

HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT:

SEXUALITY AND THREAT IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE RESPONSIBILITY

Gabriela Rivas Renderos & Kristine A. Peace, Ph.D.

BACKGROUND

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is considered one of the most pervasive forms of gender-based violence. In Canada, approximately 4% of Canadians report severe forms of IPV, such as being physically, sexually, or emotionally victimized by their partner. That said, these rates are a drastic underrepresentation of the true rate of IPV that is not reported to the police, including violence within same-sex relationships. Statistical data indicates that those in gay, lesbian, or bisexual relationships are more likely to be victims of violent crimes such as IPV relative to those in heterosexual relationships. Further, public surveys indicate that members of same-sex couples often refrain from reporting IPV due to threats related to their sexual identities. Research also has demonstrated that our perceptions of violence are moderated by extralegal factors, such as sexual orientation. Specifically, violence against women is viewed as more severe and taken more seriously by the criminal justice system than violence against men, across both same-sex and opposite-sex relationships. As such, the seriousness and criminal justice response to IPV incidents may be minimized or misinterpreted based on views about sexuality and gender identity, as well as levels of homophobia. Given that pre-existing biases and beliefs can lead to judicial bias concerning judgments of severity, culpability, and blame, this study was designed to examine how views concerning sexual orientation, use of threats, and instigator gender influence judgments of IPV.

PREDICTIONS



Selected References:

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- Seelau, E. P., Seelau, S. M., & Poorman, P. B. (2003). Gender and role-based perceptions of domestic abuse: Does sexual orientation matter? *Behavioural Sciences & the Law*, 21, 199-214.
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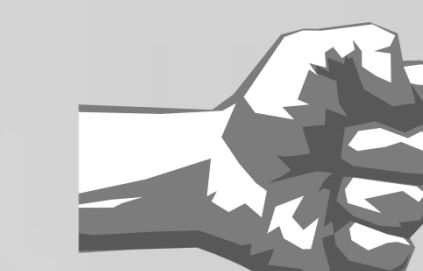
METHOD

SEXUAL ORIENTATION (5)



WHO INSTIGATED THE AGGRESSION? (2)

PAYTON



ASH

Includes Assessment of Homophobia and Gender Identity Knowledge

TYPE OF THREAT (3)

TERMINATION:

"You can consider this relationship over!"

NO THREAT

EXPOSURE:

"I'll tell everybody who you are sleeping with!"

Ash and Payton are both 5 feet and 7 inches tall, of similar weight and build, and met during K-days at the "High Striker" (i.e., the strength test) carnival machine. They hit it off immediately as they kept getting the same score no matter how many times they tried, and they shared a good laugh about this. As a result, they started talking, exchanged numbers, and started to date each other. These two young adults have now been dating for about 2 years and both consider themselves to be heterosexual. One morning, they decided to go out for breakfast. While at the restaurant, Payton and their waiter started hitting it off because the waiter complimented his outfit, which made Ash upset. When they returned to their apartment, Ash told Payton how she was feeling. The more Ash talked, the more they both started yelling and screaming and cursing at each other. Ash then grabbed Payton by the shoulders. When Payton said she was overreacting, Ash shoved Payton against the wall and said that Payton had better be careful next time he gets "too friendly" with any waiter, or else his whole family will know who he is sleeping with. Payton pushed Ash back and slapped her, yelled how dare you say that to me, and left the apartment angrily.