertheless, this desire to remain in the ingroup was also fueled by a generation distrust of White lead agencies, namely law enforcement and medical service professionals. This historic distrust comes from the barbaric treatment of Black men and women as articulated by several participants of this study. Insensitivities and antiquated policies implemented, enforced by the medical service professionals, further enabled a non-trusting environment for disclosure. The enduring scrutiny and unjust treatment performed by the officer of the law, coupled with cultural insensitive and outdated policies, created distrust for some of this study's research participants. In Jay's account, she mentioned the distrust that she had for law enforcement officials. When attempting to shield a Black male student from being beaten by police officers, Jay was arrested. Jay's actions were in line with the social categorization aspect of this theory. Defending a Black male student reinforced the meaning of herself and enabled a sense of solidarity with him and others like him. This solidarity, which accounted for a similar culture, identity, and history, with Black men, to include her attacker, not only placed law enforcement officials in the outgroup, but supported her distrust and her non-disclosure.

Lastly, during the researcher's data collection, Sharell and Alice provided comments which alluded to a perception that "bad girls get raped, good girls do not." This comparison of the two groups of "girls" appeared to be inherently derogatory, directed towards this study's research participants, and supported the social comparison mental processes of this study. Aligned with this aspect of the social identity theory is

the implementation of belittlement (i.e., labeling the victims of assault), and deliberate acts that affects one's access to resources (possible rejection from membership into a particular organization) directed towards members of the outgroup, or in this case, this study's research participants. With this understanding, some participants did not disclose in order to remain a member of the ingroup.

The implementation of the attribution theory allowed the researcher to focus on causes to explain outcomes or end results rather than actions. Additionally, it enabled an understanding how one's own attributions endeavor to clarify their prosperity or disappointments, which impacts the exertion they are happy to apply later on (Sherstha, 2017; Weiner, 2010).

Through the uses of phrases such as 'I dressed for it,' 'I blame myself,' and 'good girls don't get raped', most of the participants in this study attributed their non-disclosure to themselves, and not externally to their assaulters. Attributing the sexual assault to themselves, was a reason why participants of this study did not exert effort to disclose to law enforcement or medical service agencies. Moreover, consistent negative narratives, rape myths, unjust systems, and transgenerational beliefs that describe Black women, and their relationship with violence and sex were vehicles that this study's sample population attributed to their non-disclosure. In addition, a culture of silence and secrecy is how some participants described the long-standing environment of the Black community. With that, the enduring nature of narratives, myths, and beliefs, which negatively affected the participants' desire to disclose, supported the stability factor of this theory.

A reoccurring comment that presented itself, throughout the responses provided by the participants, was the lack of control they possessed during their assault. For

example, Tracey, a military veteran, spoke about her ability to decisively handle herself during military exercises and other aspects of the military, but when it came to the college incident, she did not possess control of the situation. Tracey was not alone, as the lived experiences of the participants alluded to the controllability dimension of the attribution theory. Alice, Vicki, and Sharell echoed a similar experience during their accounts. Understanding the lived experience of the research participants, as related to their lack of control of the environment where the sexual assault took place, allowed the researcher to understand the study's sample population's inability to exercise power over factors that enabled the causes of the challenges associated with disclosure. However, on the other hand, the researcher assessed that the act of deliberate non-disclosure was the participants' way to regain control.

The trust Sharell had for people and organizations was cultivated in her before she entered college. This trust, founded on the respect that was demonstrated by her father and uncles, was a factor that made her vulnerable the sexual assault she later endured. Although Sharell attributed a portion of her sexual assault and non-disclosure to underage drinking and the clothing that she wore, the trust that she had in men to protect her, regardless of her condition, is an additional factor that she attributed to her sexual assault and her non-disclosure. This form of the attribution theory is termed as stability aspects.

Yet, the ever-changing, or unstable, character of rape myths enabled an environment of confusion and naivety, which contributed to some of the research participants' non-disclosures. Some of the participants felt, for years, that the incident that occurred in college did not cross into the sexual assault realm. For example, Alice, with over 10 years removed from the incident, after sharing the account with friends, was

told by those friends that she was sexually assaulted. Additionally, when Jay told her mother about her college sexual assault, her mother dismissed her claims because of acts that did not occur during the incident. Not knowing the parameters of sexual assault placed this study's participants in a vulnerable position.

Another attributing factor that affected the participant's disclosure was their familiarity with their assailants. Vicki's comfort and familiarity with not only the assailant but with his family enabled a vulnerable setting for Vicki to be assaulted. Based on Vicki's accounts, the assaulter was an avid churchgoer, who sang in the choir. His manners and actions within the church made Vicki vulnerable to a person who she would later call a "Monster." Similar to Vicki, Edna's familiarity with her assailant, a college athlete, made her vulnerable to repeated sexual assaults.

The FAE focused on some of the participants' desire to marginalize their assaults. To make the incident more palatable or receptive to the researcher, and in some cases to themselves, the participants employed phrases such as "at least I am alive," "I survived," or "It's college, I'm still sure that it happens on more than one occasion when you're in the club, and someone grabs your butt" attempted to diminish the severity of the act of sexual assault. Participants downplaying or minimizing their sexual assault experience created, in some cases, vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities were, in some cases, the platform for future assaults. That being said, in the case of Edna she did not feel that her assaulter's actions were malicious by nature. Additionally, Vicki's and Danielle's focus on being alive and not contracting a venereal disease are significant concerns to possess. However, the participants' focus on the issues diminished the severity of their sexual assault. By undermining the severity of the sexual assault that occurred, makes one

vulnerable to future assaults to take place between her and the assaulter, or the assaulter and an unsuspected victim. It was the assessment of the researcher that these examples of the FAE were articulated by the participant to reduce perceived severity and increased acceptability from the researcher or an intended audience.

Although possessing various identities provided the participants access to select social groups, and enabled them to make meaning of themselves, the same identities, as they intersected, possessed severe and discriminatory tensions for members of a marginalized group). Intersectionality implied the few different ways that race, and sexual orientation interrelate to empower various extents of Black women's encounters (Crenshaw, 1991). The objective of this theory was to outline that a significant number of the encounters the exploration members confronted were not subsumed inside the conventional limits of race or sex segregation as these limits are at present comprehended, and that the crossing point of prejudice and sexism factors into Black ladies' lives in manners couldn't be caught completely by taking a gander at the race or sex measurements of those encounters independently (Crenshaw, 1991).

An example of the intersectionality portrayed in this study spoke to how Dee characterized herself as a victim of sexual assault. Dee, a victim of multiple sexual assaults, asserted that there is a notion that Black women do not possess ownership of their bodies, they are voiceless, and they are heavily scrutinized if they were to disclose. The concerns voiced by Dee are aligned with political intersectionality. This form of intersectionality illustrated the policies that have advocated the fair and unbiased treatment for all sexual assault victims, have been inequitably addressed acts of violence and misconduct perpetrated against black women. Being a young, Black, female, who

possesses additional identities, their claims of sexual assault, given the parameters of this theory, are commonly undermined and scrutinized.

An example of structural intersectionality was Vicki's perception of disclosing sexual assault was not for her because of her class and race. She went on to discuss the wearing of blue jeans to work in remembrance of a woman, who was not Black, who was sexually assaulted on the job because of the style of clothing she wore to work. Vicki's response inferred that the resources and treatment provided to women who are not black are not the same for Black women.

Although not overly discussed in this study, music, music videos, and the media played a role in the treatment of Black women from 1989 through 1999. The researcher, a college student during this timeframe, offered firsthand knowledge of how music, media, and film influenced fashion, which some of the research participants attributed to their sexual assault and aspects of their non-disclosure. As suggested by Danielle and Sharell, the "Daisy Duke" [high cut shorts] and the tight-fitting dresses worn during their incidents further validated this opinion.

The music, dance, and college party atmosphere during the period identified during the phenomenology was sexually charged. Groups like the Two-live Crew and events such as "Freak-Nick," promoted a sexual environment that, for the most part, degraded and distorted the image of Black women. This active distortion of this study's research participants was a supporting factor of representational intersectionality and a reason why some participants of this study did not disclose.

When a dominant group implemented policies and practices that negatively affected or prevented Black college women's access to resources for those who were

sexually assaulted because their race, economic class, students at HBCUs or other unique characteristics or identities, yet like resources are available those that are not Black women or attend PWIs, are factors related to the structural violence theory. Expounding on this belief, structural violence implied that violence occurs when policymakers irregularly allocated or prevented the accessibility of human needs to a specific sector of society (Galtung, 1969). Essential to structural violence were transgenerational policies, practices, and structures, and their associated prejudiced distribution of resources were as typical as breathing (Galtung, 1969). This approach was a method for the patriarchy, or governing class, to maintain the status quo (Galtung, 1969).

An aspect that created a vulnerable environment, which affected disclosure for the participants of this study were governing antiquated policies and the sexual assault that took place between some of the study participants and members of privileged classes (i.e., athletes and fraternity members). During the period of this phenomenology, the policies that governed and infrastructure that were available to sexual assault victims were scarce to non-existent at some HBCUs, as spoken to by some of this study's participants.

