# Gender, Violence and Education; Nigeria in Periscope

Peace Oluwatoyin Irefin
Department of Sociology, Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State.

**ABSTRACT**

This article examines gender violence and education in Nigeria. Gender based violence is a Universal problem that occurs in every culture. The study is an empirical study of domestic violence in higher institutions in Nigeria. It is a descriptive survey using qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain data from respondents on the magnitude of domestic violence in Nigeria. Seven hundred and sixty nine respondents were selected using random sampling technique. Data collection was done using questionnaire and interview methods. The findings revealed that the violence is a common experience and it affects students' educational experiences. There is a correlation between the experience of violence and interruptions in higher education.

## 1. Introduction

Gender refers to all the characteristics, expected behaviour and roles of men and women which a particular society has determined and assigned to each sex. It is a term describing behaviours and attributes expected of an individual on the basis of being born a male or a female. The Oxford Learners Dictionary defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power threatened against oneself, another person, a group or country that either results or has a high likelihood of affecting lives or resulting to death. Gender based violence therefore covers those incidents in which one sex asserts power by using sexual or similar acts to achieve submissiveness and fear in another person and in the process commit an offence against the dignity or privacy of that person (Ndungu, 2004). Therefore, gender based violence against women is a term that broadly incorporates many behaviours that manifest as physical, sexual or psychological damage to women or girls, which is a violation of human right, The protest against violations of human rights is based on the United Nations Charter of 1945, which recognises the need to stop maltreating all citizens. In compliance with that standard, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations.

General Assembly which Nigeria is a signatory to, described discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion made on the basis of sex, which has an effect or for the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition of right exercised by women, irrespective of their mental status, on a basis of equality of men and women; of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. The violations are not limited to physical but sexual and physiological violence occurring in the family and in the community. It includes battering, sexual abuse of female children, mental rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices that are harmful to women. Violence related to exploitation, sexual harassment, and intimidation at work, and most recently women trafficking. Violence can occur during any phase of a woman's life such as in childhood, adolescent and even as an adult.

Gender based violence against women in Nigeria occur in many areas but more of domestic (violence within the family). It usually happens to the woman or the girl child within the family. They include rape (more among family members), women being beaten up by their husbands, verbal abuse, incest, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, child marriage, denial of right to choose spouse, denial of the right to own property, refusal to permit women to work or to control their own income, refusing the girl child to go to school, all forms of cruelty for example degrading a woman by treating her as if she were a child, refusing her any affection or sexual satisfaction. It also include restricting a woman's relationship with the wide community such as friends colleagues or relatives, seeing women as incompetent, worthless or inferior to men, girls trafficking with the intention of using them as commercial sex workers. Others are physical assaults imposed on widows indirectly regarded as widow's rites. According to WHO (2002), about one third of all the women in Nigeria had at one time or the other been a victim of violence in its diverse form. In addition, a release by Jekayinka (2010) indicates that domestic violence, female genital mutilations and forced prostitution are still being practiced among Nigerians in an alarming rate. Worse still cultural practices and beliefs among tribes in Nigeria fuel the violence and relegate women to second class status. For instance, in some tribes in Nigeria, a woman has no right to inherit her husband's property. Widows are humiliated, confined and restricted in the same position as long as one year, all in the name of mourning her late husband. Most common among the violence practiced is child trafficking. Murzi, (2004) observed that over 60% of the children often trafficked from Africa to Europe for sex exploitation are Nigerians. The children are often deceived by syndicates who pretend to help secure jobs for them, but only to transport them to Europe and use them as prostitutes. All these acts of violence against women in Nigeria cut across cultures, traditions, class, and ethnic groups. Majority of women in Nigeria are not aware of human right violations.

## 2. Methods and data collection

Following a review of the literature and the reflection on the effects of violence on women, as well as on men, a questionnaire was developed to gather information from male and female undergraduate students. The choice in the construction of the questionnaire, described below, reflect feminist theoretical concerns with the ways that "violence" is characterized. Multiple choice questions that would demonstrate the myriad ways violence can impact students" lives were constructed. The questionnaires were administered to students in a set of randomly selected undergraduate courses, which resulted in 769 usable responses, representing 8.6% of the undergraduate population of 8,987 students. As Table 1 illustrates, the sample mirrors the gender and racial/ethnic demographic composition of the undergraduate students at the university, allowing inferences to be made about the undergraduate student population. Because our university has a notably diverse student body in terms of ethnicity, the findings offer knowledge about the experiences of students whose lives are sometimes marginalized in academic research about students.

