

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

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Bringing in the Bystander In-Person Prevention Program to a U.S. Military Installation: Results From a Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT Objectives: This pilot study describes an evaluation of the Bringing in the Bystander (BITB) in-person program conducted with United States Army Europe personnel. Methods: The sample was comprised of 394 soldiers (29% participated in and 71% had not participated in the BITB program). Data were analyzed 4½ months after the program was presented. Results: Compared to the soldiers who did not participate in the program, soldiers who participated in the program were significantly more likely to report that they had engaged in one or more of the 117 behaviors, that they had helped an acquaintance or a stranger, and that they had taken action when they saw sexual assault or stalking occurring, about to occur or after it had occurred. Conclusions: The results indicate that with thoughtful and appropriate modifications, the BITB in-person prevention program, initially developed for a college audience, can be transferred to a military audience.

INTRODUCTION

A major shift in sexual violence prevention messaging has transferred approaching audiences as potential victims and perpetrators to one that calls attention to the role of the community as a means for reducing the numbers of victims and perpetrators.¹⁻³ A number of prevention strategies have now begun to focus on the role of bystanders in intervening in situations related to sexual and intimate partner violence.^{2,4-6} Because the prevalence and incidence of sexual violence in the U.S. military is comparable to that found on college campuses in the United States, in this pilot study, we describe an evaluation of the Bringing in the Bystander (BITB) in-person program, originally created for college communities, that we administered to United States Army Europe (USAREUR) personnel. Similarly to college campus communities where sexual violence has been found to be a widespread problem,⁷

sexual violence is a pervasive problem in military communities, including the U.S. Army.⁸ Moreover, in the U.S. Army and on college campuses, women are the overwhelming majority of sexual assault victims.^{8,9} Another similarity between the two sites is that the majority of victims in both settings do not report that someone sexually assaulted them. A national study of college women found that only 2% of victims of sexual violence reported to police and only 4% disclosed to campus authorities.¹⁰ Likewise, the incidence of sexual assault is underreported in the Army.^{8,9,11,12}

The frequency of underreporting may indicate a need to change what the victims see as the social/peer norms that are not supportive of them but rather are implicitly and explicitly supportive of violence against women or coercion in relationships.¹³ These norms enable perpetrators to hide their assaults and silence witnesses to these assaults.¹⁴ The bystander model focuses on one way of teaching bystanders active, helpful behaviors to counter these norms with strategies so do not remain silent about predatory behaviors they witness.

One of the important lessons learned from using a bystander focus is that approaching everyone as potential helpers avoids approaching men as potential perpetrators and women as potential victims. Reaching out to men as allies can be a more useful way to educate them about sexual and relationship violence.^{13,15} In addition, research on men indicates that they are more supportive of sexual assault prevention efforts and more

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supportive of assault survivors when they perceive that community norms are supportive of these behaviors.^{3,16,17} Other research shows that informal helpers may play important roles in helping survivors after an assault has been disclosed.^{18,19} Even so, some researchers have found that many community members lack skill and confidence to help when needed.²⁰

The bystander approach is based on an extensive body of theory and empirical studies in social psychology on conditions that facilitate or hinder helping by bystanders and their application to sexual violence,¹ the pioneering efforts of Katz⁵ and Berkowitz,⁴ and on empirical research that points to the role of community norms as a significant cause of sexual violence.^{21,22} Attention to all of these factors facilitates effective prevention efforts at the community level. The BITB in-person program has been evaluated experimentally and shown to be effective in changing attitudes and actual behaviors among a population of traditionally-aged undergraduate men and women.² Researchers also found that program participants were more likely to improve readiness to change scores as a function of exposure to the prevention program.²³ The stages of change model as applied to sexual violence is described in more detail²³ in the "Methods" section of this study.