Many of the participants of this study could not recall the policies and resources dedicated to sexual assault prevention and disclosure. In one case, the college recommended that students apply for Medicaid so the town's free clinic could attend to them. Although this was the case at some of the colleges and universities that this study's participants attended, when Danielle transferred to a PWI, information about sexual assault prevention and disclosure was more available than her previous experience on the campus of an HBCU. Historically speaking, HBCUs have always been placed at a

disadvantage when it comes to funding that would put on them on par with PWIs. The lack of resources at HBCUs to address sexual assault, in comparison to PWIs, is considered structural violence and played a role in the non-disclosure of some of the participants of this study.

An additional aspect of structural violence that created a sense of vulnerability for some of the participants of this study was the perceived effects of how disclosure would affect members of this privileged class. In this case, the privileged class consisted of members of fraternities or college sports teams (i.e., basketball and football). Reflecting on her experience, Sharell, who was assaulted by a fraternity member who possessed a close relationship with the campus security, felt that because of the fraternity's history on campus, in the region and throughout the world, that the rules of sexual assault would not apply to him because of his privileged status. To a degree, Jay and Edna, both assaulted by college athletes, felt similar to Sharell. Possessing feelings of preferential treatment towards the attacker, which causes an unequal distribution of the allocation and enforcement of the law, creates an environment that supports physical violence through structural violence.

The perceived, or actual, effects of structural violence on the policies, practices, and structures affected some of the research participants' desire to disclose their experience with sexual assault. These effects facilitated a distrust and betrayal in the participants of this study of governing bodies and structures that were established to create and maintain secure and safe collegiate environments. This distrust was evident in some of the testimonies provided by this study's participants. It is the belief of the researcher, who is racially aligned with the research participants, that their perception and

realities of the effect of structural violence were through narratives passed down from generation to generation or being actual victims of structural and physical violence. During Vicki's testimony, she felt that disclosure was not intended for her [a Black woman]. Disclosing sexual assault was not for people like her, but for the person [a White woman] who was sexually assaulted at work while wearing blue jeans.

Be that as it may, Vicki mentioned this observance on her job. Vicki was never aware of her ability, or right, to disclose her assault until she became a police officer years after the assault. Vicki's way of thinking resembles the first distinction of this theory. Vicki's feeling of not being worthy to disclose her sexual assault to law enforcement or medical service professionals speaks to a psychological violence, which entailed generations of brainwashing, through images, narratives, and stereotypes, which served to negatively affect the mental potentialities shared by some White women who were sexually assaulted.

The overwhelming police presence in Vicki's neighborhood was, in her opinion, not there for good but to menace and harass. That said, what the police, the influencers, thought was wrong (the presence of poor Black people and their problems) they punished, or overly scrutinize. This feeling was echoed by Jay, as she went to a Mid-West PWI were Black students were approximately 2% of the entire student body. There she felt that Black men were considered wrong, or evil, by the local government and were the most subject to punishment or reprisals by law enforcement agencies. Given the accounts by Vicki and Jay, the effect of this aspect of structural violence enabled distrust, which served to support a portion of their non-disclosure.

Several participants grew up in environments and went to colleges where resources, to encourage sexual assault disclosure, were scarce to non-existent. Danielle, who went to an HBCU, recalled that she was informed to go to the local clinic because her school was ill-equipped. However, when she transferred to a PWI, dialogue, and programs regarding rape prevention and disclosure appeared to be a common aspect on that campus. This uneven distribution of resources created environments of unequal power life chances for the research participants of this study. The fourth distinction of structural violence, this unequal distribution of resources, not only facilitated distrust and to a degree, for some, betrayal, but enable factors of non-disclosure.

Relationship with Literary Review

A feeling of worthlessness affected research participants' non-disclosure, which was an element of the emergent theme, self-blame. Vicki described her relationship with non-disclosure, which alluded to a feeling of insignificance. She believed that reporting being a sexual assault victim was not for her because of her race and class. With this statement, she implied that the incident was not worth reporting because she felt disclosing sexual assaults was for those who were not Black and came from more economic affluent backgrounds. With that, she spoke about a woman that was sexually assaulted while wearing blue jeans to work. Acknowledging this event, some businesses observe "Denim Day" for remembrance. Broussard (2013) amplified this point by stating Black women's accounts of ambush and brutality are not commendable for open shock or examination. Expounding on Broussard's position regarding sexual assault and non-disclosure, Dee made mention of law enforcement and other governing bodies not taking Black women's claims seriously, and they are judged differently from those who are not

Black women. This feeling of worthlessness and insignificance adds to one's self-blame, which provides understanding about why this study's participants did not disclose.

Supporting the notion that Black female bodies are not valued as high as those who are not Black, Smith (2003) mentioned that raped Black prostitutes where believed to be less worthy of integrity and support than their white counterparts. This claim supports the sub-theme, insignificance. Jay, a victim of repeated sexual assaults at various times of her life, while making meaning of her non-disclosure commented that after being assaulted in college that she felt worthless. To further enable feelings of worthlessness, select segments of society utilize music, the media, and the entertainment industry to illustrate the social hierarchy that depicts White men at the top, Black men and White women in the middle and Black women at the bottom of the hierarchy (Chigumadzi, 2018). The position of some Black women, at the bottom of the social hierarchy, can be attributed to several intersectional oppressive factors, such as, education, income, and religion.

Another dilemma faced by some of the participants of this study was an aspect identified by Burt (1980), which posited that victims, that attribute the assault to themselves, sometimes allow the assailant to go free, or accept the reasoning for the sexual assault. Letting an assailant to go free, in this study was synonymous with protecting the assailant. By not disclosing one is inherently protecting their assaulter, however, in Jay's, and Edna's account, they explicitly spoke about protecting their assailant. Sharell's comments about her drinking and how her attire invited the assault, and the manner that Alice attributed her assault to underage drinking were examples of how the participants accepted reasons for their assault. By doing this, they protected their

assaulters. Robinson (2018) pointed out how some college coaches and administrators attempt to leverage their power and control for sexual favors from some college women. The act of leveraging one's power for sexual gain was illustrated in Sharell's account when she described her interaction with a college security guard on her campus. The security guard propositioned Sharell for sex, in exchange for his compliance, when she was caught breaking a school policy. The inappropriate application of power can possibly play a role in one's non-disclosure and repeated sexual assaults (Cense & Brackenridge, 2001; Robinson, 2018).

As the researcher identified a connection between the participants' accounts that supported the emergent theme, self-blame, with an emphasis on protection, they found a body of work that spoke to sexual assault, the Black church, and non-disclosure. Moore et al. (2015) asserted that members of the Black church sometimes assume a position of silence, when assaulted by a leader within the church. The researcher understood the victim's non-disclosure, in this circumstance, as a duty to protect the institution of the Black church or a person. Protecting the institution supports the accounts provided by Dee, Alice, Edna, and Jay. Dee's and Alice's non-disclosure were focused on protecting the sacred institution of their families. Focusing on Alice, her father being a lawyer, she did not want him taking physical actions against the assailant and possibly compromising his professional credentials. Similarly, Dee understood how her father and brother would react, if made aware that she was sexually assaulted. Dee felt that her father and brother would do bodily harm to the assailant, which could have facilitated imprisonment of the two. Alice's and Dee's accounts were in line with protecting the institution, which were aligned with Moore et al.'s body of work. Related to Dee's and Alice's intentions to

protect the institution of family was Edna's account. She spoke about protecting the institution of the "family-like" atmosphere that existed on the basketball team and her father's professional, her family's cultural, and the college's staff members reputations.

Although in some cases, Black women were sexually assaulted by Black men, given the historic harsh treatment of Black men by the legal and other social economic systems, Black women found themselves protecting the very men that assaulted them (Broussard, 2013). This protection not only allowed the assaulter to hide in plain sight but provided them opportunities for repeated assaults. This notion was captured in the testimony provided by Jay as she recalled a reason why she did not disclose was because she did not want to feel responsible for "another brother sent to jail." Jay's non-disclosure enabled an environment where her assaulter was later imprisoned for raping another woman.

During slavery, the act of avoidance was perceived as a survival tactic (Broussard, 2013). The act of avoidance spared additional physical violence, in addition to the sexual violence slaves endured. Avoidance and its relationship to non-disclosure was prevalent throughout this study with all its participants. Although the researcher did not acquire a sense of concern from the participants of physical violence related to their avoidance, what the researcher did gather from their testimonies, was more of a mental component associated with their avoidance. Comments such as "I just did not think about it or talk about it", ' or "I just swept it under the rug" was the participants' way of avoiding, which enabled them to progress socially, professionally, and psychologically. The comments provided by the research participants supported the emergent theme, avoidance, which enabled them and the researcher to understand their reason for their non-disclosure.

Understanding the possible scrutiny and believability factors associated with disclosure, several participants willfully elected to assume a strong Black woman persona as a manner to facilitate avoidance. Participants that purposefully resisted assistance from health care or law enforcement agencies, by choosing to not disclose and address the trauma and its associated issues in silence were traits of the strong Black woman persona. Several research participants felt that if they would have disclosed the sexual assault they would have been viewed as being weak. Therefore, assuming a strong Black woman attitude supported their avoidance and how they understood their non-disclosure. Living in an environment where it was common for Black women in a family to be perceived as strong and leaders of the family, enabled an environment of non-disclosure. Vicki coming from a large family where the women in the family were leaders and were perceived as the strength of the family, influenced Vicki to assume a strong Black woman persona so she would not be ridiculed or scrutinized by the women in her family. Likewise, becoming a teenage mom, coupled with being the victim of several sexual assaults, Danielle felt that being a strong Black woman was the only way she could survive the issues she faced growing up. Although she was cognizant of the physical and mental issues that could accompany being a strong Black woman, she still assumed this posture.