Surveying people about experiences of violence is methodologically challenging, from framing the questions to preparing for respondent's possible emotional reactions. The questionnaire was constructed based on those of prior studies, theoretical concerns (for example, including a wide range of types of violence), and experiential input from research community members. As the goal was to examine the pervasiveness and effects of violence on student's education, we provided comprehensive definitions and examples of each of the types of violence (included below), providing students the ability to consider and include behaviours that they might not think of as domestic violence or sexual violence as they are commonly understood. As Levy (2008) discusses, "studies that ask directly, have you ever been raped? result in low estimates of rape's prevalence. Meanwhile, studies that use descriptions with several elements rather than single-word terms result in higher estimates" (Levy, 2008, pp. 108-09). This is a technique used by numerous interpersonal violence researchers who employ broad definitions of violence (e.g., Horsman, 1999; Rundle and Ysabet-Scott, Fall 1995), including economic, verbal, and emotional abuse" (Levy, 2008, p. 109). For instance, a woman who was forced into having sex by a drunken male friend might not think of herself as having been raped, since she knew the man and otherwise think well of him. The man's behaviour might have an effect on her, nevertheless. The questionnaire was structured so that questions about the types of violence followed the descriptions. The respondents were informed that these were not limiting definitions.

In the questionnaire, we described three types of violence: physical, sexual, and emotional. We asked similar questions about each type of violence, inquiring whether students had experienced these types of violence from a variety of perpetrators.

Possible perpetrators included the following: 1) past intimate partner, spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend; 2) current intimate partner, spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend; 3) parent, guardian, or other family member; 4) authority figure, such as teacher, coach, boss, religious leader, or baby-sitter; 5) peer such as acquaintance, friend, co-worker, or class-mate; and 6) stranger. The frequency response scale that was used was Never - Once or twice - Rarely - Occasionally - Frequently. The ordinal scale thus has a subjective element to it, as the respondent had to decide the operational definitions of "rarely," "occasionally," and "frequently". This approach was used because the main concern was not to determine absolute frequency of violence experienced, but to explore the perception of experiences of violence in relation to school attendance and progress towards degree.

Possible forms of physical violence includes: hitting, punching, kicking, choking, slapping, biting, pushing, shoving, throwing objects, threatening or hurting with a weapon or object, physically grabbing or holding someone against their will, and/or putting someone in fear of any of these acts. While possible forms of sexual violence includes: forcing someone into unwanted sexual activity, touching someone in a way that makes them uncomfortable, engaging in sexual activity with someone who is unable to consent, coercing someone to watch or participate in ponography, coercing someone to engage in sexual acts with others, coercing someone to take off their clothes, and/or rape or attempted rape. Possible forms of emotional abuse includes: repeated name-calling, put-downs, intimidation, being insulted in front of others, being threatened, controlling the way you look/dress, having your money withheld or being controlled by someone, being isolated from family and friends (by controlling your time, repeatedly calling), being forced to become or stay pregnant or end a pregnancy, stalking, cyber-stalking, and/or being followed.

As in any study, both theoretical concerns and practical constraints imposed some limitations on the findings. Our theoretical approach emphasized comprehensiveness in asking about violent experiences, at the expense of distinguishing severity of violence. We recognize this limitation to our findings, but given our concerns as feminist educators to expand what "counts" as violence, the goal was to gather data that took a broader picture of the respondents" experiences. We saw the research process not as a completely abstracted activity, but as embedded in larger social relations. By responding to survey questions that framed violence broadly, it is hoped that respondents might be prompted to rethink their own framing of "violence." But this imposed time constraints, as we were asking faculty to give up class time. For this reason, we decided to forego open-ended questions. Despite the limitations imposed by our methodological decisions, our findings offer useful data that can be built on in further research.

Members of the research community received training from counseling and student services staff to prepare for possible emotional distress triggered by the survey. In addition, respondents were given a brochure with resources for rape crisis, domestic violence, and similar services. This provided support for possible distress, and also as education about the issue of violence. A student and a faculty member of our team were present for each class in which we distributed the survey, typically during the final 20 minutes of a class period.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Prevalence of Violence

The most compelling finding is that 83.3% of the undergraduate sample reported having experienced some type of violence. Table 2 presents these data: 69.6% of the students answered yes to having experienced some form of physical violence; 30.8% responded that they had experienced a form of sexual violence; and 70.2% had experienced some form of emotional abuse.

