Men Stopping Violence's Definition of Male Sexual Violence Against Women: Implications for Prevention and Intervention

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Contents

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Abstract

How one defines sexual violence has significant implications for intervention and prevention efforts. This chapter reviews and critiques current definitions of sexual violence. The chapter presents Men Stopping Violence's definition of male sexual violence against women and how that definition is applied directly in Men Stopping Violence's batterer intervention program and, in the community, at large. Additional components include a case study; a discussion of the strengths and limitations of Men Stopping Violence's definition; and implications for male sexual violence intervention and prevention efforts on campuses and in the community.

Current Definitions of Sexual Violence

How one defines sexual violence has significant implications for intervention and prevention efforts. Current definitions related to sexual violence vary greatly depending on the purpose of the definition and the analysis of the organizations proposing them. Generally, definitions fall into the following four categories: legal, public health, campus, and community-based/social justice.

Most definitions, while accomplishing their goal within the context they were created, are not suitable for educational settings designed to encourage behavioral change. Men Stopping Violence has attempted to create a definition which fits the specific context of its work. Primarily, Men Stopping Violence (MSV) has created a definition which will engage men in conversations about social norms while encouraging them to take a mental inventory of beliefs that could justify sexual violence in themselves and others.

Legal

The primary purpose of legal definitions related to sexual violence is to punish perpetrators or hold individuals liable for civil penalties. Legal definitions must be enforceable and – as a result – are focused on defining specific tactics and behaviors which constitute illegal behavior rather than male socialization and training.

Sexual violence is not a legal term and is not defined explicitly in federal or state law. Instead, components of sexual violence are separately codified based on the specific behaviors that make up each crime. For example, "sexual offenses" in Georgia law include rape, aggravated sodomy, sexual assault by persons with supervisory or disciplinary authority, and sexual battery, among others. The FBI

defines rape as: "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim" (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2013).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's and Georgia's definitions of rape are examples of legal definitions which focus on prohibited behaviors so that law enforcement can police men's abuses. Many states updated their rape laws to reflect the FBI's definition, but Georgia did not. Georgia's legal definition of "rape" protects men from accountability in its narrow and archaic expression that a man must "[have] carnal knowledge of... (1) a female forcibly and against her will or (2) a female who is less than ten years of age" (Official Code of Georgia Annotated 2018). Carnal knowledge is defined by Georgia as "any penetration of the female sex organ by the male sex organ."

The primary strength of legal definitions is that they are – or should be – enforceable. To be enforceable, they must be narrow and focus on concrete actions that legislatures and courts deem as unacceptable. However, as articulated by Georgia's rape law, legal definitions are often too technical or archaic for educational settings designed to help increase knowledge about sexual violence and to encourage behavioral change. In addition, legal definitions do little to acknowledge the culture which trains and socializes men to commit sexual violence in all its forms. When legal definitions are used in educational settings, they focus on the actions of individual perpetrators rather than examining social norms.

Public Health

Public health definitions of sexual violence are designed "to monitor the prevalence of sexual violence and examine trends over time" and "to measure risk and protective factors for victimization and perpetration" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2018a). The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines sexual violence as "a sexual act committed against someone without that person's freely given consent." It includes any of the following subcomponents: "completed or attempted forced penetration of a victim," "completed or attempted alcohol or drug-facilitated penetration of a victim," "completed or attempted forced acts in which a victim is made to penetrate someone," "completed or attempted alcohol or drug-facilitated acts in which a victim is made to penetrate someone," "nonphysically forced penetration which occurs after a person is pressured to consent or submit to being penetrated," "unwanted sexual contact," and "noncontact unwanted sexual experiences" such as verbal harassment or nonconsensual exposure to pornography (CDC 2018a).

The CDC's definitions, like many public health definitions, are broader and more encompassing than legal definitions and therefore may more accurately reflect the experience of sexual violence and coercion, even if some of those violations may not be actionable by the criminal justice system. For instance, "nonphysically forced penetration" includes "being worn down by someone who repeatedly asked for sex or showed they were unhappy" and "having someone threaten to end a relationship

or spread rumors." While those behaviors are unlikely to illicit legal penalties, they are more reflective of the full range of abuse and harassment that women must navigate as they move through the world (Koss et al. 2007; Pollack 1990).

The CDC's definition, and its focus of identifying risk and protective factors, also acknowledges the role of male socialization and training in perpetuating male sexual violence. For example, the CDC states that "a combination of individual, relational, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of becoming a perpetrator of SV" and that societal factors include "[s]ocietal norms that support sexual violence" and "societal norms that support male superiority and sexual entitlement" (CDC 2018b).

While the CDC provides some recognition of cultural norms, male socialization, and training of men to become abusers, societal factors are de-emphasized in favor of more focus on individual and relationship risk factors. The CDC acknowledges that its "research examining risk and protective factors for SV perpetration at the community and societal levels is limited" and that "the risk factors identified at community and societal levels are based on findings from the World Health Organization's World Report on Violence and Health Societal Factors" (CDC 2018b).

The CDC's strategies to promote social norms which protect against violence include bystander approaches and mobilizing men and boys as allies are important but avoid the male socialization and entitlement that all men and boys receive and the analysis of discourses of gender and power necessary to fully address male sexual violence.

Perhaps more directly influenced by a human rights perspective, the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations place more emphasis on gender and power analysis to address root causes of violence against women. For example, the WHO notes that "Gender inequality and norms on the acceptability of violence against women are a root cause of violence against women" (World Health Organization 2017), and the United Nations recognizes that "violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men" (United Nations 1993).