Hood (2019) asserted that after one is involved in a sexual assault incident, they tend to detach themselves from activities and settings that one time brought them joy. Detaching one's self from the environment that provided one happiness, could enable a vulnerability for repeated assaults, physiological or psychological disorders. Although the following participants did not provide any data that supported any repeated assaults or

disorders, Dee's disposition after the assault in college created an environment for her to isolate. Tracey's measured engagements with former classmates and college events based on her lived experience with sexual assault. The researcher asserts that Dee and Tracey saw themselves as possibly socially awkward and "unable to identify with anybody"; therefore, they isolated themselves and engaged their peers and faculty when necessary. Lastly, a feeling of returning to when she was six years old [when she was first sexually assaulted], is the feeling that Jay had when she was sexually assaulted in college. This feeling of returning to when Jay was six years old, supported the belief of Shree and Manjula (2017) belief that one's psychologically maturity is hampered after an assault. The hampering effect experienced by Jay was her recalling the feelings that she felt as a six-year old child as a college woman who was sexually assaulted.

In some cases, the participants' familiarity with the assailant facilitated a sense of vulnerability. Although this vulnerability created the environment for the sexual assault to occur, given the familiarity shared between some of the participants and their attackers, their silence crossed over in to a realm that could be attributed to a sense of duty to protect their attacker. Nevertheless, the familiarity with the assailant was apparent in Edna's, Vicki's, and Sharell's testimonies. In Edna's case, her silence created the setting for repeated attack focused on her.

In the instance of Jay and Danielle, when they gathered up the courage to disclose to a family member, their disclosure was met with ignorance or coercion. The demonstration of ignorance and coercion created a feeling of betrayal for the participants. The sense of betrayal felt by the participants of this study had an enduring effect on their lives. The researcher feels that there were various levels of betrayal associated with each

participants testimony, however, when the assault was administered by (in Vicki's case), a Man of God, (in Edna's case) a member of the team, and (in Sharell's case) one's protectors, the assault was 'more far-reaching than the assailants' physical abuses'.

Additionally, some participants' feeling of betrayal was related to a feeling of inaction by members of the law enforcement or legal system. This was evident in Dee's account when she alluded to the betrayal she possibly would have felt if she disclosed to law enforcement or governing bodies and they did nothing on her behalf. This in action, not only illustrated betrayal facilitated by institutions created to encourage disclosure, but it could possibly expose Black victims of sexual assault to additional scrutiny by the authoritative agencies. Therefore, the participants' feeling of potential betrayal is what played a role in their non-disclosure.

With regards to abandonment, some participants perceived the actions that could have been taken by authoritative bodies, because of an attempt to protect the integrity of the colleges' name. Although some colleges advocated that they would aggressively address injustices perpetuated against their students, for the most part, the participants articulated that their claims of sexual assault did not fall into the school's agenda, therefore, the school moved on to other issues better suited to meet their needs. This was the case with Sharell when she attempted to report the security guard's inappropriate sexual advances to a dean in her college.

The effects of structural aspects on the participants of this study was apparent through their lived experiences, namely in the area of believability. The scrutiny that one could potentially face from friends, family, the legal system and medical professionals can be attributed to why some participants of this study chose nondisclosure. This

scrutiny that the victim of sexual assault could possibly face involved the integrity of their claim being challenged. Dee asserted that she was cautious about disclosure because of the unwanted attention it may have created. Additionally, she felt given the chances that no one would pursue claims because of a believability factor, she did not want to expose herself to scrutiny from peers, college administrators, law enforcement agencies, and medical service professionals. The feeling of the participants' integrity being questioned, or their story not believable, is a direct result of structural aspect that influenced a distrust environment, which subsequently aided the participants' decision to not report to medical service professional or law enforcement officials.

In the case of Vicki, it appeared that she admired the assailant before the assault because of his attachment and commitment to the church. In Vicki's description of her assailant, she alluded to him being somewhat of a "choir boy." However, after the assault, she used phrases like "monster," and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" to describe the shock and betrayal associated with the incident. Additionally, the manner that Sharell was raised and influence by men created an environment of trust and respect for men. The manner that she portrayed the incident revealed an underlying tone of betrayal. She felt, despite her manner of dress, and underage drinking, which subsequently led to her assault, that Black men should protect Black women, and not take advantage of them. Lastly, the betrayal that Danielle felt was less about her assaulter and more about the scrutiny she received from her mother when she reported being assaulted as a child. Danielle's mother questioning her claim of being sexually assaulted made her feel betrayed, which was a feeling that she carried with her during the interview.

Compromising one's trust to have a sexual encounter is a sub-theme of the emergent theme, betrayal. During the testimonies of some of the participants, their comments were synonymous with a "violation of one's soul". This violation of one's soul was alluded to in Vicki's testimony as she spoke about her attacker and her trust she placed in him based on the activities he participated in in church. Additionally, Sharell placed her trust in her attacker because of a comfort she felt around men, which was cultivated as a young child, and Edna placed her trust in her assaulter because of a family-like environment created within the basketball team. The aforementioned examples are environments where the participants' trust was compromised based on the comfort and security environments created.

Although not explicitly spoken to in this study, there were several comments made by the study participants that alluded to White privilege. The distrust in systems, structures, and relationships was a contributor to this study's participants' non-disclosure. White privilege is acquired from birth and enables recognition and greater access to resources than Blacks (Kendall, 2002). The recognition and support that White women may receive, because they are White, as opposed to Black women was illustrated in Vicki's account. She believed that reporting the sexual assault was not for her, a Black woman; it was for those who were not Black women. She provided the example of an observance (i.e., Denim Day), where everyone is encouraged to wear blue jeans to work on the 29th of April in remembrance of a (White) lady that was sexually assaulted in Italy while wearing blue jeans. Dee alluded to the scrutiny, re-victimization, and cultural insensitivities experienced by Black women by dominant culture agencies is a reason why she did not disclose her sexual assault. Dee's perspective is aligned with Kendall's

(2002) observations as he posited that White led agencies and systems tend to make decisions about marginalized groups without conferring with members of those groups. Lack of consideration and unequal access to resources and recognition created distrust in Black sexual assault victims that support their non-disclosure.

Another aspect that enabled distrust in the Black community and the participants of this study is the legal system. As demonstrated earlier in the study, the unjust treatment of Racy Taylor stands as an example regarding the relationship that exists between Black women, justice, legal systems, and disclosure. Decker and Sherman (2016) pointed to a futile justice system, which is the reason why Black women do not trust or disclose to legal authorities. Broussard (2013) pointed out that the legal system remains insensitive and unresponsive to the issues concerning Black women and sexual assault. Dee, along with other participants in this study, recognized the insensitive and unresponsive nature of some law enforcement and medical facilities, therefore, she refused to disclose out of concern of being re-victimized. Kanyeredzi (2014) compounded the issue of distrust by identifying that Black women rarely possess "a voice" when attempting to acquire a conviction for sexual assault. Throughout this study, participants mentioned their inability to be heard; therefore, they would not disclose.

As the researcher acquired the lived experiences of the participants of this study, it was apparent that some felt that they did not possess privilege, like those who are not Black women that were sexually assaulted. This lack of privilege was tied to the participants not being born into a tradition of advantage granted because of their race, gender, and resemble the people of the dominant culture. Vicki lacked power and privilege and felt that reporting a sexual assault was something that people like her, Black

women, did not engage in; this privilege was reserved for White women. Along this theme, Dee and Danielle alluded to the intersectional aspects of being a Black woman and the lack of power these identities possess. Given the lack of power and influence that some of the participants felt that they possessed, there was a feeling that their disclosure would fall on the deaf ears of the dominant culture and no action would be taken.

Structures that patriarchal dominance, poverty, the legal system, and ill-defined sexual restrictions increase the risk of sexual violence directed towards Black women and could reduce their potential for disclosure. Danielle's and Alice's testimonies pointed to the aggressiveness of men, and their persistent attitude towards sexual assault because of a reduced probability that they would suffer any consequences. Danielle's, Sharell's, and Alice's experiences spoke to a common notion that suggested that sexual assault victims, if drunk rather than sober, are held more accountable for the assault than the perpetrator.

When examining the effects of rape myths and how they created enduring false beliefs, at the societal and individual levels, that serve to validate aggressive male sexual behavior directed towards this study's participants, the researcher acknowledged cases where RMs where evident. Jay disclosed to her mother regarding her sexual assault. Based on how Jay's mother understood aspects of rape, she told Jay that she was not sexually assaulted because the assaulter did not perform certain acts. These acts were not disclosed to the researcher. Additionally, Vicki felt that Black women, from an economically challenged environment, were not entitled to report sexual assaults. Lastly, Sharell and Alice both stated "bad girls get raped and good girls do not." The effect of these RMs, which were a sub-theme for the emergent theme, structural, played a role in the non-disclosure of the participants of this study.