**Table 1**

| Gender | Sample (n=769, 8.6% of UNN undergraduate students) | UNN undergraduates (N=8987) |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Women | 56.0% | 58.7% |
| Men | 44.0% | 41.3% |

**Table 2. Student experiences of violence**

| Type of Violence | % of Students Experiencing | % of Women Experiencing | % of Men Experiencing | Total Number of Students Experiencing |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Physical violence | 69.6 | 68.9 | 70.4 | 533 |
| Sexual violence | 30.8 | 41 | 17 | 236 |
| Emotional violence | 70.2 | 73.3 | 67.7 | 540 |
| Any form of violence | 83.3 | 83.3 | 83.3 | 634 |

**Table 3. Amount and types of violence experienced**

| Type of Violence | % of Students Experiencing | % of Women Experiencing | % of Men Experiencing | Number of Students Experiencing |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| No violence | 16.7 | 16.8 | 16.8 | 127 |
| 1 type of violence | 21.8 | 19.1 | 25.1 | 166 |
| 2 types of violence | 35.6 | 29.1 | 44.3 | 271 |
| 3 types of violence | 25.9 | 35.0 | 13.8 | 197 |

**Table 4. Experiences of Violence & Taking Time Off**

| | Physical violence | | Sexual violence* | | Emotional violence* | | Any violence* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Percent who Report Taking Time Off | 37.1% | 33.0% | 43.0% | 33.3% | 39.1% | 29.4% | 38.8% | 23.6% |
| * These differences were statistically significant (p < .05). | | | | | | | | |

**Table 5. Violence and Trouble Attending School**

| | Physical violence* | | Sexual violence* | | Emotional violence* | | Any violence* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Percent who Report Having Trouble Attending School | 17.3% | 4.3% | 24.1% | 8.7% | 16.9% | 4.5% | 15.2% | 3.1% |
| * These differences were statistically significant (p < .05). | | | | | | | | |

**Table 6 . Violence and Taking Time Off from School**

| | Physical violence* | | Sexual violence* | | Emotional violence* | | Any violence | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Percent who Report Taking Time Off Due to Violence or Abuse | 8.8% | 3.4% | 13.0% | 4.7% | 8.8% | 3.6% | 7.9% | 3.1% |
| * These differences were statistically significant (p < .05). | | | | | | | | |

Looking at all of the students who answered yes to any of these forms of violence, it is clear that our students experience an inordinate and troubling amount of violence in their lives. Far from being exceptional, violence is the norm among our students.

Men and women students were as likely as one another to have experienced physical violence (70.4% vs. 68.9% respectively). Women students were significantly more likely to have experienced sexual violence than men (41% of women vs. 17% of men); this difference is statistically significant.[1]

Women were also more likely to report having experienced emotional violence (73.3% vs. 67.7%), though this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 3 shows that more than a quarter of the students had experienced all three types of violence (physical, sexual, and emotional). More than one-third of the students said that they had experienced two types of violence, and more than one-fifth said that they had experienced only one type of violence.

In addition to the gendered variations in types of violence, women and men experiences of violence differed in terms of the perpetrators of violence against them. The perpetrators of physical and emotional violence against women students were most likely to have been past or current intimates or family members, while men were more likely than women to have been victimized physically or emotionally by a stranger, peer, or authority figure. Consistent with national crime victimization rates (BJS Statistics, 2009, p. 4), women are more likely than men to be the victim of sexual violence by all categories of perpetrators with the exceptions of sexual violence committed by authorities or current intimate partners which were not statistically different in our sample.

Racially/ethnically diverse campus allowed us to test for differences by race/ethnicity in the experiences of violence. It was discovered that white students and students of colour were likely to report that they have been victimized by physical violence (71.9% vs. 67.6%), emotional violence (73.7% vs. 68.6%), and sexual violence (28.4% vs. 32.6%). We also disaggregated race and ethnicity into subgroups of students and tested for statistical differences in violence across more specific racial/ethnic groups. These disaggregated racial and ethnic categories reinforced the aggregated racial/ethnic categories, with no statistical

difference emerging in rates of violence across racial or ethnic groups.

The survey did not ask students about their economic and social class categories. The university is a commuter campus, and is one of the most affordable universities in Nigeria. A high percentage of the students are first in their families to attend Higher Institution. Thus, the students represent an economic range from poor to middle income.

From the data reported above, it is clear that our undergraduate students have encountered a great deal of violence in their lives. For some, the violence is currently happening; for others, it is a past occurrence. In the questionnaire, we distinguished between past and current violence only in the intimate partner category. The student's responses revealed that 14.6% reported experiencing current physical violence from an intimate partner (spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend) (N=112); 4.6% were experiencing current sexual violence from an intimate partner (N=35); and 21.6% were experiencing some form of current emotional abuse (N=166). These figures culminate in 26.9% of students currently experiencing at least one type of violence. This is a great deal of current violence that students must negotiate in order to attend the university, much less to succeed.

This finding also suggest that in addition to violence being widespread in our student's lives, the types and sources of that violence follow patterns consistent with scholarship on the gendered dimensions of violence. In keeping with extant scholarship, we found that women students are more likely to experience sexual violence, typically at the hands of people they know: intimate partners, peers, and family members. Moreover, women are more likely than men to experience all three types of violence; one third reported all three types of violence. Another 29% reported experiencing two types of violence. We found high rates of violence among our men students, primarily physical and emotional violence at the hands of peers and authority figures. Nearly half (44%) of men experienced at least two types of violence with another 13.8% having experienced all three types of violence. These findings suggest that the violence experienced by women and men students are not only gendered in terms of the types and sources of violence, but are also complex and interrelated.

## 3.2 Violence, Retention & Academic Performance

Do these experiences with violence affect student's time to degree and retention from year to year? To determine this, we asked students about their progress toward their degree. Early in the questionnaire we asked the simple question: "Have you taken time off of college since you started, excluding summer semesters/terms?" (Q #11) This question follows a question about their total credit hours.

*Social Sciences (SPSS),* the results across groups were then compared for each variable, and statistical significance was determined by calculating the Pearson Chi-Square values for a two-by-two table (p < .05).

The students were not asked to explain in this question why they took time off. It was discovered that a large number of students reported taking time off from college classes. Of the sample of 769 students, 278 (36%) had taken off one or more semesters since they began taking classes. Men and women were equally likely to have taken off one or more semesters (37.6% of men vs. 35.4% of women). White students (39.8%) and students of color (33.3%) were also equally likely to have taken time off, as the racial difference in the percentage of students taking time off was not statistically significant.

As demonstrated in Table 4, students who reported that they had experienced violence were more likely than students who did not report violence to have taken off one or more semesters. Table 4 compares the percentage of students who reported taking at least one semester off with the percentage of students who reported different types of violence. With the exception of physical violence, the relationship between violence and taking time off is statistically significant. For example, 38.8% of students who have experienced any form of violence report taking time off while 23.6% of those who did not experience violence took time off. This is a 15.2 percentage-point difference, suggesting that an experience with violence translates into a 64.4% increase in the likelihood that students will take time off. While the data analysis cannot demonstrate causality, the findings strongly suggest that students who have experienced violence are more likely to drop out of college classes. While we are not claiming a direct causal link, there may be other life factors that accompany the experiences of violence that inhibit student's ability to continue their education uninterrupted. For example, we have known women students whose experiences with a stalker have caused disruptions in their ability to consistently attend work, resulting in the loss of employment. For working-class students, this type of employment disruption is likely to affect their ability to pay for tuition and other school-related expenses, forcing them to take time off from their education. In this case, violence indirectly affects student's time to degree. This example, of course, is largely speculative and would require qualitative methods to fully uncover the complexities of the relationship between violence and its potential ripple-effects to other life events. The findings that experiences of violence are strongly correlated with an increase in the likelihood of taking time off from school underscore the need for such qualitative studies.

Later in the survey, following the questions about experiences with the three types of violence, we asked whether the respondents "ever had trouble attending school as a result of violence or abuse" in their lives (Q #33). The next question (Q #34) asked if the students had "ever decided to leave school as a result of violence or abuse" in their lives. Through these questions students were asked to make the link between their behavior in terms of school enrollment and the violence they had experienced. Students who experience violence often suffer fall-out and negative ramifications from that experience (lose employment, lose self-esteem) and those effects could lead to stopping out or dropping out from school (MacMillan, 2001) much as Kolodny (1998) claimed in her earlier cited passage. As Strong (1998) comments, "at every level—psychologically, socially, and biologically—the sexually abused girls have fared worse than the non abused counterparts.