Our goal in this article is to present the results of an evaluation of the BITB in-person program based on a pilot study conducted with USAREUR personnel in 2010. The bystander approach used in this program is an innovative one to help prevent the problem of sexual violence across campuses and other communities.^{1,2,4,13,24,25} This approach involves teaching bystanders how to intervene in situations that involve sexual violence, and although still involving programming that trains groups of individuals, this model takes next steps by including a broader community approach to prevention.

Hypotheses

We hypothesize that program participants will report that they had performed a greater number of bystander behaviors aimed at preventing or intervening in sexual assault and stalking for each of the following categories: friends, acquaintances and strangers as well as for the overall category of "all," which combines the three separate categories. Moreover, we hypothesize that members of the control group will have a higher number of "no to all" bystander behavior responses than do program participants. Further, using the stages of change action subscale, we hypothesize that soldiers who participate in the program will have higher scores than those soldiers who did not participate in the program indicating they are more likely to say that they were actively involved in projects dealing with the prevention of sexual assault and stalking. (These scales are described in the "Methods" section).

METHODS

Procedure

Given the Department of Defense's (DoD's) focus on bystander-oriented related training, the purpose of this study

was to test whether the BITB in-person program, developed for a college campus population, could be effectively translated for members of the U.S. military, specifically U.S. Army, personnel. This research focused on a pilot test of the program created especially for soldiers posted to a USAREUR installation. The creators and lead trainers of the program worked closely with the USAREUR G1 Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) to translate the campus version of the in-person program into one specifically geared toward members of the USAREUR to pilot at its installations. That is, they developed a specific facilitator's guide and slide show for USAREUR personnel using specific language, statistics, and examples that would resonate with members of the U.S. military, U.S. Army, and particularly USAREUR. In addition, the program creators and evaluators added language, examples, and skill-building exercises focusing on stalking. Importantly, servicemen were not addressed as potential perpetrators and servicewomen were not approached as potential victims; this model is based on the premise that everyone has a role to play in ending sexual violence on the installation (and in the Army).²⁶ Two lead trainers from the University of New Hampshire (UNH) with several years of experience preparing trainers, including those from campus, military, and other community venues, trained 16 USAREUR personnel to conduct the Army-adapted BITB program. The 16 cofacilitators then worked in teams (one man, one woman) to present the 4.5-hour version of the program to multiple groups for a total of 360 soldiers. The program consisted of three sections: introducing the bystander model, applying bystander concepts to sexual violence, and developing and applying skills as a bystander. The creators of the program worked closely with the USAREUR G1 Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Office to translate the campus version of the program into one specifically geared toward members of the USAREUR to pilot at its installations.

Data were collected at two different times and then both surveys were analyzed from a sample of soldiers following their participation in the BITB program on an USAREUR installation. Data were collected from participants a week and then 4½ months following the BITB program. In addition, soldiers on the same installation who had not received the program (control group) also completed the surveys at the same times. Given previous work that has shown the efficacy of this program using an experimental design with college students,² in this study, we sought to extend these findings using a different population. This design used here, posttest only data at two time points, reflects the constraints of working in the field with personnel on active duty, and is often used in applied research under similar circumstances.

Participants

The sample of survey participants in this pilot study was comprised of soldiers who had participated and soldiers who had not participated in the BITB program. We present data at an aggregate level so individuals who agreed to participate in the

study are not identifiable, thereby insuring that our data analysis complies with UNH human subject regulations. Ninety percent of the participants were male and 89% lived on the installation. Fifty-three percent of these soldiers reported that they had participated in a previous training or class where the topics of sexual assault and rape had been discussed.

Measures

Bystander Behavior Scale (3rd Edition)

This version of the scale asks about bystander behaviors conducted in the past 2 months with each of three specific groups: friends, acquaintances, and strangers.²⁷ Each subscale contained 39 items for a total of 117 items. For instance, the following question would be answered for these three groups; "I stopped and checked in with a/n (friend, acquaintance, stranger) who looked very intoxicated when they were being taken upstairs at a party or home with someone they just met." This measure was adapted for use in the Army pilot project by changing language and examples in the items to reflect military life. In addition, participants had the option of checking "no to all" (friends, acquaintances, and strangers) for each of the 39 items in the scale. This option affords an additional subscale measure regarding behaviors. That is it allows us to calculate a measure of not bystanding by summing the number of responses under this option.