Campus/School Policies

Campus definitions related to sexual violence focus on sexual misconduct and are designed to ensure that all students have a safe environment where they can learn. Campus response is guided by the Title IX civil right that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (Education Amendments Act of 1972 2018; End Rape on Campus 2018; Know Your IX 2018). Schools must respond to sexual

violence and sexual harassment because they create a hostile environment that keeps students from learning and fully accessing their education.

Campus sexual misconduct is often defined very broadly as it needs to cover myriad ways which actions related to sex and gender may impede a student's opportunity to learn. For example, types of sexual misconduct prohibited by Emory University in Atlanta, GA, include nonconsensual sexual contact; nonconsensual sexual intercourse; dating violence; sexual exploitation; stalking; sexual harassment; gender-based harassment; retaliation; and aiding, facilitating, encouraging, concealing, or otherwise assisting in a violation or attempted violation (Emory University 2018).

There is strength in delineating this breadth of behaviors related to sexual misconduct because it reflects so many of the ways that women face duress and threats – physical, psychological, and sexual – daily. In addition, campuses have a responsibility to address not only individual actions after the fact but also the environment in which students operate to ensure that all students are safe to learn. Title IX holds institutions responsible for creating a safe environment, which means that schools often have a vested interest in addressing both individual acts but also the cultural and social norms on campus that support male sexual violence against women.

Without the appropriate social context, however, definitions of sexual misconduct on college campuses can be challenging to use as an educational tool. The number and complexity of behaviors defined as sexual misconduct can be overwhelming to men who have internalized messages of entitlement to women's bodies.

Community-Based/Social Justice

Community-based and social justice organizations which address sexual violence are often nonprofit organizations. The purpose of their definitions is facilitating advocacy. That is, their purpose is to articulate the experiences of people and communities that have been violated to influence change on the individual, community, or societal levels. Most often that change involves advocating for increased resources for victim services, persuading individuals to change their behaviors (i.e., to stop sexually harassing women), and pushing institutions to take sexual violence more seriously.

Many of these community-based and social justice organizations' definitions skew towards legal definitions by focusing on providing concrete examples of tactics that constitute sexual violence, and they often reference laws and legal codes for defining sexual violence as "crime." This tendency makes sense given that many mainstream sexual assault agencies have historical ties to law enforcement agencies, and their objectives for advocating include persuading legislatures, law enforcement, and judicial systems to enforce more severe legal penalties for sexual violence.

Perhaps the focus on concrete behaviors is natural, in part, for definitions of sexual violence. The connection with a legal framework – and the implied goal of increasing criminal sanctions for sexual violence – also reflects the long-standing

relationship between sexual assault advocates and law enforcement. Law enforcement and legislators were among the first institutions to be accountable enough to the public that they were responsive to increasing criminal legal sanctions for sexual assault. However, many of the advocates whose voices were prioritized during that period – and even today – are white, middle-class advocates who felt confident in law enforcement as an acceptable tool to respond to sexual violence. Advocates of color were unconvinced as their communities were often over-policed by law enforcement and suffered inequitable incarceration rates, police brutality, and even increased risk of sexual violence by law enforcement officers themselves.

However, since their purpose is advocacy rather than enforcement, community-based and social justice definitions do not have to be concrete and legally actionable. They have the potential to name and creatively link individuals' tactics to societal and cultural messaging which support male sexual violence against women.

The Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault (GNESA) offers an interesting juxtaposition between relying on legal definitions to define tactics and beginning to link those tactics to societal roots. GNESA cites Georgia law to define sexual assault but then goes on to define sexual violence as: "[a] socially tolerated, pervasive sex crime of power and control used to humiliate, devalue, and objectify a person" (GNESA 2017). Those words – "socially tolerated" and "pervasive" – begin to locate the tactics within the context of social norms that support the violations at some level.

INCITE! – a community-based "network of radical feminists of color organizing to end state violence and violence in our homes and communities" – provides another example of linking rape and violence towards women to larger systems and institutions. For INCITE! "gender violence" against women of color and trans/queer people of color must be addressed as a combination of "violence directed at communities," such as police violence, war, and colonialism, and "violence within communities," such as rape and domestic violence (INCITE! 2018). The implication is clear: interpersonal violence is nestled within larger systems of oppression. Focusing on interpersonal violence in isolation will never end gender violence.

The Chicago Task Force on Violence Against Girls and Young Women provides another example of a community organization which connects the dots between individual violations and larger systems. The Task Force was formed to "galvanize attention" to the range of violence women and girls face and to "marshal the public/political will" to end the violence. The Task Force's analysis defines the problem of sexual violence as "systemic in nature, culturally supported and based on intersecting oppressions." Based on that analysis – any effort to end sexual violence "must address those systems and forms of oppression in order to impact the issue" (Chicago Taskforce on Violence Against Girls & Young Women 2011). An example of the Task Force's efforts to address the cultural support for sexual violence is its "Reporting on Rape and Sexual Violence" media toolkit (Chicago Taskforce on Violence Against Girls & Young Women 2012). The toolkit breaks down rape culture and intersectionality for journalists and then gives concrete tips for reporting in ways that are accurate and disrupt the negative beliefs that support male sexual violence.

Community-based, social justice definitions of sexual violence have great potential for changing norms within communities because they have the most latitude and freedom to name those norms and connect them to individual tactics. One limitation of the community-based and social justice definitions of sexual violence for use as an educational tool with men is that they are not written with educating men specifically in mind. They often seek to explain women's experiences of sexual assault. MSV seeks to engage men in conversations about sexual violence based on women's experiences.