The gendered aspect of the impact of violence is reinforced by the finding when we asked the students if they had had trouble attending school due to violence or abuse, 15.2% (N=117) answered yes. Comparing this with the types of violence they reported having experienced in earlier responses, a statistically-significant pattern emerges across all types of violence, with those reporting experiences with violence being far more likely to report having trouble attending school. Students who experienced sexual violence were the most likely to report having had trouble attending school (24.1%), and as previously mentioned results show (Table 2), women are much more likely to be victims of sexual violence than men (41% of women vs. 17% of men).

These data are illustrated in Table 5. When the students were asked directly if they had ever decided to take time off from classes because of violence or abuse, 7.2% (N=55) answered yes. As Table 6 shows, the relationship between experiences of violence and taking time off of classes because of that violence is significant for physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Again, students who had experienced sexual violence were most likely to have taken time off.

Compared with the positive correlation we found between taking time off from school and experiences with violence, relatively few students responded that they took time off *because* of the violence. This suggests that they do not make the link between the two. This is consistent with findings on the effects of violence: oftentimes, victims blame themselves for what happened to them and minimize its effects on them. Nevertheless, the effects become apparent sometimes months or years after the violence (Levy, 2008, pp. 83-85). The primary concern in this research was to explore the connection between student retention in college and their experiences with violence, hypothesizing that experiences with violence in the past or present would be positively correlated with taking time off from school.

After asking about their individual experiences with the three types of violence, we were curious about the effects of violence generally in their home communities. The students were asked if they had ever had trouble attending school because they feared violence in their home community (Q #35). Fifty students answered yes to this question (6.5% of the respondents). Of the women respondents, 7.1% (N=30) indicated yes; of the men, 5.4% (N=18) responded yes.

Students were asked if they had had flashbacks or recurring thoughts about a traumatic experience that made them not want to attend classes. Almost one-fifth of the respondents answered yes (18.5%, N=142); 21.5% of the women and 14.5% of the men, a statistically significant gender difference. Whether or not students are stopping or dropping out of school, the experience of flashbacks or recurrent thoughts suggest that some students may be missing classes because of past or current violence. For sure students who miss classes may receive lower grades, which affects their decision to persevere through graduation (Bowen, Chingos and McPherson, 2009).

Students in abusive relationships might face barriers constructed by their abusive partners. The students were asked in the sample, "have you ever been in a relationship (romantic or otherwise) with someone who deliberately made going to school difficult?" (Q #38) More than one tenth of the students (11.7%, N=91) said that they had. Women were slightly more likely than men to answer yes to this question (12.8% vs. 10.9%), although the gender difference in this case is not statistically significant.

Abuse also can take the form of controlling one's source of funds for education (Levy, 2008, p. 6). We asked the students, "Have you ever been in a relationship (romantic or otherwise) with someone who controlled your money in a way that made going to/paying for school difficult?" (Q #37) Forty-nine students answered yes (6.4%). Women were much more likely than men to answer yes to this question (7.1% of women vs. 1.8% of men); this difference is statistically significant.

The university is a commuter institution; there are no dorms, and most of the students live outside of the school. We asked "Have you ever had trouble attending school because you fear violence on campus?" (Q #36) Fifty-one students answered yes (6.6%); 7.6% of the women and 4.8% of the men, although this gender difference is not statistically significant. We also asked whether the students have "ever felt discouraged, intimidated, embarrassed, or insulted by teachers or classmates in ways that made you question continuing with your education?" (Q #31) Twenty-eight percent of the students said yes (N=215); 29.4% of the women respondents and 26.6% of the men, a gender difference that was not statistically significant. While residential colleges and universities may have problems of date rape on campus, a commuter campus is not immune from violence affecting student's on-campus lives. These responses revealed issues over which campus communities have some control.

## 4. Discussion

The findings suggest that violence, as we have defined it, is a common rather than exceptional experience, takes many forms, and affects student's educational experiences. Eighty-three percents of our sample reports some experience with violence—physical, sexual, and/or emotional. While there were gender differences in the most common types of violence and in their perpetrators, both women and men students reported a sobering amount of violence in their lives, both past and present. There is a correlation between the experience of violence and interruptions in higher education, consistent with other research. It was discovered that gendered sexual violence was the type of violence that was most correlated with such interruptions.

There are many reasons that students stop out or drop out altogether from an institution of higher education, as enumerated in the introduction to this paper. The data from this study suggest that there are students who are negatively affected by their home, community, institutional, and/or personal lives in such a way that they find it difficult to continue with college. In our questionnaire, we employed only multiple-choice questions with no sections for open-ended questions and answers. As a result, we have no in-depth comments from the students explaining their reasons for stopping out.