Action Stages of Change Subscale (3rd Edition)

This scale measures participants' engagement in bystander behaviors to prevent sexual assault and stalking.²⁷ Participants respond on a 5-point scale from "not at all true" to "very much true" indicating how much each of the statements was true of them. Following the work of Grimley et al,²⁸ the action subscale (composed of eight items) assessed whether or not participants have taken action. For example, one of the sexual assault items on the action subscale is "I am actively involved in projects to deal with sexual assault on the installation." Thereby, the higher the action subscale score, the more likely the participant has been involved in actual activities aimed at reducing violence against women.

RESULTS

Four and one half months following the administration of the BITB in-person prevention program, we compared the group of research participants who reported participating in the bystander prevention program (28%, $n = 131$) and those who did not (72%, $n = 337$). We then used a Chi-square test to determine if the two groups varied significantly by gender, residence, and participation in a previous training or class that addressed sexual assault or stalking. The BITB program participants were instructed not to include the bystander program when they answered this question. The two groups did not vary significantly by gender or residence. However, the groups did vary significantly by participation in a previous training or class addressing sexual assault or stalking. That is, 61% of the

program participants, compared to 50% of the control group, reported previously attending a training that covered the topic of sexual assault or rape. This difference was significant ($p < 0.05$). For this reason, in our analyses, we controlled for previous attendance at a training addressing the topics of sexual assault and rape.

We asked the soldiers who did and did not participate in the BITB training program to indicate if they had performed each of the 39 bystander behaviors (listed in the bystander behavior scale) in the past 4½ months to help a friend, acquaintance, or stranger. Counting across these three relationship categories, the total number sums to 117 possible behaviors. Table I displays the means and standard deviations (SD) for outcome measures by participation in BITB and participating in a previous training where the topic of sexual assault and rape were addressed.

Given the significant difference between previous attendance at a training addressing the topics of sexual assault and rape noted above, we calculated a two-way analysis of variance using SPSS 18 to determine whether participating in BITB impacted the number of bystander behaviors a soldier reported performing for the three individual relationships categories, all relationship categories, and no behaviors while controlling for whether a soldier had previously participated in a training that addressed sexual assault. Since we hypothesized that soldiers who participated in BITB would perform more behaviors than those soldiers who did not, we utilized a one-tailed test of significance. We found no significant difference in the bystander behaviors for friends reported by soldiers who did and did not participate in the BITB. However, when we looked at bystander behaviors for acquaintances, we found that the main effect for BITB participation was significant ($F_{1, 390} = 10.85$, $p < 0.001$, partial eta-squared = 0.027) and the main effect for previously participating in a training that addressed sexual assault and the interaction of the two main effect variables (BITB participation and previous training) were not significant. This means that soldiers who participated in BITB reported that they performed a greater number of bystander behaviors to aid an acquaintance compared to soldiers who did not participate in BITB and that this relationship held regardless of previous training.

Moreover, soldiers who participated in BITB reported a greater number of bystander behaviors to aid a stranger compared to soldiers who did not participate in BITB. We found a significant main effect for BITB participation ($F_{1, 390} = 2.69$, $p < 0.10$, partial eta-squared = 0.007) and the main effect for previously participating in a training that addressed sexual assault and the interaction of the two main effect variables were not significant. Further, soldiers who participated in BITB reported a greater number of bystander behaviors to help people in all three relationship categories compared to soldiers who did not participate in BITB. The main effect for BITB participation was significant ($F_{1, 390} = 5.37$, $p < 0.05$, partial eta-squared = 0.014), but the main effect for previously participating in a training that addressed sexual assault and

TABLE I. The Mean and (SD) for the Outcome Measures for Soldiers Who Did or Did Not Participate in the BITB In-Person Prevention Program^a