Typically when one thinks about a rapist, they conjure up thoughts of a male that conceals their presence through the cover of darkness, who uses a weapon, and employs violence, or threatens the employment of violence, to perform a sexual act on an unsuspecting victim (Vrushali & Purkayastha, 2015). With this, the manner that the mainstream media depicts and perpetuates RM shapes one's understanding of what real rape is, who commits rape, and who are rape victims (Vrushali & Purkayastha, 2015). That characterization of the factors that consist of a rapist, and what dictates what rape is are elements that supports the structural aspects of this study. The effects of RM and how one understands the principles of rape were illuminated when Alice recalled her experience of assault, as she did not come to the realization that she was assaulted to until 15 years after the incident, while sharing it with a group of her friends. Edna came to the same realization years after the assault because the assault did not fit within her "traditional" parameters of what sexual assault was.

While acquiring the participants' lived experiences, there were several comments provided that were affiliated with this study's literature review. The stereotypical images of Black women held by key officials in the legal system which has made them less likely to pursue allegations of sexual assault through supportive agencies, which creates, and reinforces, sexual assault victims' non-disclosures (Bryant-Davis et al., 2010; Hood, 2019; Jacques-Tiura et al., 2010), was alluded to by Dee during her interview. Contained in her testimony was a feeling of members in the legal systems, harboring pre-conceived notions about Black women when they attempt to disclose their experiences with sexual assault. Additionally, attending a large Mid-western college where the Black student body was 2% of the total population of the institution, Jay witnessed acts conducted by

members of the dominant culture that were influenced by stereotypes. Dee's and Jay's feelings about the pre-conceived notions, or stereotypes, such as being sexually insatiable, the Jezebel, and welfare cheat, created barriers between them and the dominant culture's judicial system. During Alice's and Dee's interview, they acknowledged that there is an acceptance among members of the dominant culture that believes that Black women are less likely to experience psychological or physical issues because they are more sexually experienced. A belief such as this could affect one's desire to disclose. Sharell's and Alice's comments, with regards to "bad girls get raped and good girls do not", supports the notion spoken to by Kennedy (2017) that only "certain women get raped" (p. 17). Although not explicitly spoken to during the interviews, the researcher attended college, generally around the same time of the participants and understood the power of the media, entertainment industry, and other aspects designed to create and reinforce images during the 1989-1999 period. These images resembled "stereotypes that Black women were sexually exploited, not educated, and relied on men or governmental assistance (Broussard, 2013; Collins, 2009; hooks, 1992; Lubiano, 1992; Painter, 1992). The persistence of these messages, not only reinforced stereotypes, but affected the participants' desire to disclose.

The researcher identified episodes that support the sub-theme of authoritative bodies and their relation to this study's literature review. In various degrees, although not explicitly spoken to during the interviews, there was a sense expressed by the participants [through non-verbal language, voice inflections, or historic codes commonly used by Blacks to describe the dominant culture]. There were cases where the participants alluded to disadvantages, they inherently possessed because they were black. This

feeling is unlike what was identified by Kendall (2002), as he asserted that White privilege 'is a traditional (rather than personal) advantage granted to those who, by race, resemble the people who dominate influential positions in United States or Western institutions. This tradition, in some cases, affected Black women's desire and opportunity to disclose being sexually victimized.

As the researcher gather data from the participants, a feeling of being objectified was interpreted from their accounts. This feeling of objectification was illustrated by Szymanski et al. (2011) as they spoke about the patriarchy and how it was embedded into policy-making and societal apparatuses, making this male-dominated system powerful. This male dominated system enabled the exploitation of Black bodies, which is an aspect of structural violence (Benard, 2016). This manner of structural violence was demonstrated in all the participants accounts, explicitly and discreetly. Although not explicitly discussed, given the researcher's understanding of the culture and time period that the participants attended college, they asserted that rape cultures were enabled by media, art, music, pop-culture, and portrayed Black women in ways that often lend to added legal scrutiny (Cusmano, 2018). Given this added legal scrutiny, which made the participants feel more like an object and not a human being, convinced Dee, and Vicki to not consider disclosing their assaults to authoritative bodies. Advancing the concept of objectivization, Sharell's account of assault is aligned with Ray's (2013) observation of how some fraternities victimize and objectify Black college women. He suggested that Black fraternity members, after utilizing sophisticated social engagement techniques to influence one for sex, often discards the female. The discarding is usually met with depression, and a feeling of worthlessness, and self-esteem issues, based on a sharp

reduction in communication and once familiar interface (Ray, 2013; Robinson, 2018). The objectification of one's body played a role in Sharell's non-disclosure. Benard (2016) compared the treatment Black exotic dancers to their White counterparts, she posited that Black women are, unlike White exotic dancers, not seen as women of mystery but as objects of sexual exploitation, as they are often verbally demeaned and receive unsolicited touches on their private parts. Drawing a parallel, Dee and Alice alluded to a condition that Black women do not possess the rights to their bodies and that they are undervalued when it comes to how the dominant culture (i.e., the patriarchy) sees them.

Culture is a sub-theme of the emergent theme, structural. Given the various comments provided by the participants of this study, the effects of culture on one's desire to disclose was apparent. Edna, who grew up in a traditional West Indian Household that enforced a standard of conduct for men and women, was reluctant to disclose out of honor for a member of her family. As an equipment manager on a college basketball team, it appeared that although Edna suffered multiple accounts of sexual assault that she believes that team members and other supporting staff knew about the assaults and did nothing; they assumed by-stander status. These bystanders, that were also present in Sharell's (fraternity members) and Alice's (her friend and other young men in the hotel room) accounts, turned a blind eye to the known acts of sexual misconduct. Being a bystander, and not taking actions to stop the assaults were a part of a culture to preserve the reputation of a fraternity or sports team. Historically, and in some cases that pertain to this study, there has been culture prescribed to by some Black women to protect their sexual assault assailants. Given this culture to protect Black men, in some cases, not only

does this encourage repeated attacks, as demonstrated in Edna's account, but this protective culture enable the attacker to avoid justice and attack others, as demonstrated in Jay's account.

Summary of Analysis

This chapter enabled the researcher to analyze the lived experiences of participants of this study, and how they understood their non-disclosure as college sexual assault victims from 1989 to 1999. From the data collected during the interviews, the researcher was able to identify the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that housed the thematic findings of this study. The intrinsic factors consistent with self-blame, avoidance, and vulnerability, and the extrinsic factors of this study consisted of distrust, betrayal and structural. This chapter provided the researcher with the ability to analyze the findings, which examined the previously identified six themes and their relation to the information contained in this theoretical framework and literature review. Examining the super-ordinate themes, against this study's theoretical framework, provided the researcher increased understanding of the participants behaviors on an abstracted level.

In the following passages, the researcher will provide the trustworthiness of the data collected during the interviews. Understanding the proceeding findings of this study, the researcher recommends the employment of a conflict resolution practice, consisting of Saunders' (2011) sustained dialogue approach, to affect the reasons for non-disclosure. Given the results of the researcher's analysis of the emergent, subordinate, and superordinate themes, coupled with their analysis of the data collected in the relation to the theoretical framework and the literature review, the researcher implemented the emergent theme, structural and its superordinate theme, competent figures create

perceptions that exploit societies, to serve as a guide for the moderator that enables sustained dialogue practice.

Trustworthiness

Given the sensitivities associated with this study, the researcher utilized three strategies for validating the trustworthiness of the manner that the data was collected and analyzed. The three strategies for validating the trustworthiness included corroborating evidence through triangulation of multiple sources, engaging in reflexivity, and Yardley's (2000) four principles for assessing the quality of this study. When validating the trustworthiness of this study by corroborating evidence through triangulation of multiple sources, the researcher employed evidence captured in this study's literature review, the lived experiences of the research participants, and experiences and interpretations of the researcher. Forming a basis of understanding, the researcher looked to the literature review to sensitize their thinking and awareness of the issues that the participants could face when desiring to disclose the incident to authoritative bodies. Given this information, data provided by the research participants, the researcher analyzed, interpreted, and assimilated relative information against material contained in the literature review. The relationship between the data gathered from the research participants, information recovered from the literature review, and the researcher's interpretations support the trustworthiness of this study and was illustrated in the previous chapter.

The second method utilized to facilitate the trustworthiness of this study was the researcher engaging in reflexivity. It was important that the researcher conveyed to the reader, personal biases, the reasons for their biases, and the manner that the researcher

planned to counter the biases identified. Providing the reader how the researcher sees themselves within the research, coupled with the biases harbored and the manner that the researcher plans to counter those biases, illuminates the ethics associated with this study.

Lastly, the researcher employed Yardley's (2000) four principles for assessing the quality of this study. The first principle that Yardley mentions is, sensitivity to content. As the researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews, there was a cognizance of the implementation of ability, attentiveness, and commitment (Flowers et al., 2009). By employing the factors mentioned above, the researcher remained aware of the participants' voices when attempting to identify how the participants understood their non-disclosure.

Additionally, the researcher personified a sense of commitment and rigor when it was time to collect and analyze data. For this study, the researcher demonstrated a high degree of personal commitment and investment, by traveling-sometimes by air-to meet with participants within their environments. Meeting the participants within their environments created a comfort level that allowed them to speak in a more candid and unfiltered manner. The rigor placed into this study is evident based on the manner that the researcher employed the IPA process without compromise. From this process, not only did the researcher identify emerging themes and the various testimonies that supported these themes, but the researcher aligned the emergent themes against excerpts from the literature review and theoretical framework. This process illustrated the deliberate steps needed to conduct an IPA in its totality. Completing the tasks, the researcher, based on the findings of this study, and a personal understanding of conflict resolution practices, recommended a practice to not only to encourage disclosure from

persons who are similar to the research participants, but to acknowledge a sensitivity needed to encourage disclosure.