Men Stopping Violence: A Different Approach

Men Stopping Violence (MSV), founded in 1982 in Atlanta, GA, is a community-based organization whose mission is to engage men and communities to take action to end violence against women. Since its inception MSV has:

- Educated over 100,000 men about how to change abusive behavior
- Provided consultation, keynotes, and training to about 2,500 government agencies, businesses, universities, and domestic violence agencies including Emory University, the US State Department, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US Department of Justice, the British Home Office, and the government of Taiwan
- Provided expert analysis and commentary on domestic violence and sexual assault through media including CNN, Al Jazeera America, The New York Times, TV One, the Tom Joyner Morning Show, and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- Authored peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and the *Men At Work: Building Safe Communities* curriculum that integrates intervention and prevention within a Batterers Intervention Program (BIP)
- Served as a technical assistance provider for the Office on Violence Against Women and the Center for Court Innovation

Current initiatives include educating, engaging, and mobilizing men in a Men's Education Program which directly intervenes with more than 2,000 men each year; Training and Education to change community norms and practices; an internship program; and, Because We Have Daughters® which helps foster healthy relationships between fathers and daughters and mobilize fathers to create safer communities for all women and girls.

Men Stopping Violence's history and analysis are centered in the Battered Women's Movement (Bathrick 2014). Prior to creating Men Stopping Violence, co-founders Dick Bathrick and Gus Kaufman approached Susan May, then Executive Director of the Council on Battered Women, for guidance, and she soon had them listening to hotline calls to better understand battered women's realities. Later, after starting their first batterers' group in Atlanta, Bathrick and Kaufman interviewed with Kathleen Carlin, then Executive Director of the Cobb County

YWCA Women's Resource Center in Georgia, to be facilitators in the YMCA's new court-mandated batterers program. They got the job and received supervision from Kathleen Carlin and Leigh Ann Peterson that was pivotal in informing MSV's work and analysis moving forward (Bathrick 2014). One of the messages that they received, pointedly, was go work with men but stay accountable to women. This guidance has informed MSV's work to this day. Structural manifestations of this commitment to center women's experiences include the influential leadership of Kathleen Carlin as MSV's Founding Executive Director and Shelley Serdahely Executive Director from 2002 to 2012. These women's impactful leadership emphasizes MSV's institutionalized core principle, "Women's voices and experiences must be central to our work to end male violence against women" (Bathrick et al. 2006), a theme echoed by Koss, White, and Lopez in 2018.

On the macro level, women's voices are leading the way about the need to address male sexual violence against women in all its variations and forms. The mainstream understanding of sexual assault and harassment has broadened to include unwanted sexual talk and touching. In response to these violations, women's organizing – which has been ongoing for centuries – is receiving heightened energy, attention, and traction. The #MeToo movement initiated by Tarana Burke is an example of the kind of identity and inclusion work that has not been done consistently and broadly for at least two decades. Similar to the fervor in the 1980s, the context which led to the formation of Men Stopping Violence Inc. (1982), women's voices are being heard when they detail the heinous ways that men target them based on their gender and sexuality.

Predictably, the #MeToo movement and related progress have sparked a backlash from those invested in maintaining patriarchal structures and defending the status quo (Mahdawi 2019; McGregor 2019; Peck 2019). Some men feel victimized by the movement and the possibility of accountability. Other men are genuinely confused as they reflect on what they once considered to be "normal" behavior.

Within this context, Men Stopping Violence offers practitioners a definition of male sexual violence against women which invites men into the conversation and into the movement. MSV's definition of male sexual violence against women offers a critical addition to the field as it invites both men and communities to interrogate the socialization and training which all men receive concerning male entitlement to women's bodies. Therefore, MSV's definition provides an opportunity for men to examine the justifications and tactics they use to coerce women.

MSV's Analysis of Male Violence Against Women

Men Stopping Violence's critique of the definitions discussed earlier is informed by its analysis of male violence against women.

The Men Stopping Violence Community-Accountability Model offers an extensive view of the cultural and historical mechanisms which support violence against women (Douglas et al. 2008a). The model illustrates how the problem of male violence against women is not rooted in individual men. Rather, the problem of

male violence against women is rooted in the community. Within this analysis, all men receive training and socialization from communities and institutions which support patriarchal norms and male violence against women. That training includes implicit and explicit messages which reinforce that men are more important than women and that men should therefore have access to women's bodies and services at will. Individual men may become conscious of these messages and beliefs and may or may not choose to act on them. When they choose to commit to destructive patriarchal values and behaviors, they can count on the support of male-identified, male-dominant institutions which will minimize and deny their behaviors while blaming women for men's choices.

If the problem of male violence against women is rooted in the community, then community and social change are required to end it. The Community-Accountability Model points to the need to engage and organize men to change the ecological systems in which they are nestled (Douglas et al. 2008a). The global patriarchal system – which is comprised of the primary, micro, and macro communities – creates a destructive environment for women. But communities are made up of individuals, and men will stop committing acts of violence against women when men believe that the communities in which they reside will not tolerate it. Through policies and practices, men can send strong messages which reinforce that women's safety is paramount and that there will be meaningful consequences for men who violate women, children, and other men.

While MSV's practice demands accountability and change from individual men, MSV's Community-Accountability Model illustrates how intervention strategies focusing solely on individual men are insufficient to end male violence against women. First, research and experience point to the difficulty of reaching enough numbers of individual men through formal systems. For example, bias and racism within the criminal legal system often lead to the overrepresentation of low-income men of color who are sent to batterer intervention programs (BIPs), while men with greater privilege who abuse women are often shielded by the system rather than facing consequences (Brewer and Heitzeg 2008; Douglas et al. 2008a, b). Trying to identify individual men who are abusive and sending them to BIPs, jail, or other interventions will always be insufficient if institutions and communities continue to churn out men who are socialized and rewarded for controlling women.