Outcome Measures	Participated in BITB		Participated in BITB Previous Training on Sexual Assault		Did Not Participate in BITB Previous Training on Sexual Assault	
	Yes (n = 115 ^b)	No (n = 279 ^c)	Yes (n = 69)	No (n = 46)	Yes (n = 146)	No (n = 133)
	Mean (SD) Number of Behaviors Reported		Mean (SD) Number of Behaviors Reported		Mean (SD) Number of Behaviors Reported	
Acted as a Bystander for						
Friend	11.44 (12.45)	9.87 (12.03)	12.54 (12.14)	9.80 (12.85)	10.20 (11.85)	9.57 (12.30)
Acquaintance	10.37 (12.56)	6.47 (9.77)	10.23 (11.92)	10.59 (13.61)	7.27 (10.08)	5.64 (9.40)
Stranger	5.78 (9.01)	4.19 (7.89)	6.09 (8.47)	5.33 (9.85)	4.64 (7.86)	3.73 (7.94)
All Relationship Categories	27.60 (28.35)	20.53 (24.82)	28.86 (27.16)	25.72 (30.25)	22.12 (24.79)	18.94 (24.87)
“No to all” Relationships Categories	20.54 (15.71)	25.24 (14.22)	19.46 (15.27)	22.15 (16.39)	24.37 (14.30)	26.20 (14.13)
Action Stage of Change Subscale	13.84 (6.76) ^d	11.44 (6.30) ^e	21.95 (7.84) ^f	19.45 (7.37) ^g	18.59 (7.56) ^h	16.52 (7.56) ⁱ

^aAs measured 4½ months following the administration of the program on the installation. ^bTwenty-nine percent (115) of the soldiers in the study participated in the BITB Training Program. Of these soldiers, 60% (69) had participated in a previous training where the topics of sexual assault and rape were addressed. Forty percent (46) of these soldiers had not participated in a previous training. ^cSeventy-one percent (278) of the soldiers in the study did not participate in the BITB Training Program. Of these soldiers, 52% (146) had participated in a previous training where the topics of sexual assault and rape were addressed. Forty-eight percent (133) of these soldiers had not participated in a previous training. ^dN = 131 because of missing data on behavior variables. ^eN = 333 because of missing data on behavior variables. ^fN = 80 because of missing data on behavior variables. ^gN = 51 because of missing data on behavior variables. ^hN = 168 because of missing data on behavior variables. ⁱN = 165 because of missing data on behavior variables.

the interaction of the two main effect variables were not significant. In other words, we found that compared to soldiers who had not participated in BITB, soldiers who participated in the program performed a greater mean number of bystander behaviors than those soldiers who did not participate in BITB, independent of having previously participated in a training that addresses sexual assault and rape.

Next, we examined the number of times soldiers who did and did not participate in BITB and answered “no to all” regarding performing any of the 39 bystander behaviors for friends, acquaintances, or strangers. We found a significant difference between the groups. Soldiers who participated in the BITB training reported “no to all” of the bystander behaviors significantly less than those soldiers who did not participate in the BITB training. The main effect for BITB participation was significant ($F_{1,390} = 7.37, p < 0.001$, partial eta-squared = 0.019), whereas the main effect for previously participating in a training that addressed sexual assault and the interaction of two main effect variables were not significant. Once again, participation in BITB was significant independent of having previously participated in a training that addresses sexual assault and rape.

Finally, we calculated a two-way analysis of variance for the action stage of change subscale to examine if soldiers who participated in BITB reported that they took action more often when sexual assault or stalking were occurring, about to occur, or after it had occurred compared to those soldiers who did not participate in BITB. We also controlled for the soldiers’ previous participation in a training that addressed sexual assault. Soldiers who participated in the BITB training had significantly higher action scores than those soldiers who did not participate in the BITB training. The main effect for BITB par-

ticipation was significant ($F_{1,460} = 15.59, p < 0.001$, partial eta-squared = 0.033), the main effect for previously participating in a training that addressed sexual assault was also significant ($F_{1,460} = 8.26, p < 0.001$, partial eta-squared = 0.018), but the interaction of the two main effect variables was not significant. This means that participating in BITB and having previously participated in a training that addresses sexual assault and rape increased the scores on the action subscale. That is, soldiers were more likely to say that they were actively involved in projects dealing with sexual assault, for example, if they had participated in BITB, or a previous program, or both.