The final aspect of Yardley's (2000) principles are transparency and coherence. The researcher achieved transparency not only within the reflexivity portion of this study, but by describing the selection process of participants, the conduction of interviews, and data analysis procedures. The manner that the intrinsic and extrinsic themes coherently flowed from one theme to another, coupled with the researcher's ability to acquire and examine the participants' ideographic statements, determined how the participants understood their reasons for non-disclosure and how the researcher, based on their understanding, made meaning of the participants, their testimonies and applied a theme that best generalized how the researcher understood the participants' testimonies was the hermeneutic character of this study. The proceeding aspects lent themselves to the coherence that this study possessed. Lastly, this study demonstrates a significance and relevance which could affect the manner that populations that share similar characteristic of this study's participants could benefit.

Unexpected Findings

Entering this study, there was a concern from others, outside of the researcher, that felt that the researcher's access to the participants would be challenged. Their concern was based on a feeling that those who fit the inclusion criteria, who have concealed their sexual assault for 20 to 30 years, would be reluctant to share their lived experience with anyone, let alone a Black male. Being a Black male is significant because the researcher assumed that by sharing the same identity as this study's participants' attackers (i.e., Black and a male), could have created additional reluctance

by a potential participant. Unbeknownst to the researcher, the personal identity could have played a role in securing more participants volunteering for this study. Nevertheless, almost immediately after posting this study's ad on social media, the researcher, unexpectedly, began to receive inquiries from those who were within and outside the inclusion criteria that wanted to participate in the study. Although three potential participants withdrew from the study, the researcher, based on one's interest readdressed the IRB because of their desire to participate. This participant's request to participate in the study, exceeded its original intent to have seven participants, brought the number of research participants to eight.

This study was more than acquiring the participants' lived experiences to support its methodology, it, unexpectedly, served to assist a participant to seek help for the issues associated with their sexual trauma and related non-disclosure. Although this study was not focused on providing therapy to any of the participants, when keeping the participants advised on the status of this study, and thanking them for their support, the researcher was met with some unique news from Tracey. During the interview, Tracey outwardly demonstrated the pain associated with her non-disclosure.

Tracey stated,

> No I have to thank you. Had it not been for you reaching out about your study I would have continued to suppress what happened. I would have continued to think I was fine. So you know, I have been in therapy and joined a support group. It was hard, but it helped me understand me a bit better. So you actually help me instead of the other way around."

Given the emotional and sensitive nature of this study, the researcher learned to meet the participants where they were (i.e., emotionally, and physically). While analyzing this study's data, the researcher identified that there were several instances where participants answered questions that were not asked or answered questions that were asked previously asked by the researcher. Although the intention was for a participant to answer the question they were asked, the researcher did not force any answers to a particular question. The researcher believes that a reason why the participants addressed the questions in the way that they did, was that this study was their opportunity to have their voices heard. This study served as a platform for some of the participants to discuss incidents that they never disclosed with anyone until now.

The intersectional aspect of generational stereotypes, images promoted by the entertainment industry and the legal system's preconceived notions are designed to de-humanize the Black woman. Based on these intersectional aspects, and many more, in conjunction with the styles of dress and underage drinking, Alice brought to the researcher's attention that society places the blame on the victim, while it rarely holds the assaulter, when dealing with Black women, at fault. Alice's, assertion was unexpected and not aligned with comments provided by the other participants of this study. Based on a feeling that society blames the victims for their assault, this may create environments where the participant may have felt that their voices will not be heard if they were to disclose.

The intersectional pressures of being Black, a woman, a Black woman who appeared to act like a "Jezebel," facilitated a feeling within the participants that they should have known better [or they asked for it]. The participants' feelings provided

meaning for their sexual assault. The participants of this study should have been aware of the laws that spoke to the factors that consist of sexual assault.

Recommended Conflict Resolution Practice

With an understanding of the intrinsic and extrinsic themes of how this study's participants understood their non-disclosure, the researcher focused on a conflict resolution practice that should be able to create environments where Black women, who were sexually assaulted in college, are more comfortable to disclose the incident to governing bodies (i.e., law enforcement and medical service officials). The conflict resolution practice advocated by this study's researcher is Saunders' (2011) Sustained Dialogue [SD]. It is important to note that identifying and addressing the factors that facilitate non-disclosure is a complex task and there are a several methods to acquire data to recognize these factors. Equally, there are several conflict resolutions practices that a researcher could employ to resolve or transform this one's non-disclosure. Saying that, SD is but one, of many, conflict resolution practice that could enable a practitioner to reach their desired goal, and that this recommended practice will focus primarily on the extrinsic causes of non-disclosure.

Nevertheless, SD allows a sense of commitment, course, and goal for participants willing to come together time after time in an open-ended process (Saunders, 2011). SD is not only a tool to address international conflict but regional disputes as well. In 1999, when Princeton University students were faced with entrenched racial and systemic issues, they turned to SD to address their problems (Sustained Dialogue Institute, n.d.). Given the deep-seated historical oppressive factors concerning race, gender, identity, and re-victimization issues that the participants of this study faced, the researcher assessed

that the most suitable tool to enable transitioning these oppressive factors is the employment of SD.

To conduct SD, the practitioner must understand the guiding goals of the process, and the five-step SD process disputes (Saunders, 1991 Sanders, 2011: Sustained Dialogue Institute, n.d.). In addition to understanding the five steps of this conflict resolution practice, the practitioner must understand the findings of most recent studies on this topic to inform their approach. Given the causes of one's non-disclosure identified in this study, the researcher could focus the majority of their efforts on identifying external factors that influence non-disclosure. They could do this through the uses of the extrinsic super-ordinate theme, structural factors impede one's pursuit for justice and seeking remedial services and support. Given the understanding of the goals of this practice, the practitioner articulated the five stages of SD as they applied to the lead extrinsic factors of non-disclosure identified in this study.

Based on the trust and faith placed in leaders of the Black church, the researcher recommends that a moderator, who understands this practice, should come out of this community to orchestrate the SD. Although the moderator arrives to the SD with a clear understanding of its steps, it is recommended that they be mindful of discursive approaches to maximize the effectiveness of each SD session. Because of the silence associated with their assault, the moderator must create opportunities for victims of sexual assault to lead sessions. Taking the lead is essential, as it allows the victims to express their unfiltered feelings associated with, in some cases, the intrinsic and extrinsic super-ordinate themes identified in this study. Additionally, the moderator should encourage elements of discursive through seamlessly highlighting demonstrations of self-

discipline, and respect and encouraging support to the outcomes of this conflict resolution practice (Boateng, 2014). Lastly, with this approach, the moderator should inspire the participants to embrace disagreements that may arise during the SD as opportunities to learn more about the factors that affected the participants' non-disclosure (Boateng, 2014). Applying these tenants could increase collaboration between participants of the SD and attaining the goal of creating a safe and secure environment for Black college women to disclose sexual assaults to authority figures while in college.

Despite the respect held for the moderator and the approach mentioned above, given the sensitivities of this study, there may be an apprehension for participants to volunteer, making this portion of SD most challenging and time-consuming (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011). In this case, some of the participants of this SD were Black women, who were sexually assaulted in college who were affected by structure factors that facilitated conflicted positioning, denigration, and oppression. With this in mind, Saunders did not provide prescriptive methods or models to create the environment for the this population or any population, to decide to engage. Therefore, the moderator, versed in the history and destructive aspects of the problem, coupled with an understanding of the stages of SD and possessing a referent power (Barry, Lewicki, & Saunders, 2016) component, creates situations where there are shared interests, needs, and desires to initiate discussion within this Community of Interest [COI] (Lewicki, Saunders, & Barry, 2016; Ury,1993; Winslade & Monk, 2000).

Not only should this COI consist of victims of sexual assault but others that have been historically affected, can affect and understand the inner workings of this issue over the years. This COI could consist of, but not limited to, members of college faculties,

local communities, women's groups, and the church's congregation, college students. The more significant number of direct and indirect participants involved in this process, the more fruitful the dialogue that could facilitate identifying the root cause of the problem in a more inclusive manner (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011). Members of the greater community, who have wittingly or unwittingly contributed to this transgenerational problem, coupled with victims of sexual assault, agreeing to enter into this process is a significant step towards achieving the objective of this conflict resolution technique.

As members of the COI agree to engage, the moderator must gradually transition from stage one to stage two, mapping relationships and naming problems disputes (Sanders, 2011). This stage is considered emotionally difficult because during this phase, the moderator encourages the SD parties to express their views on the nature and basis of the issue of non-disclosure (Sanders, 2011). This sharing of views on the nature and basis of non-disclosure could be perceived as "venting– of anger, of frustration, even of hatred" (Sustained Dialogue Institute, n.d.). Cognizant of the intrinsic and extrinsic super-ordinate themes related to this study, the moderator assesses the members of this COI's expressions, namely those who were victims of sexual assault. It could be possible that some victims of sexual assault demonstrate conflicted positioning, speaking to a position of strength, yet possessed feeling of fear and insignificance after the assault. Contained in that, they also could speak to the structural factors, such as stereotypes and cultural issues, that impeded their desire to seek out law enforcement and medical support.