Preventing male violence against women requires community and social change (Bathrick et al. 2006; Bathrick 2014; Carlson et al. 2015; Douglas et al. 2008a; Holmes and Flood 2013). While individuals need to experience consequences for their choices, institutions and community organizations also need to be held accountable for the ways in which they support and condone male violence against women. This analysis forms the foundation for MSV's definition. For educational purposes, definitions that draw attention to male sexual socialization provide greater explanatory potential over definitions which simply describe actions. Rather than providing an excuse or scapegoat for men, examining community norms and institutional practices which promote male sexual violence positions men to take greater accountability for their choices by increasing their ability to think critically about their underlying beliefs and justifications. In addition, acknowledging socialization holds

a mirror up to communities and institutions and their role in perpetuating male sexual violence. Focusing solely on individual men – and relying on the legal system and BIPs to "fix them" – lets communities off the hook and will never be enough to end male violence. Those core MSV principles – "Women's Voices and Experiences Must be Central to the Work" and "Community Accountability is Key to Ending Male Violence Against Women" – direct MSV's prioritization of addressing male sexual violence and the centrality of creating a definition which invites men to critique both the socialization and tactics they have used within relationships.

A third core MSV principle – "Intersectionality Matters" – is also influential in the creation of definitions and solutions. Intersectionality is a concept and practice that recognizes and values the interconnections between oppressions, including those based on race, gender, class, and sexual orientation (Crenshaw 1991). For example, in the principle "women's voices and experiences must be central to the work," intersectionality demands the question: Which women? To state the obvious: All women do not speak with one voice, particularly when articulating their understanding of causes and solutions to issues of oppression. Gender cannot be untangled from class, race, sexual orientation, and other social identities (Bathrick et al. 2006; Douglas et al. 2008b).

For example, the marginalization of black women's voices (racism) undermines the work to end the violence perpetrated against them. What works for white women does not always work for black women. The histories of black women and white women are not parallel. Though the women's movement and the subsequent battered women's movement involved women of all races and class, the white, middle-class narrative dominated the discourse and influenced policies and practices (Douglas et al. 2008b). The historical facts of slavery, segregation, and ongoing discrimination which occur at every level of American life demand a thoughtful and thorough examination of race and how it influences the work to end male violence against women.

Men Stopping Violence has a long history of engagement with and leadership by African American women (Douglas et al. 2008b). Their directive is unequivocal – work for safety and accountability, but does not rely solely on the criminal legal system. They have consistently challenged MSV to create other pathways and spaces to engage communities – including faith-based institutions – to help end male violence against women (Douglas et al. 2008b). Based on this guidance, Men Stopping Violence's community work requires a definition of male sexual violence that is approachable and usable within community contexts. Legal definitions are important. However, definitions that require lawyers, those which focus on criminal accountability via law enforcement or others which center on identifying the serial rapist in isolation, will not meet MSV's goal of having a definition available to practitioners and men in the community to go to work on unpacking the societal messages that all men receive about their privileged place in the world.

Why an MSV Definition?

Amid so many existing definitions, why is MSV offering another definition? For what purpose? How does MSV's definition make a difference?

As discussed, legal, public health, campus, and community-based/social justice definitions are crafted for different purposes, and each has strengths and limitations in addressing sexual violence. The number of these definitions and functions are confusing and overwhelming for some men, communities, and practitioners who sometimes say: "Just tell me what not to do!"

Of course, some of that confusion may well be intentional – to avoid accountability.

While some men are confused, and others feign confusion (Ransom 2020), women's realities are much clearer and more urgent – women are under siege and targeted because of their gender. Responding to that urgency and MSV's charge to listen to women but work with men, Men Stopping Violence realized the need for a workable, operational definition of sexual violence that includes all or most male sexual violence for use by practitioners with men in the community. Rather than a legal definition, MSV saw the need for a definition designed to promote individual and community self-reflection and – ultimately – for prevention, social change, and justice.

Definitions that focus solely on tactics let men and communities avoid responsibility – both individually and collectively – for acknowledging and addressing the male socialization and training that all men receive. They exemplify the ways in which institutions work to keep social norms in place by focusing on the individual instead of requiring structural and institutional change necessary to disrupt patriarchy, sexism, and other forms of oppression. MSV's definition offers a critique of the dominant norms and offers the invitation to engage in a critical examination of socialization.

MSV's Definition

Men Stopping Violence's definition of male sexual violence has evolved over 38 years of intervention, classroom, and community work directly with men. MSV offers this definition of male sexual violence against women – "**Male sexual entitlement combined with tactics to impose his will**" – as an educational tool for use by practitioners working directly with men to facilitate change on the individual, community, and societal levels.

Unpacking "Male Sexual Entitlement"

MSV's definition of male sexual violence against women begins with "male" as an adjective, rather than a noun. Beginning the definition with male, for MSV, relates to a biological determination made at birth which leads to a socialization process that

informs cultural norms of masculinity. Boys and men are perceived to have certain innate qualities and are rewarded or punished for their loyalty or disloyalty in demonstrating those qualities. Male, here, refers to an often uninterrogated way of being in the world that goes well beyond biology and refers to a vernacular way of talking about sex and gender rather than adhering to strict definitions.

Most sexual violence is committed by those socialized as male. MSV's work focuses on negative aspects of male socialization as a major contributor to male violence against women. Focusing on male socialization is both accurate and strategic. It allows MSV to avoid the trap of framing this issue as about "good" women versus "bad" men. The problem, as we see it, is the massive fallout caused by harmful aspects of male socialization – not men. Women receive the same messages and socialization about men and boys and often pass it on to the men, boys, and girls in their lives. Lastly, focusing on male socialization rather than men allows MSV to cast a broader net as male also includes teens and boys.

Male sexual entitlement is experienced by men as having an inherent "right" to women's bodies for sex acts and services at will and a right to have power over other sexes and genders. Male sexual entitlement is most frequently unexamined and is presumed to be a birth right or an intrinsic part of someone being "a real man."

Male entitlement to women's attention and bodies is a core component of male socialization and therefore embedded in many socialized norms of masculinity. Many men share common experiences that teach and reinforce male entitlement. One common experience of male socialization regards peer pressure from other men and boys. Many boys can relate to being asked for details following a date with a girl. Questions posed by adult men in their lives or their peers imply that an expectation of sexual activity is inherent to the encounter. Questions include "Did you get some?" While others ask: "How far did you get?". These interrogations imply that sexual activity was the goal of the date. A negative response often leads to pressure to "succeed" next time; a response in the affirmative leads to congratulations and requests for details. A common experience for boys is lying about these encounters and generally exaggerating their sexual experience for the sake of fitting in. Compound this reality with broader messages sent through mass media. Constant portrayals of male entitlement manifest in male role models pursuing women who inevitably give in to constant sexual demand.

MSV's Community-Accountability Model describes in more detail how this socialization is enacted (Douglas et al. 2008a). Specifically, male-identified, male-dominated institutions work in men's interests across primary, micro, macro, and global communities to maintain male power and privilege. The process is set in motion by global norms of patriarchy and colonialism and works to maintain power differentials created by those norms. Men who sexually violate women are not acting in isolation. Rather, they are being fiercely loyal to the script which they have received that men are more important than women and that men have a "right" to dominate and control women.

Of course, male socialization is not uniform. Social location – race, class, geography, etc., – all have an impact on how males are socialized. Entitlement operates differently for different people: the entitlement of a white man may manifest

itself differently than that of an African American man. But a controlling aspect across patriarchal masculinities is dominance over women and entitlement to sex acts and services from women.

Starting the definition with "male sexual entitlement" is intentional. There is significant value in inviting broader systems and communities to look at an essential aspect of male violence against women that is too often ignored: The socialization and normalization of the patriarchal training that men have a right to access women's bodies at will. Systems and individuals often want to jump straight to concrete tactics and behaviors to focus on "he did this/he did that." But what informs a man doing this or that? His training that says, "I am more important than women and I am entitled to their bodies as I wish." Trying to address individual tactics without addressing the training/socialization that leads to underlying beliefs is similar to what Tarana Burke describes as playing whac-a-mole if the underlying systemic support for patriarchal beliefs remains. As Burke describes it, these oppressions are resilient because when we extinguish one tactic another will just take its place (Brown University 2018).

Unpacking "Tactics to Impose His Will"

Following the discussion of entitlement, MSV invites men to reflect on a broad range of tactics. The *Men at Work* curriculum used in the MSV intervention class contains multiple lessons on male sexual violence that ask the participants to interrogate the broad range of sexual tactics which men use to dominate women. Men are often surprised by the range of tactics that go far beyond illegal actions that are violating to women and designed to establish and maintain dominance. These tactics are functional: The goal is "to impose his will." Notice how male-centered the definition is – "Male sexual entitlement combined with tactics to impose his will." It's all about him. There's no "her" – she doesn't matter.

Contrast the implied aggression of this definition with assertiveness. As taught in the *Men at Work* curriculum, in assertive communication, a person communicates his or her desires, but the intention is respect instead of "imposing his will." The other person – what they think and feel and want – really matters. With aggression, the other person does not matter. At the end of the day, the man who uses sexual violence does not care whether the other person consents or not. The goal is gaining and maintaining power and control in his individual relationships and maintaining patriarchal, gendered power dynamics more broadly. By dominating her he's upholding patriarchal norms that – when scaled to a societal level – serve to solidify male dominance.

The Evolution of MSV's Definition

Since about 2001, MSV defined male sexual violence against women as "male expectation of sex acts combined with tactics to compel submission." This definition

proved valuable for inviting men and communities into a conversation about male sexual violence. It also raised some common questions during trainings in the classroom and community. These experiences informed the decision to later adjust the definition.

Most frequently, participants' attention and energy revolved around the word "submission." Some participants picked up on how submission implies the possibility of consent on the woman's part. For example, Christian participants sometimes asserted energetically that "submission" is a positive act and virtuous (though most agreed that compelling submission is problematic).

Including submission in the definition provided an educational opportunity for men on several levels. First, it left room for women's agency and the possibility of women's consent even if men engaged in abusive or controlling behaviors amid unjust power dynamics. Many men would say that their partners wanted to have sex with them and that women even protested when men reported trying to change their behaviors. There are many reasons that women under duress might say they agree to sex or want sex with a man who is engaging in controlling and abusive behaviors. But including submission also complicated issues in a sometimes helpful way. MSV instructors were not trying to define women's reality. A woman may say she is consenting to sex, and it is not helpful for MSV's definition to be used to disagree with what a woman might be saying. Rather, the strength of the definition lay in requiring that men identify their own problematic behaviors and address them whether his partner said she was submitting or not. In addition, discussing submission provided an opportunity to acknowledge that women too receive socialization that male sexual violence is to be expected. From this perspective, a woman may choose to engage in relationships that MSV, and their male partners themselves, view as problematic.

After exhaustive critical discussions, MSV decided that the concerns about "tactics to compel submission" were compelling enough to change it to "tactics to impose his will." This adjustment eliminated any inference of consent on her part. It unequivocally names his intent – to impose his will. It is also broad enough to include all the ways women are targeted based on their gender outside of intimate partner relationships: rape, street harassment, workplace harassment, etc.

Focusing on power in the second part of the definition also provided another opportunity for MSV to revisit concerns raised by some advocates about the first part of the definition: "male expectation of sex acts." They asserted that male sexual violence is not about sex acts; it is about power and control. Men receive messages from the community that support the mandate at the individual level to control women. Like hitting and kicking and strangulation, sexual violence is just another weapon to dominate and diminish women. His mandate goes beyond obtaining "sex acts"; however it is to police gender and gender norms. For example, street harassment and employment harassment are forms of male sexual violence that do not necessarily involve the expectation of sex acts but are still designed to embarrass, humiliate, or frighten women in order to maintain a gendered power dynamic. Shifting MSV's definition from "male expectation of sex acts" to "male sexual

entitlement" better reflects the reality that male sexual violence is not about sex – it's about power.

How and Where the Definition Is Used

MSV uses its revised definition of male sexual violence against women in various contexts including its Men's Education Programs with both court-ordered and "self-referred" men and in national trainings for batterer intervention programs (BIP) facilitators. MSV also presents the definition regularly at college and university classes and events, during conference workshops and keynotes, and at community events. The definition is very effective in evoking conversations about violence against women, particularly with men. Women participate fully in trainings and discussions, but the definition is not intended to define women's realities nor for women to determine if they have experienced sexual violence. Rather, the definition provides an invitation for men to examine internalized beliefs and the tactics they use that may or may not lead to an individual woman's experience of sexual violence but that men (and women) can still critique as problematic whether they are illegal or not.

For example, MSV partnered with Emory University's Interfraternity Council to present the definition at a campus forum in early 2018. The discussion was vibrant and energetic as participants examined the entitlement and expectations that men carried and how that entitlement translated to tactics of sexual violence. A discussion based on a legal or campus definition whose focus is solely on prohibited activities would likely have been less effective in engaging Emory's male students. It is easier to distance oneself from specific crimes – "I'm not a rapist!" – and the men's privilege also meant that the likelihood of legal intervention was remote. However, MSV's definition provided space for all men to examine their own expectations and entitlement, where they learned those lessons and the effects of those lessons on women, men, their communities, and themselves.

A Case Study

MSV's intervention class provides an example of the transformational power of MSV's definition. In 2018 Roger – a young, white, middle-class, man – presented his 12-Week Self Inventory during his formal review at the halfway point of MSV's 24-week Men's Education Program course. During the 12-Week Self Inventory review, men are required to verbally recount their worst incident of violence towards a woman, their patterns of abuse towards women, and the effects of their abuse. Participants receive feedback from other men for the purposes of eliminating any justifications while learning to take full responsibility for their actions. In addition, as part of the review process, men are required to bring a man from their community to witness the work and to be an accountability partner in the community. Roger brought a friend.

Roger's 12-Week Self Inventory sent shock waves through the class: he named his patterns of sexual violence with an extraordinary level of detail and ownership – beyond anything that one class facilitator had experienced in his 25 years in the classroom. Some men were crying ("I don't want to believe that!"), others were frozen ("I don't know what to say to you.") Some identified with Roger ("Oh my God, that was me in college!"), while others tried to distance themselves from him ("That's not me! That's not us!"). And some men were angry: Roger's honesty was a betrayal of the silence that allows men to deny the reality of male sexual violence against women ("I didn't want to know that") and – consequently – to avoid holding a mirror up to themselves and their actions ("Why are you doing this to us? Why are you making me feel this while challenging me to look at the dark parts of my psyche that motivated me to participate in some of these behaviors?") Patriarchal norms dictate that men are not supposed to talk about the sexual violence which they have used or its effects. And yet Roger (a pseudonym) did, and the discomfort which men felt provided an opportunity for the class to go to work by examining their own socialization and behaviors. It was instructive.

The environment was conducive for Roger's sharing. Awareness of male sexual violence has increased significantly because of the #MeToo movement. Likely influenced and empowered by #MeToo, one of Roger's former partners called out his sexually abusive behavior towards her on social media. Remarkedly, he confirmed on social media that she was telling the truth.

MSV's intervention class encourages men to name their abuse fully and work to change their future behavior. Men may experience accountability and consequences for their actions. Men may feel uncomfortable or even guilty as they grapple with what they have done and the effects of their abuse on others. But MSV strives for a classroom culture where men are not harmed, shamed, or disrespected when they practice accountability. That respect for truth-telling provided room for Roger to share his violence.

Within this context of raised awareness and classroom culture, MSV's definition of male sexual violence crystallized the discussion: it provided Roger and the men with a clear definition to center the discussion and a framework necessary to reflect on their own beliefs and tactics. Community accountability, truth-telling, and education: all three were present and contributed to Roger and the class shifting in important ways.

Roger's understanding of male sexual violence evolved during the course. Towards the end Roger wrote in one of his regular weekly check-ins: "MSV's definition of sexual violence is much more inclusive and accurate than the various legal definitions. I have expected sexual acts from many of the women in my life, and the times I have used physical and psychological tactics to compel submission from women have been my worst incidents of abuse." He went on to write: "Most women have unfortunately experienced sexual violence as defined by MSV. If this definition were taught in schools hopefully us men could change our behavior from an early age and end the cycle of violence." These cognitive shifts lay the groundwork for Roger to make different choices in his relationships, hopefully leading to more safety and justice for the women and girls in his life.