DISCUSSION

Public health and health psychology researchers have found that because public health problems have multiple causes, prevention programs that include these multiple causes and target a variety of populations are more effective than those that address a single cause or limited segment of the population.²⁹ Thus, effective sexual violence prevention programs must utilize different strategies and mechanisms to educate the public.³⁰ For this reason, the U. S. military has begun to develop and disseminate campaigns focusing on soldiers and related military personnel to teach them how to engage in prevention and intervention to end sexual violence in an effort to curtail the high numbers of sexual assaults and other forms of sexual violence in the U.S. military. To emphasize the importance placed on the goal of ending sexual violence in the U.S. military, the DoD established the SAPRO, which developed and implemented prevention strategies and campaigns across all five branches of the military and has now incorporated an agenda to improve accountability utilizing data collection and analysis, reviews of cases, and case outcomes as well as

programming efforts.^{12,31} Because the BITB program has proven to be successful with a number of college student constituencies,^{2,32-35} we wanted to evaluate it with a population that shares a number of similarities but also differences with college student constituencies. The present administration and evaluation of the program with USAREUR personnel afforded us that opportunity.

The BITB in-person prevention programs provided soldiers on a USAREUR installation the opportunity to learn about the problems of sexual assault and stalking and how all community members have a responsibility to reduce incidence of violence in their community. Importantly, servicemen were not addressed as potential perpetrators and servicewomen were not approached as potential victims; this model is based on the premise that everyone has a role to play in ending sexual violence on the installation (and in the Army).²⁶ Asking all community members to take responsibility to help prevent or intervene in situations of sexual violence does not imply an exoneration of perpetrators. That is, the responsibility for sexual violence perpetration correctly rests with offenders.

When we compared the types of bystander behaviors that both groups reported doing in the 4½ months since the administration of the BITB program, soldiers who participated in the program were significantly more likely to report that they had engaged in one or more of the 39 behaviors and significantly more likely to help an acquaintance or a stranger compared to the soldiers who did not participate in the program. Independent of having previously participated in a training that addresses sexual assault and rape, soldiers who participated in the BITB training performed a greater mean number of bystander behaviors than those soldiers who did not participate in BITB. Further, soldiers who participated in the BITB training reported "no to all" of the bystander behaviors significantly less than those soldiers who did not participate in the BITB training. Finally, soldiers who participated in the BITB training had significantly higher action scores than those soldiers who did not participate in the BITB training. The results indicate that the BITB prevention program, initially developed for a college audience, can be transferred to a military audience with appropriate and thoughtful modifications.

Even so, this pilot study has a number of limitations including the small sample size and the inability to follow soldiers over time. The training and work schedules of some soldiers made it difficult for them to participate in the surveys before and immediately following their training. Clearly longitudinal research conducted with a larger military sample is in order, but the findings from this pilot study are promising regarding the utility of the BITB in-person prevention program for training soldiers to intervene in situations where sexual violence and stalking have occurred, are occurring, or have the potential to occur.

These limitations notwithstanding, the results of the study indicate that the soldiers who experienced the BITB in-person program appear to have improved their commitment to intervene in instances of sexual assault and stalking in specific

ways. That is, soldiers who participated in the program were more likely to report that they had intervened in as an active bystander compared to soldiers who did not participate in the program. In conclusion, although this pilot study has limitations, it provides a positive example of an evaluation of a prevention program that addresses the DoD's call for scientific evaluations of efforts to reduce sexual assault and stalking in the U.S. military.¹

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