As members of the COI voice their unfiltered stories and concerns, the moderator gathers data to inform transformational efforts focused on how the information collected supports this study's super-ordinate themes and how this COI can reach their desired goals together (Sanders, 2011). With this understanding, the moderator must remain cognizant of other themes that may emerge during future SD engagements. Examining this occurrence, the moderator would gather data to create a strategy or policy that, in some, may be viewed as affecting the status quo. The status quo transformation affects the relationship between those who were Black women that were sexually assaulted and did not disclose, those who were not sexually assaulted, and members of structures created to provide justice for all. Understanding this, these members can facilitate movement towards empowering Black women to break their silence and report sexual assault, with the hope that appropriate legal actions are taken. Lastly, the venting taking place allows SD participants to hear the issues of "the other." Comprehending these issues could create a sense of understanding and in some cases empathy, amongst the group members, which could facilitate a more inclusive environment to navigate the problems identified in the intrinsic, extrinsic and the super-ordinate themes (Sanders, 2011). This stage intends to map the path of potential relationships and a common, yet flexible, group understanding of defining the problem associated with Black women, sexual assault and non-disclosure (Sanders, 2011).

Probing problems and relationships to set a direction stage disputes (Sanders, 2011) possesses several sub-stages enabling the COI to have a greater understanding of the issues and sub-topics associated with the extrinsic, intrinsic themes the super-ordinate themes and potential paths to consensus and transition. Throughout this process, the

moderator must continuously encourage the COI to revisit how they understand the problem (i.e., Black college women, sexual assault and their non-disclosure) (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011). Within this context, the COI looks to expand the group's understanding of Black women, sexual assault, and non-disclosure, even though the group agreed, during stage two, on a standard definition of the problem. As more rapport is built between members of the COI, the moderator should create an environment where discussions are less restrictive, which contributes to gaining a more refined understanding of the issues and redefining the problem is a constant feature of this conflict practice (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011). While increasing the COI's understanding of the problem, the moderator should aim to identify the appropriate extrinsic structural factors that created disclosure dilemmas within the sexual assault victims and identify ways to change their own positioning and a possible an enduring affiliation between the Black women and the leaders of the structures present at this SD (Sanders, 2011). Like several steps associated with this model, there is no prescribed manner to create a new relationship of trust and respect between privileged and marginalized groups. However, a manner that a moderator could generate common ground within the COI is to direct the discussion, again, towards basic human needs [BHN] (Maslow, 1943; 1954). In this situation, BHN of the COI is the bridge where common ground is achieved (Winslade & Monk, 2000). Discussing needs, interests, and desires could create the setting to initiate steps for developing new and sustainable relationships that undermine the discriminatory practices, structures, and relationships held together by previous relationships (Sanders, 2011).

Understanding that "stage three ends when each side adopts their opponents' deepest concerns and will work with them. The acceptance of one's concerns, coupled with the application of the will to work together, is essential when transforming relationships: (Saunders, 2011, p. 27-28). The next evolution within this stage is revealing relationships that enabled one's non-disclosure between the victims of sexual assault and those who are not members of this population that have created barriers, wittingly or unwittingly, that deterred Black women from reporting sexual assault (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011). Also, during this stage, the moderator identifies ways to create enduring changes to the relationship shared by the members. While finding ways to change the relationship, the moderator and group members evaluate opportunities to develop logical paths to inform the steps for the follow-on stages (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011). After examining various paths for the follow-on stages, the group also explores the consequences of maintaining the status quo (i.e., maintaining a position of non-disclosure); after which, the groups determine if they are ready to create actions plans and strategies to enable environments that support disclosure (Saunders, 2011).

Once the SD participants are ready to develop a plan, which entails agreeing on a wide-range of desired end-states and recommended changes necessary to bring about the various end states, the moderator initiates Saunders' fourth stage of this conflict resolution practice; stage four is scenario building (Sanders, 2011). As this phase starts, the COI discusses historical accounts, bias structures, and challenging relationships that established the problem. The SD participants' discussion evolves from dialogue to real-world actions to prevent or reduce the re-occurrence of non-disclosures attached to Black college women's sexual assault. Within this discussion, Saunders' (2011) asserted that

the following questions are asked to encourage transformational actions that included: "(a) What resources do we have to deal with this problem?; (b) What are the obstacles to moving in the direction we have chosen?; (c) What steps could overcome those obstacles?; (d) Who could take those steps?; and (e) How could we sequence those steps, so they interact, one building on and reinforcing another ,to generate momentum and broaden participation behind the action plan?" (Saunders, 2011, p. 28). Once the group possesses answers to the questions, which are suitable to all participants within this process, the group is ready to act and learn together (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011).

A vital factor of the fifth and final stage of SD, "acting and learning together," is equipping stakeholders (i.e., college presidents, chiefs of police, and lead medical experts) who possess unfiltered access and placement to diverse groups with critical aspects of the action plans (Sanders, 2011). These stakeholders are White men and women, and Black men and Black women, outside of this COI, who possess the influence and could create buy-in to facilitate transformation (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011). This transformation is not just focused on structures factors that prevented Black women from disclosing, but, for some, their conflicted positioning that affected their desire to report (Broussard, 2013; Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011).

Although incremental transformation could occur personally and structurally, there remains a necessary need to conduct scheduled re-assessments of the environment to ensure that the action plans and strategies continue to advance in a manner to achieve the stated objectives (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011). If it appears that areas of the program are not affecting the environment in the desired way, revisiting critical

components of the plan, to determine why things are not going in the manner that they were envisioned, is essential (Saunders, 1999; Sanders, 2011).

Conducting planned periodic assessments and strategic modification leads to two occurrences. The first thing that occurs is that "new opportunities for acting emerge but most importantly, relationship building skills are enhanced between the victims of sexual assault and other members within the COI" (Stewart & Shamsi, 2015, p.172). The second aspect of the assessment and modification is that "problem-solving approaches have a realistic chance of changing how problems with non-disclosure are addressed" (Stewart & Shamsi, 2015, p.172). These occasional meetings allow the participants to "reflect and learn how they could affect the themes that have negatively affected disclosure among Black college women" (Stewart & Shamsi, 2015, p.172).

Suggested Future Research

Although this study explored the topic of Black College women, sexual assault, and non-disclosure, there is a limited amount of studies that address this body of literature. With this understanding, the researcher recommends the following studies to expand the collection of significant scholarly works on this topic. Initially, to obtain a more complete perspective for this body of literature, it is suggested that a quantitative, mixed method, and other qualitative methodologies are employed to gain a greater sense of the dilemma Black college women face with deciding to disclose sexual victimization to governing authorities. The exploration of varied sample populations that were sexually assaulted, but did not disclose, such as, but not limited to, gay Black college women, and Black college women who were Muslim, could not only expand the body of literature that speaks to Black women, sexual assault and issues with disclosure, but

identify shared lead causes for what impacts non-disclosure. As the researcher spoke to relationships, power and identity throughout this study, one could explore, or explain, the effects these factors possess on Black college women's desire for disclosure sexual victimization.

Understanding how White privilege plays and has played a role in Black women's desire to disclose, could be benefitted by conducted a qualitative study because conflict resolution professionals examine practices to create awareness and offer techniques to mitigate findings identified in this future study. An observation of how sexually assaulted Black women who attend HBCUs, PWIs, and Ivy league institutions are treated when they disclosed the incident to on or off-campus official designed to encourage disclosure and protect sexual assault victims. Also, a study focused on the effects cultural and racial differences have on systems, structures, and relationships designed to encourage sexual victimization disclosure is a study that would increase the depth of the current body of literature. Based on a perception that society inherently places the onus on women for being victims of sexual assault, a future narrative study could focus on how members of the dominant and marginalized culture understand who is the blame for sexual assaults that occur on HBCUs and PWIs campuses.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to interpret the experiences of how Black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college. Utilizing a semi-structured interview process, the researcher employed four interview questions to address this study's research question, by acquiring the lived experiences of eight research participants who met the study's inclusion criteria.

The employment of this manner of interviewing allowed for an unfiltered and unconstrained setting for the participants to employ their voice, within environments that were historically muted, or have marginalized their truths. During the interviews, the participants explored the reasons for their non-disclosure. These explorations facilitated the emergence of intrinsic and extrinsic properties, which housed six emergent themes (i.e., (intrinsic) self-blame, avoidance, and vulnerability and (extrinsic) distrust, betrayal and structural). Gaining an understanding of the entrenched nature of themes that enabled one to understand how Black college women understood their non-disclosure, as it related to sexual assault, enabled the researcher to identify and recommend a conflict resolution practice, tailor-made for this problem.

The researcher understands that there are but a hand full of bodies of work that are aligned with the purpose of this study. However, given the findings acquired through the emergence of the themes and the recommendation of the conflict resolution practice, the researcher hopes that respected (i.e., Black church and family) and authoritative bodies (i.e., college faculty and staff, the legal system and law enforcement, and medical professionals) look to this work to affect not only dilemmas some are placed in when contemplating disclosure, but the de-stigmatization of discussing sex and acceptable sexual behavior. Additionally, the bodies mentioned above should re-evaluate external structures, with an eye towards cultural awareness, and stereotyping when addressing Black women who were sexually assaulted. Moreover, the researcher hopes that this body of work encourages not just Black college women, but all women who were sexually assaulted to disclose their accounts to law enforcement, medical service professionals, and parents. Conversely, those who are entrusted with one's disclosure

should take steps to possess sensitivities and cultural awareness to encourage and permit sexual assault reporting. Space is available to further explore this topic through, but not limited to, formal post graduate works, seminars, implementation of policies, to educate and reduce the dilemma associated disclosing sexual assaults. Lastly, the researcher posits that enabling Black women, and every woman, to have their voice is heard is a positive step in the rise of a nation, and "No nation can rise no higher than its women" (Jefferies, 2015).