It is apparent, however, that students who report violence either in their past or present are more likely to take time off from the university than those who report no experiences with violence; this is not a question that had previously been asked in exit interviews at our institution. It can be argued therefore that experiences of violence should be added to the constellation of factors affecting Higher Institution attendance.

The students that were sampled resembled the undergraduate population at our university. It can be inferred from this that over 80% of our undergraduate students have encountered violence in their lives and that this is a source of distress for them that may interfere with their ability to attend university classes. We could only survey students who were present in their courses on the day of the survey. What about the students who were not there because of the violence they had experienced or were at the time experiencing? What about the students who had already dropped out of the university because of their experiences with violence? One study posited that only those survivors of early trauma who had developed substantial coping skills actually enrolled in college, and hence were available for studies of the effects of trauma on college attendance (Banyard and Cantor, 2004). If this is correct, the students we surveyed had already self-

selected, and were among those who had developed some coping skills.

Given the high rates of violence experienced by students attending the university, we suggest, following Horsman (1999, p. 55), that institutions take into account that the new "normal" is that students arrive at universities and colleges having experienced or currently experiencing violence. Where the overwhelming majority of students have experienced some form of violence in their lives, universities and those of us concerned with supporting student success in higher education must engage with this reality. We cannot close our eyes to the impact of this on students" lives and their ability to succeed in college. The university must understand as part of its mission recognizing the personal impact of violence and must support students accordingly. Violence, and coping with its effects, is a common experience for our students, and institutions of higher education should incorporate ways to recognize and address its effects.

How might this research help colleges and universities address the connections between experiences of violence and problems with retention? The first step is for administrators, faculty members, and other campus staff to become aware that this is an issue. In the wake of dramatic and terrible incidents of campus violence such as campus shootings, many schools have created responses to try to prevent and address these forms of potential violence on campus. However, those incidents are thankfully rare; this research suggests a more commonplace and pervasive issue with violence that affects students every day. Many campuses have adopted a philosophy in planning and policy-making that entails treating students as whole people, with strengths and challenges. The findings suggest that addressing the violence in their past and current lives outside of school should be part of any initiative to create student centred institutions.

Among the policies that can help students to be resilient and enable them to progress toward their degrees, it is recommended that counselling, student support services, and campus police departments be prepared to handle the stresses that come from experiences of violence. Campus communities can offer programming that opens up dialogue about violence and building non-violent relationships. Faculty and staff orientation and professional development should include information about the prevalence of violence in student's lives and the potential effects of violence on student's performance and ability to proceed academically. More generally, the higher education profession should engage with community-based efforts to reduce all forms of violence in the broader society. For example, at new student orientations the effects of violence on higher education should be discussed and students should be informed of the myriad of ways that people on campus can support student success. Rather than waiting for students in crisis to have to go looking for support, institutions should advertise the availability of services, and educate students about the benefits of accessing them before they are enveloped in crisis.

Overall, we advocate that universities devote resources not only to supporting students academically, but also socio-emotionally. In addition to tutoring, universities need sufficient counselling and responsively trained student support services to aid students both in their educational/ goals and in coping with the impact of violence on their lives. For example, many institutions have first year experience programs in which all incoming students participate; these programs would be a perfect location for students to learn that

there is a high prevalence of violence in student's lives; that they are not alone; and that the university has many programs, discussion groups, and counselling options to support their success. In addition, many institutions are developing service learning programs, in which students engage in internships with community-based organizations. Developing partnerships with community organizations that address violence could be another avenue for raising awareness about violence and connecting students with resources.

Lastly, campus women's services centres traditionally have provided support groups and education in areas of violence prevention and intervention. Universities need to continue to allocate resources to these centres.

All of these recommendations are part of the project of making higher education responsive to the real lives of students. As the opportunity for a university education has spread to previously excluded groups, including women, institutions have faced the need to respond to a wider range of challenges in order to ensure that access is genuine. Even though women now represent the majority of university students, the need for gender-sensitive programs and services has not been eliminated. This research helps to demonstrate why that is so, and suggests way to improve the climate for all students. On the other side, this work is part of the project of infusing feminist responses to violence throughout society. Violence is pervasive, and must be addressed in multiple venues. Our contribution focuses on how and why that must be done in higher education.

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