Changing individual men like Roger is insufficient and perhaps impossible if community norms around him do not shift as well (Douglas et al. 2008a). The goal for class is for the impact on Roger and the other men in class to effect personal and intergroup change which reverberates into the community. First, Roger's guest – a man from his community – witnessed the class and was motivated to take an honest inventory of his own behavior and committed to support Roger in the transformative work he was doing. After Roger's truth-telling, the class facilitators reported that other men began to claim their abuse while speaking more honestly. One man connected with male sexual violence against women at a different level: "It made me think about the safety of my own daughter." Another class participant – an MSV intern preparing for leadership in another social justice organization – reported, "I can see where I have been assaultive too." Roger's sharing also had an impact on MSV staff. His sharing and the shock waves that followed convinced and motivated the three authors to write this chapter.

Strengths and Limitations of MSV's Definition

MSV's definition of male sexual violence against women is short and focused. When presented well, MSV's definition facilitates self-examination and community accountability.

Breadth is also a strength of the definition. Too many men and institutions still view male sexual violence as forcible rape only. MSV's definition encompasses a broad range of behaviors that constitute male sexual violence. Within a context where acts of male aggression towards women are normalized, MSV's more expansive definition has value in inviting men to slow down and closely interrogate their beliefs and behaviors and how those impact women regardless of whether those behaviors are socially sanctioned or not.

MSV's open-ended educational approach is designed to promote community change and accountability. Engaging and mobilizing men are critical components of community change. MSV's definition invites men into a conversation about the socialization and training all men to receive rather than prompting men to "opt out" because they have not committed (or been caught committing) a specific violation.

A third major strength of MSV's definition is that it connects male socialization and training to male sexual violence. It invites men and communities to examine the normative aspects of male sexual entitlement. Going beyond individual men, the definition holds a mirror up to society and has implications for prevention and social change which are discussed in a later section.

Men Stopping Violence's definition of male sexual violence against women is also heteronormative and cisgendered-male in its conception, tone, and application. Thus, a limitation is that it has limited applicability for addressing sexual violence committed by women and LGBTQ populations. For example, MSV's definition "does not account for the complexity nor the variation of gender identification, of sex identification, nor of sexual orientation, such as men engaging in sexual violence against other men" (Barnes 2018).

MSV's definition is also less exact than criminal justice or public health definitions which are designed to be enforceable or measurable and therefore list specific prohibited behaviors. A limitation of MSV's more expansive approach is that its definition may be overly broad. Does the definition problematize "normal" courtship behaviors and label them as sexual violence? For example, has a man committed sexual violence if he has an expectation of sex after buying a woman a glass of wine at a bar? There is a risk of diluting the terror and meaning of "sexual violence" if it is applied too broadly.

Another limitation is that although the revised definition is at its core similar to MSV's original definition and is also based on 30-plus years' experience of engaging men and listening to women, it has not been tested with the same breath and depth as the original definition. There is much to learn about how men and communities experience it.

Despite its heteronormative and gendered limitations, as discussed in the previous section, the definition does have implications for women and LGBTQ individuals and communities as well. Everyone is socialized about gendered norms and expectations (Douglas et al. 2008a). Regardless of social location, everyone receives and – to some extent – internalizes the training that produces "male sexual entitlement." For example, gay men receive the same messages that heterosexual men do about male superiority and male entitlement to women's bodies, attention, and services. Sexual violence against women may not be the weapon of choice for many gay men, but entitlement is still there. And, since male sexual violence is about maintaining gendered power differentials, gay men may use other tactics to solidify their authority as men. An illustration of this is the casting, and accepted view by many, of gay men as fashion savvy, which privileges them to cross boundaries with women including feeling free to comment on how they dress and entering their personal spaces, including touching them without permission. Some gay men rationalize that these behaviors are not problematic, because they are not romantically interested in women.

Women receive training on male superiority as well. Manifestations include women joining men in protecting men from the consequences of their actions, blaming women for male violence, reinforcing women's duty to yield to men, and perpetuating sexist gender norms with children. Socialization may also inform women's decisions about "submission." Consent becomes much more complicated within a context in which both women and men have internalized the normalization of male sexual entitlement. In addition, some women may also internalize the patriarchal promise that the pathway to success and power involves using tactics to impose one's will within sexual relationships. Women may not receive institutional support to enact such power and control. Cisgender male-identified men have power and position to act on this socialization in a way that cisgender women do not. But, the definition still holds value for women who may want to reflect on ways that they have internalized socialization that supports or even seeks to replicate "male sexual entitlement combined with tactics to impose his will."

"Race matters" is a core MSV principle when discussing sexual violence (Bathrick et al. 2006; Douglas et al. 2008b.) Race is a social construct that has real

meaning for power dynamics and how people are treated (Bathrick et al. 2006). Power differentials are relative in any interaction: A Latino man and a white man have different social locations and will have different levels of access to women depending on the context and the social location of the women they are engaging. For example, because of racism, white men may have more access to white women's bodies and services than Latino men do. Social dynamics and power differentials influence men's access to women's bodies and services, and any given man may or may not be able to impose his will in any given situation. However, MSV asserts that the training is there. Male sexual entitlement may manifest itself differently, but it is there across races, and all men can benefit from exploring MSV's definition.

MSV's definition is not a criminal justice definition, nor is not intended for enforcement purposes. This distance from the criminal justice system is useful when engaging communities of color which have faced a disproportionate response from law enforcement. MSV's definition is not intended to prompt an increased criminal justice response or new laws to criminalize all problematic behaviors. Rather, it is applicable to all men, not just those identified through the criminal legal system. The definition can be used with men in fraternities, at churches, mosques, and synagogues, and community events.

Implications for Intervention and Prevention Efforts

MSV's definition of male sexual violence against women as "male sexual entitlement combined with tactics to impose his will" has significant implications for prevention. To prevent male sexual violence, community norms need to be changed. The definition's inclusion of "male sexual entitlement" requires an examination of how communities participate in the normalization of male sexual violence. Terms and standards are set when peers, mentors, and institutions encourage entitlement to women's bodies or excuse sexually abusive behavior from a man or boy. When schools impose little consequence for sexual violence or the media blame women for sexual violence enacted upon them, they signal to the rest of the community that sexual violence is not to be taken seriously. As long as negative beliefs about women are promoted, men will act on those beliefs (Men Stopping Violence 2018). MSV's definition opens space to examine socialization in a way that focusing only on prohibited tactics and behaviors does not. In doing so, MSV's definition offers a dent in the patriarchal norms that support male sexual violence and challenges communities to do the same.

MSV's definition is unique in the level of emphasis it places on male socialization and training as a root cause of male sexual violence against women. Some in the community and the academy are resistant to this degree of focus on male socialization; it is easier to define the problem as limited to serial rapists and offenders. If the problem is rooted in a few bad men, the solution lies in focusing resources on identifying and prosecuting serial rapists and sexual predators. Certainly, serial rapists and sexual predators exist, and a fair and stout criminal justice system response is warranted to protect victims. Unfortunately, the emphasis on individual

rapists allows men to distance themselves from the problem of male sexual violence – "That's not me! I'm not a rapist!" – rather than explore how they have internalized male sexual entitlement and enacted it within their relationships. Focusing on serial rapists and sexual predators also lets the community avoid responsibility for the multiple ways that it gives men permission to access women's bodies, services, and resources at will and without consequences. MSV definition doesn't refute legal definitions or the need for legal protections from certain individuals; it refutes the social norms that nurture male sexual violence against all women.

Creating and Facilitating Spaces That Enhance Learning for Men

Men learn to sexually violate women primarily from other men and can therefore unlearn it too from other men and move to create more safety in their relationships and their communities. To change, however, men need spaces where they can make an honest assessment about their use of sexual violence. Of course, men may still choose whether to step into hard discussions about male sexual violence or continue to distance themselves. But, for those men who want to change, where are the spaces that invite men into self-evaluation and discourse for the purpose of learning new ways of being in relationships that are not grounded in entitlement nor bolstered by abusive and controlling tactics?

There are far too few spaces where men can honestly examine their beliefs and actions, learn, and change. And, to the extent that space for these discussions is being created within batterer intervention programs (BIPs), it is ironic that the men most benefitting from these discussions are also those most stigmatized in their communities (Bathrick 2014). How can the movement to end male sexual violence create more such spaces that enhance learning for all men in the community, not just men identified and prosecuted by the criminal justice system?

The Roger Case Study provides an example of how learning is possible within a context of increased community accountability as a result of the #MeToo movement and a classroom culture that facilitates honesty and change, including educational components like MSV's definition of male sexual violence against women. One additional component for successful engagement with men in the community or classroom involves expecting accountability from men, not ideological purity. All men have received training and socialization supporting male entitlement; all men have work to do to unlearn this training.

Too often, MSV experiences spaces within the movement where men are discarded or "written off" if a sexist attitude or belief is exposed. Men need to receive honest feedback and experience meaningful accountability. But as more men join the movement to end sexual violence, they will make mistakes, and that's an opportunity for growth – for all. How will men learn in the absence of sharing, accountability, and empathy? MSV operates from the stance of wanting to stay connected with men who inevitably make mistakes but are willing to be accountable for their actions and change.

Creating and facilitating more spaces in the community to enhance men's learning is critical to improving safety for women. Such learning is in men's interests too if men want to have meaningful and respectful relationships with women and girls (Carlin 1995; Loughlin 2018). But the promise of these spaces goes beyond individual change and safety. Such spaces engage and develop men to become change agents within their communities. Self-reflection is the first step in organizing men to change the social norms that influence all men. Such organizing and social change is critical to the community change necessary to prevent male violence against women.

Key Points

- How one defines sexual violence has significant implications for intervention and prevention efforts.
- Legal, public health, campus, and community-based/social justice definitions of sexual violence all have strengths and limitations in their intents and applications.
- To prevent male sexual violence, community norms need to be changed.
- MSV's definition of male sexual violence against women is "Male sexual entitlement combined with tactics to impose his will."
- MSV's definition invites both men and communities to interrogate the male socialization and training which all men receive concerning male entitlement to women's bodies.
- MSV's definition is unique in the level of emphasis it places on male socialization and training as a root cause of male sexual violence against women.
- An intersectional approach to policy and practice is essential to preventing and ending male sexual violence against women.
- Focusing on serial rapists and sexual predators lets the community avoid responsibility for the multiple ways that it gives men permission to access women's bodies, services, and resources at will and without consequences.
- The community must provide men spaces where they can make an honest assessment about their use of sexual violence. There are far too few spaces where men can honestly examine their beliefs and actions, learn, and change.

Summary and Conclusion

The primary aim of this chapter is to contribute to the discourse and advance efforts to prevent male violence against women. The approach to that end was to examine the strengths and limitations of some of the established definitions of sexual violence and to offer a more expansive, reflective, and functional definition. The authors, who have substantial experience as practitioners in the violence prevention field, recognized the conspicuous absence in these conventional definitions of the problem – the role of male socialization – and felt an ethical responsibility to do something about it, hence, this chapter.

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