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Appendix A: Community Support to Study

Community Leader

My name is Lawrence Henry, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate at Nova Southeastern University (College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences). I am currently writing a dissertation that focuses on describing the experiences of how black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college.

Currently there is little to no literature that specifically addresses the dilemma that sexually assaulted black college women face when considering disclosure. With that, completing this study will add to the existing body of literature focused on black women, sexual assault and the complex nature of disclosure.

Based on the information provided above-mentioned, I am requesting support from your church by making general announcements at women's group meetings and posting the attached flyer in location where potential research participants could review and contact me without fear of their confidentiality being compromised. Along this theme, once a research participant agrees to participate in this study, maintaining a confidential and safe environment is key and essential for me. The uses of pseudonyms, meeting at a causal (yet discrete) location for a one-time interview, and a possible follow-up (phone) meeting is the manner that I intend to gain and maintain a confidential and safe research environment. Furthermore, I will store all interview materials in a fire retardant safe, and password-protected files on my personal computer, located at my home office. All research participants must be 37 years old or older to participate in this study.

Your contribution to this study will assist me in uncovering the reasons for black college women's non-disclosure. With information acquired research participants, I will recommend a conflict resolution practice aimed at transforming environments that once prevented, and current prevents, black college women from disclosing to law enforcement and medical professionals.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Lawrence W. Henry

Ph.D. Candidate, Nova Southeastern University

lh1340@mynsu.nova.edu

Attachments:

Recruitment Flyer

Appendix B: Recruitment Advertisement

CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Are you a black woman who was sexually assaulted in college, 1989-1999, and did not disclose to formal agencies (i.e., law enforcement, and health services) while in college?

If so, would you be willing to volunteer and participate in a confidential study focused on understanding your lived experience as a sexual assault victim that did not disclose?

My name is Lawrence Henry, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate at Nova Southeastern University (College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences). The purpose of my study is to describe the experiences of how black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college.

Your support will enable this study to uncover the reasons for non-disclosure. With this information, I will recommend a conflict resolution practice aimed at transforming environments that once prevented this study's sample population from disclosing.

Currently there is little to no literature that specifically addresses the dilemma that sexually assaulted black college women face when considering disclosure. With that, completing this study will add to the existing body of literature focused on black women, sexual assault and the complex nature of disclosure.

Participants

Black women who:

- Identify biologically as a black woman
- Primarily speaks English
- Are 37 years old and older
- Attended undergraduate studies in the United States
- Was sexually assaulted as a college undergraduate between 1989- 1999
- Did not report the occurrence to formal agencies as a college undergraduate (i.e., campus police, off-campus law enforcement personnel, and health services agencies).

Participation environment

The research participant completes demographic and screening questionnaire surveys to validate inclusion criteria, and consents to participate in the study.

The research participant participates in a confidential one-time open-ended interview, lasting from 60-90 minutes.

The researcher provides the research participant access to the written transcript no later than 72 hours after the one-time open-ended interview

The research participant determines if a second follow-on telephonic meeting, lasting no longer than 30 minutes, is needed to validate the interview transcript's accuracy, or to provide additional information to the researcher.

The research participant reserves the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

At the completion of the open-ended interview, the research participant will be provided a Target $20.00 gift card for their contribution to this study.

If you fit the criteria above and are willing to participate in this study, please contact me given the information below.

Lawrence Henry
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Appendix C: Contact Script

Hello, my name is Lawrence Henry, I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the Nova Southeastern University, in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science, and thank you for showing an interest in my research project, entitled "A Silent Dilemma: The challenges black collegiate women face disclosing sexual victimization."

I am conducting this study to examine the lived experience of being a black college woman who was sexually assaulted (from 1989 through 1999) and did not disclose in the incident while in college. If you meet the inclusion criteria and chose to participate in this study, your unfiltered responses during a one-time open-ended interview, will not only positively affect this study's primary research question, (i.e., How do southeastern Black women who were sexually assaulted in college but did not report, make meaning of their experiences?"), but it purpose as well (i.e., To describe the experiences of how black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college). To maintain the integrity of this study, I recommend that we conduct the one-time, face-to-face, open-ended interviews at Hillsborough County College (Tampa).

However, if you have another location that does not compromise your safety and the integrity of this study, I will plan to accommodate it.

Although I am requesting unfiltered responses during a one-time open-ended interview, my top priority is to protect the identity and well-being of the study's research participants. The implementation of pseudonyms and code numbers are ways to create confidentially and comfort for the research participant. Additionally, I will

store the one-time open-ended interview digital recording in a fire retardant safe, and password-protected subsequent data files on my home personnel computer. Only the Internal Review Board, my Dissertation Chairman, and I will have access to interview notes, files, and transcripts. Furthermore, given the sensitivity of this study, you and I will review a list of medical resources in the local area and talk through contingencies just in case, during, or after, the interview you experience a painful memory.

After the one-time open-ended interview, I will provide you an opportunity to ask questions, review the notes taken during the interview, and coordinate an optional follow-up meeting. The purpose of this optional follow-up meeting is to review the transcript of the interview to ensure accuracy and provide you the chance to add any additional information needed to increase its clarity. Nevertheless, after you complete the initial interview, I will provide you a $20.00 Target Gift Card for your participation in this study.

You will still receive the $20.00 Target Gift Card if you opt-out of the Follow-up meeting.

You will always reserve the right to withdraw from this study.

The topic discussed for this study is sensitive; therefore, your participation is voluntary, and you will not be held accountable, in any way, if you chose to withdraw.

During the conduct of the interview, I will proceed at your pace; and I will honor your desire to skip a question, take a pause in responding, or terminate your participation.

Nevertheless, if you elect to proceed with the study, the next step is to conduct a screening questionnaire, followed by a demographic survey. Taking both the questionnaire and survey should last no longer than 20 mins. At their completion, I would like to email you a copy of the informed consent for your review and coordinate a time to review the informed consent together at either the library mentioned above or a place of your choosing. If you consent to participate in this study, by signing the form, we will proceed to conduct the one-time open-ended interview.

What are your questions?

Would you like to proceed with the study?

If so, then let us proceed to the screening questionnaire.

Appendix D: Screening Questionnaire

Do you identify biologically as a black woman?	Yes	No
Is your primary language English?	Yes	No
Are you 37 years old or older?	Yes	No
Did you attend undergraduate studies in the United States	Yes	No
Were you sexually assaulted as college undergraduates between 1989- 1999?	Yes	No
As an undergraduate you did not disclose the assault to formal agencies (i.e., campus police, off-campus law enforcement personnel, and health services agencies)?	Yes	No

Date Time

Participant Code: 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908

Appendix E. Demographic Questionnaire

- Age:
- What years did your attend college/ university?
- Is your college/ university a PWI or HBCU?
- Where is your college/university located?
- Did your parents attend college/ university? If so, what college/ university and where are they/ it located?
- Was there a history of sexual assault in your family?
- Were you sexually assaulted before entering college?
- Were your parents never married, married, separated or divorced at the time of assault?
- Were you aware of the role of the campus police and health service when it came to sexual assault?
- What was you class standing when the assault took place?
- Were you a member of a team, sorority, or other organizations on campus?
- Have you ever disclosed this incident to anyone? If so, who? (i.e., family member, friend, etc.)

Participant Code: 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908

Appendix F. Request for Hillsborough County College Support Study

Re: Reserving a research room next semester

From: Lawrence Henry <lh1340@mynsu.nova.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 1:00 PM
To: Lemke, Dustin <dlemke@hccfl.edu>
Subject: Reserving a research room next semester

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mr. Lemke-

Thank you very much for you time.

My name is Lawrence Henry, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate at Nova Southeastern University (College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences). I am currently in the dissertation phase of my program. During this phase of dissertation, I will conduct a series of interviews to affect the purpose of my study. That said, I am requesting access to an area where I can conduct interviews of a confidential nature. These interviews may present a minimum risk to the research participant because of unpleasant memories. With that, I will take all precautions to minimize, the already minimal risk that a research participant may experience.

If this request is met with favor, I will make the needed coordinations, and will comply with all standing regulations that governs the conduct of post graduate research and interviews.
If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Nova Southeastern Internal Review Board at (954) 262-5396, or irb@nova.edu; my Dissertation Chairman, Dr. Ismael Muvingi, at (954) 262-3023, or im283@nova.edu; or me at (831) 224-0384, or lh1340@mynsu.nova.edu.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support!

Lawrence Henry
831-224-0384
Please note: All correspondence to or from this office is subject to Florida's Public Records law.

Appendix G. Informed Consent

General Informed Consent Form

NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled

A Silent Dilemma: The challenges black collegiate women face disclosing sexual victimization

Who is doing this research study?

College: College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Department of Conflict Resolution Studies

Principal Investigator: Lawrence W. Henry MS

Faculty Advisor/Dissertation Chair: Ismael Muvingi LLB, PhD

Co-Investigator(s): NA

Site Information: Hillsborough County Community College Library, 4001 W Tampa Bay Blvd, Tampa, FL 33614, or a mutually agreed upon location between the Principle Investigator and the Research Participant(s).

Funding: Unfunded

What is this study about?

This is a research study, designed to test and create new ideas that other people can use. The purpose of this research study is to describe the experiences of how black women, who were sexually assaulted as college undergraduates, understood reasons for their non-disclosure while in college. Your involvement, and unfiltered responses in a one-time open-ended interview will not only positively affect this study's primary research question, (i.e., How do southeastern Black women who were sexually assaulted in

college, but did not report, make meaning of their experiences?") but adds to the body of literature that focuses on black women, sexual assault and non-disclosure.

Why are you asking me to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this research study because of your lived experience of being a black college woman, who was sexually assaulted (during the period of 1989-1999, who is 37 or older, and has attended college/ university in the United States) and did not disclose in the incident while in college. This study will include about seven (7) research participants. It is expected that two (2) research participants will be from your state.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?

While you are taking part in this research study, you are requested to participate in one-time open-ended question interview that will not take longer than 60-90 minutes. After this interview, there is no plan to meet for a subsequent 60-90 minute meeting.

Research Study Procedures:

Before participating in the one-time open-ended question interview, you answered a screening questionnaire to ensure that you met this study's inclusion criteria, and demographic survey to allow me to become more familiar of who you are. Upon completing the questionnaire and survey mentioned above, you elected to participate in the study. At that time, I provided you this informed consent form, I asked where there any questions that you had of me and we coordinated the time and place to review this informed consent form together, and follow-on open-ended interview.

If you elect to proceed with this study, as a participant, this is what you will be doing:

Once you approve and sign this informed consent form, you and I will review a list of sexual assault resources in the local area and talk through contingencies, just in case of an overwhelming painful memory emerges during or after the interview. Afterward, we will then proceed to the interview. During the interview, you will be asked questions that address specific memories, activities, and feelings regarding the reasons for your non-disclose. At the completion of the interview, I will ask is there anything else you would like to add, and I am prepared to again review the list of sexual assault resources in the local area. Next, I will

provide you the opinion to review any notes taken and information about attaining copy of the interview's transcript. This transcript should be available for your review three (3) days after the completion of the interview. Additionally, I would like to schedule a follow-up with you within five (5) days of the completion of the interview. This follow-up is optional; however, it is to ensure I have accurately captured your lived experience and provide you an additional opportunity to add to, or clarify, your previously recorded and transcribed accounts. This follow-up will take no longer than 30 minutes and could be conducted over the phone, or any other manner feel most comfortable.

Could I be removed from the study early by the research team?

My primary focus is to ensure that no harm comes to any research participant. If there is behavior that gives the appearance that you may be in danger, regardless of this informed consent, I must remove you from this study.

Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?

This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life.

The only discomfort that you may experience is recalling and discussing memories of the assault to took place between 20-30 years ago. If you feel uncomfortable with some of the questions and topics, you are free not to answer, to skip to the next question, or terminate your participation. Additionally, you may find some questions we ask you to be upsetting or stressful. If so, we can refer you to someone who may be able to help you with these feelings-as stated above. Participating in this study does not possess any foreseen Physical, Legal, Social, or Economic Risks. However, there is a minimal Privacy Risk. To increase the confidentiality of this study and reduce the risk, I will utilize code numbers, pseudonyms, store written materials in a fire retardant safe and password protect digital files to conceal one's identity (if desired).

What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?

You have the right to leave this research study at any time, or not be in it. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to be in the study anymore, you will not get any penalty. If you choose to stop being in the study, any information collected about you **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the end of the study but you may request that it not be used. After which, I will destroy all materials by incinerating all paper products and deleting all electronic files.

What if there is new information learned during the study that may affect my decision to remain in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to whether you want to remain in this study, this information will be given to you by me. You may be asked to sign a new Informed Consent Form, if the information is given to you after you have joined the study.

Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?

There are no direct benefits from being in this research study. We hope the information learned from this study will increase our understanding about the individual and group dynamics associated with black college women, sexual assault and non-disclosure. This study's results may be used to help others who have experienced similar and related trauma in the future.

Will I be paid or be given compensation for being in the study?

You will not be given any payments or compensation for being in this research study. However, at the completion of the one-time open-ended interview, you will receive $20.00 Target Gift Card for your participation in this study. If you opt-out of the follow-up meeting, this will not affect you receiving the $20.00 Target Gift Card.

Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you for being in this research study. Ask me if you have any questions about what it will cost you to take part in this research study (for example bills, fees, or other costs related to the research).

How will you keep my information private

Information I learn about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law and will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. I will secure all notes, recordings, and the transcription in a fire retardant safe and password-protected digital files on my personal computer. This data will be available to the researcher (me), the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution. If we publish the results of the study in a scientific journal or book, we will not identify you. All confidential data will be kept securely in a

fire retardant safe and a personal computer in my home office. I am the only person that has access to those storage facilities. To protect your identity, my notes and transcripts, I will utilize code numbers and pseudonym; unless you specifically request that you be identified by your actual name. All data will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study and destroyed after that time by incineration of all written notes and study documentation, and deletion of all electronic password protected files.

Will there be any Audio or Video Recording?

This research study involves audio and/or video recording. This recording will be available to the researcher (me), the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution. The recording will be kept, stored, and destroyed as stated in the section above. Because what is in the recording could be used to find out that it is you, it is not possible to be sure that the recording will always be kept confidential. The researcher will try to keep anyone not working on the research from listening to or viewing the recording.

Whom can I contact if I have questions, concerns, comments, or complaints?

If you have questions now, feel free to ask us. If you have more questions about the research, your research rights, or have a research-related injury, please contact:

Primary contact:

Lawrence W. Henry MS can be reached at (831) 224-0384, or lh1340@@mynsu.nova.edu. I am readily available during and after normal work hours.

If primary is not available, contact:

Ismael Muvingi LLB, PhD can be reached at (954) 262-3023, im283@nova.edu. Dr. Muvingi is readily available during and after normal work hours.

Research Participants Rights

For questions/concerns regarding your research rights, please contact:

Institutional Review Board

Nova Southeastern University

(954) 262-5369 / Toll Free: 1-866-499-0790

IRB@nova.edu

You may also visit the NSU IRB website at www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-research-participants for further information regarding your rights as a research participant.

Research Consent & Authorization Signature Section

Voluntary Participation - You are not required to participate in this study. In the event you do participate, you may leave this research study at any time. If you leave this research study before it is completed, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

If you agree to participate in this research study, sign this section. You will be given a signed copy of this form to keep. You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this form.

SIGN THIS FORM ONLY IF THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE TRUE:

- You have read the above information.
- Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction about the research.

Adult Signature Section

I have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study.

Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent and Authorization	Signature of Person Obtaining Consent & Authorization	Date

Appendix H. Resource List (Example)

Emergency services: 911

Tampa General Hospital: 1 Tampa General Circle, Tampa, FL 33606

(813) 844-7000

Crisis Center's Sexual Assault Services: 1 Crisis Center Plaza Tampa, Fl

2-1-1 (24/7); (813) 964-1964; (813) 264-9961

The LIFE Center of the Suncoast, Inc.: 6811 N Central Ave Tampa, Fl

(813) 412-8912

Heels to Heal: 290 9th St N., Suite M100, St. Pete, Fl

(727) 895-5885

Spencer M. Lee: 4101 USF Apple Drive, Tampa Fl

(941) 241-2860

Rena Davis: 8905 Regent Park Drive (New Tampa), Suite 230, Tampa Fl

(813) 829-1835

Chivon Cowart: Way Changers Services, LLC, 1601 49th St South, Gulfport, Fl

(727) 483-2283

Dr. Kenya King: Aya Psychological and Wellness Services, LLC:

14502 N Dale Mabry Hwy, Suite 200, Tampa, Fl

(813) 295-2103

Aisha Warner: Renewed (IN)ERGY, LLC: 2005 Pan Am Circle, Suite 270

Tampa, Fl

(727) 939-5116

Appendix I. Interview Protocol

Date: **Time Start:** **Time End:**

Rapport Building Phase

Informed Consent reviewed, with researcher, and signed by research participant; researcher is prepared to address any questions → revisits the purpose of the study

Opening Questions:

What influenced you to attend the college you attended?

How would you describe the student life on your campus during your attendance?

What is your relationship with college friends today?

What do you miss most about attending your college?

Interview Phase

IQ1. How did you understand yourself as a college black woman, that was sexually assaulted in college and did not disclose?

IQ2. What was your experience with the factors that affected your non-disclosure?

IQ3. How did you understand your non-disclosure?

IQ4. How did you perceive, or understand, on and off campus structures, systems, and relationships that were established to encourage disclosure and medical support for victims of sexual assault?

Transition Phase

Is there anything else you would like to share?

How are you feeling?

Review incident hotlines and contact information for dissertation chair, IRB and researcher

When would like to schedule our follow-on meeting?

Inquire about their plans for the rest of the week, upcoming holiday, etc.

Discuss something that the researcher and research participant have in common?

Thank them for their participation, courage and voice→ provide gift card

Observations:

Follow-up date: **Time:** **Location:**

Follow-up Meeting

Date: **Time Start:** **Time Stop:** **Location**

Notes: