



Results of the Rutgers University - New Brunswick 2018

#iSPEAK

Campus Climate Assessment: Report on queer and trans students

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In 2018 all Rutgers University–New Brunswick students were invited to participate in a campus climate survey to assess the prevalence of sexual and dating violence among students, as well as students’ perceptions of the university, knowledge of resources related to sexual and dating violence, and disclosure (or non-disclosure) of incidents of sexual and dating violence.¹ The following report presents results for queer-spectrum (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/pansexual, asexual) and non-cisgender students (i.e., students who identify with a gender different from their assigned sex).² The report is based on data from 5,911 survey respondents (68% identified as women, 31% identified as men, and 1% identified as another gender identity).

Key Findings:

1. Nearly 1 in 5 students identify on the queer spectrum.

In total, 17% of the total sample identified on the queer spectrum and 2% identified as non-cisgender. A breakdown of specific queer identities is displayed in Figure 1 (note, this chart represents only the 17% of the sample who identified as something other than heterosexual).

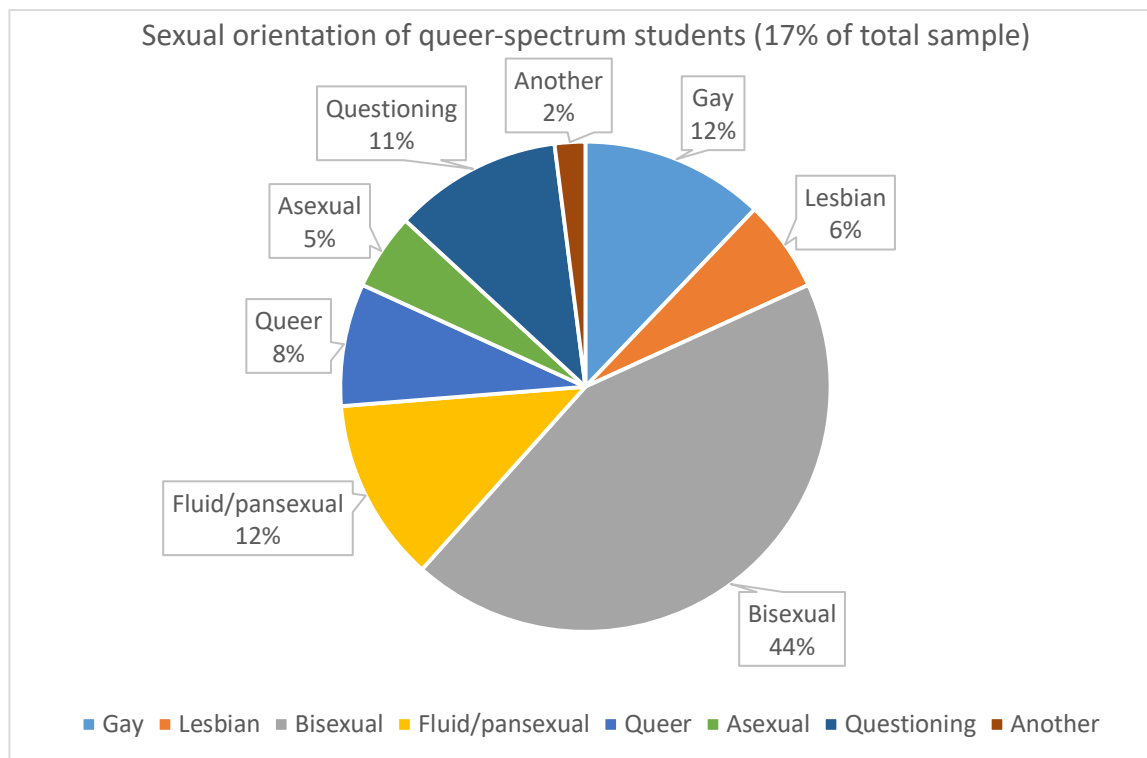


Figure 1. *Sexual orientation of queer-spectrum students.*

¹ The survey tool is based on the *Not Alone* toolkit from The White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/protecting-students-sexual-assault>

² A full report of the methodology and the responses to all survey questions as well as other reports on specific populations/topics are available on the Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) website.

2. Rates of sexual and dating violence are higher among queer-spectrum students than heterosexual students.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence was measured by asking students whether they had experienced six types of unwanted sexual contact since coming to Rutgers University – New Brunswick: 1) unwanted sexual contact by physical force, 2) unwanted sexual contact by coercion/threats of force, 3) attempted unwanted sexual contact by physical force, 4) attempted unwanted sexual contact by coercion/threats of force, 5) unwanted sexual contact when incapacitated and the victim is uncertain the unwanted sexual contact occurred, and 6) unwanted sexual contact when incapacitated that the victim is certain the unwanted sexual contact occurred. Students were also asked one question about whether they had experienced any form of unwanted sexual contact before coming to Rutgers.

Rates of sexual violence were higher among queer-spectrum students than heterosexual students: 45% of queer-spectrum students compared to 25% of heterosexual students reported at least one experience of sexual violence before coming to Rutgers University – New Brunswick. Since coming to Rutgers, 25% of queer-spectrum students, compared to 16% of heterosexual students, reported at least one experience of sexual violence.

Rates of sexual violence by gender and sexuality are presented in Figures 2 and 3. Women on the queer spectrum had 2.2 times greater likelihood of experiencing sexual violence before coming to Rutgers University – New Brunswick and 1.3 times greater likelihood of experiencing sexual violence since coming to Rutgers than heterosexual women. Men on the queer spectrum had 5.6 times greater likelihood of experiencing sexual violence before coming to Rutgers and 5.6 times greater likelihood of experiencing sexual violence since coming to Rutgers than heterosexual men.

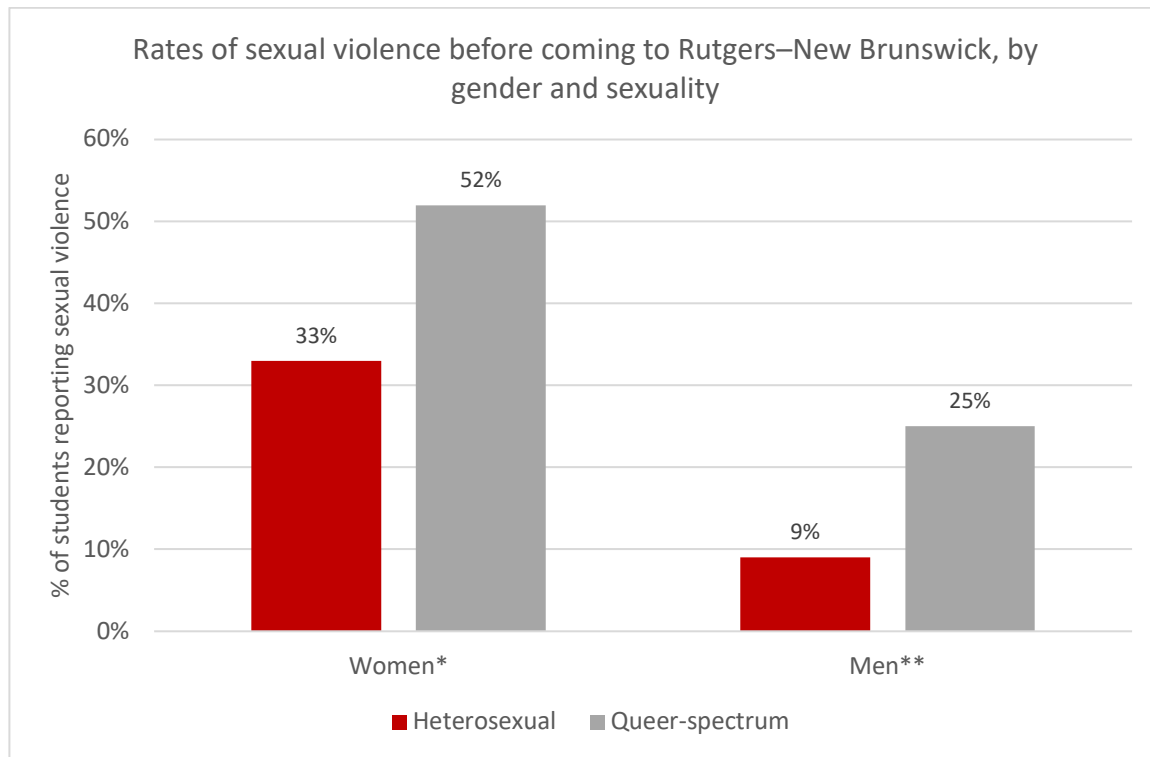


Figure 2. *Percentage of students who experienced at least one incident of sexual violence before coming to Rutgers University–New Brunswick by gender and sexual orientation.*

*The difference between heterosexual and queer-spectrum women is significant, $X^2(1) = 44.65, p < .001$; **The difference between heterosexual and queer-spectrum men is significant, $X^2(1) = 24.71, p < .001$.

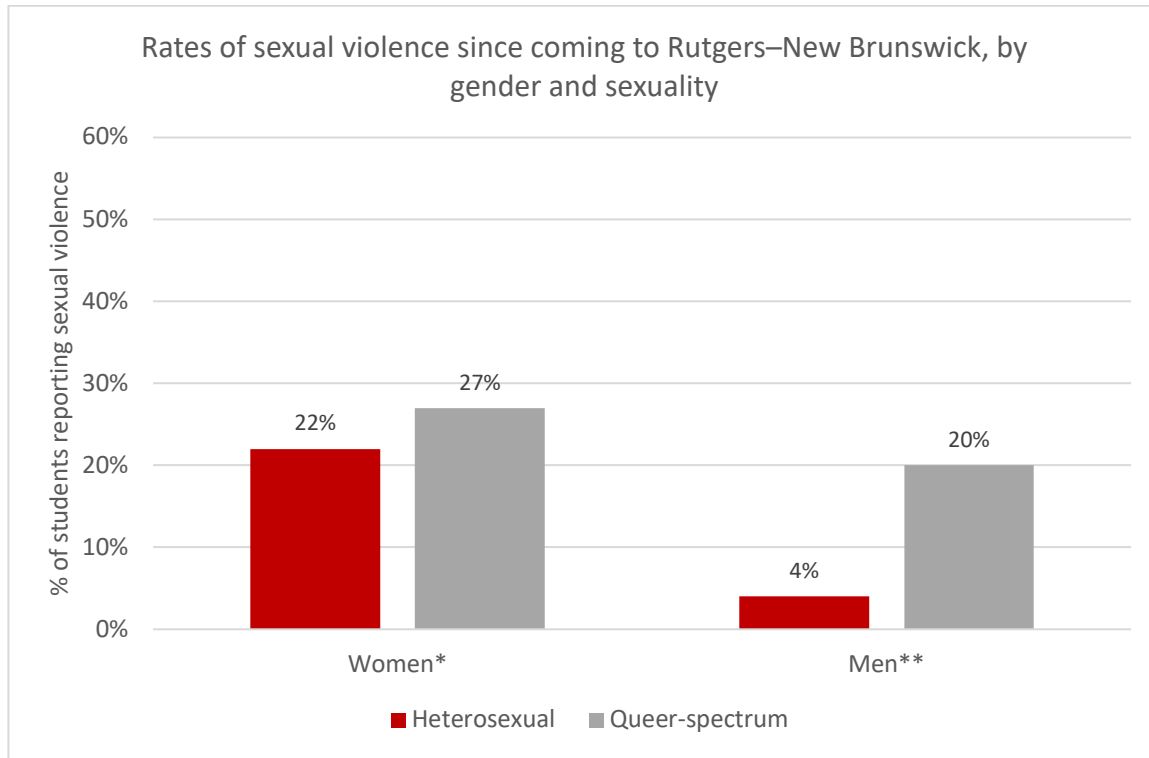


Figure 3. *Percentage of students who experienced at least one incident of sexual violence since coming to Rutgers University–New Brunswick by gender and sexual orientation.*

*The difference between heterosexual and queer-spectrum women is significant, $X^2(1) = 4.05, p = .04$; **The difference between heterosexual and queer-spectrum men is significant, $X^2(1) = 40.18, p < .001$.

When looking at gender identity, 44% of trans students compared to 36% of ciswomen and 11% of cismen reported at least one experience of sexual violence before coming to Rutgers University–New Brunswick (see Figure 4). Trans students had 6.4 times greater odds of experiencing sexual violence before coming to Rutgers than cismen; there was no difference between trans students and ciswomen on rates of sexual violence before coming to Rutgers. Since coming to Rutgers, 19% of trans students compared to 23% of ciswomen and 6% of cismen reported at least one experience of sexual violence (see Figure 4). Trans students had 3.6 times greater odds of experiencing sexual violence since coming to Rutgers than cismen; there was no difference between trans students and ciswomen on experiencing sexual violence since coming to Rutgers.

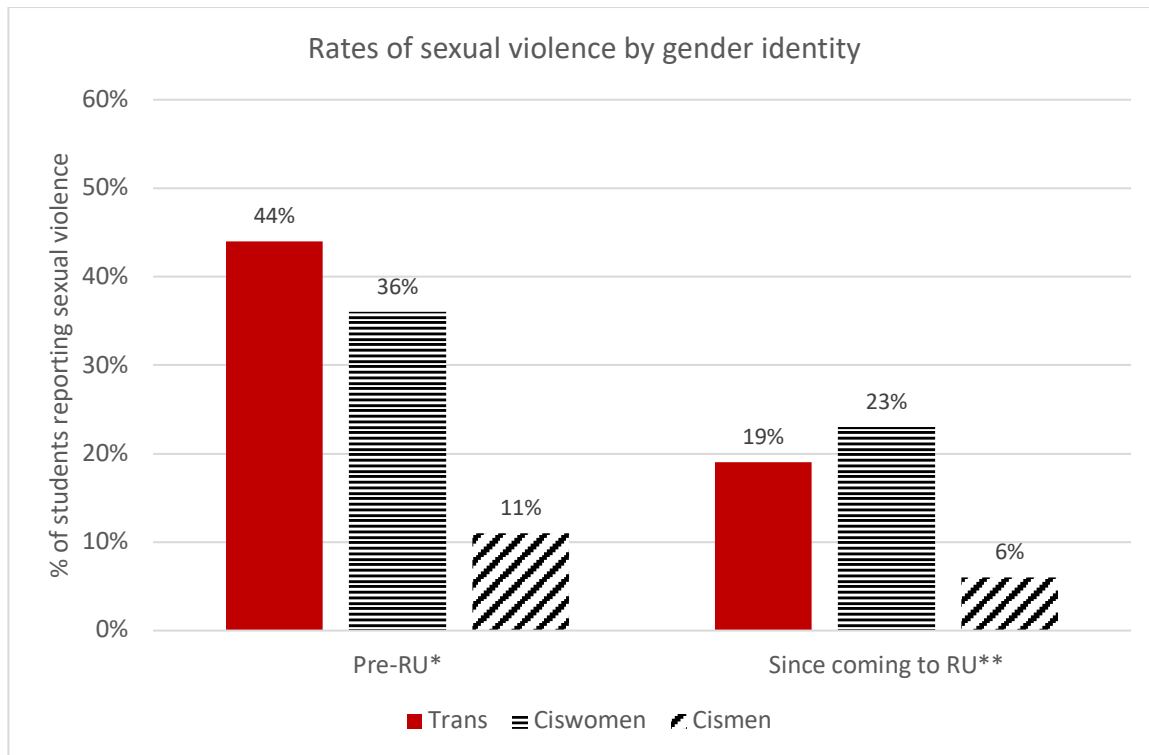


Figure 4. Percentage of students who experienced at least one incident of sexual violence by gender identity before coming to Rutgers University–New Brunswick.

*The difference is significant, $\chi^2(2) = 190.97, p < .001$; **The difference is significant $\chi^2(2) = 115.76, p < .001$.

Dating violence

Students were asked about four different types of dating violence experienced since coming to Rutgers University–New Brunswick: physical (e.g., pushing, shoving, or grabbing partner), psychological (e.g., saying things to hurt partner’s feelings on purpose), digital (e.g., pressuring partner to respond quickly to calls, texts, or other messages), and financial (e.g., doing things to keep partner from going to job or classes). Rates of dating violence by sexuality are presented in Figure 5.

Queer-spectrum students had 1.4 times greater odds of experiencing digital dating abuse than heterosexual students. Queer-spectrum and heterosexual students were equally likely to experience physical, psychological, and financial abuse (see Figure 5).

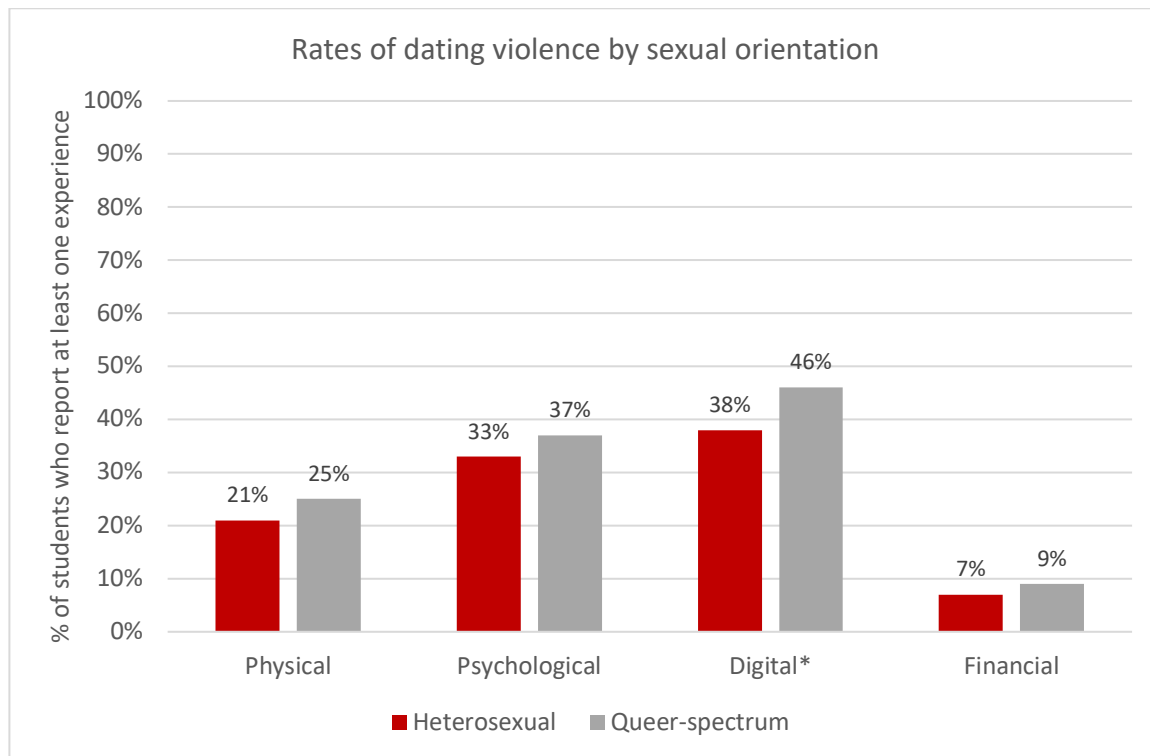


Figure 5. Rates of dating violence by sexual orientation.

* The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 8.75, p = .003$.

Rates of dating violence by gender identity are depicted in Figure 6. Ciswomen experienced disproportionately more digital dating abuse than cismen and trans students. There were no differences in rates of physical, psychological, or financial abuse.

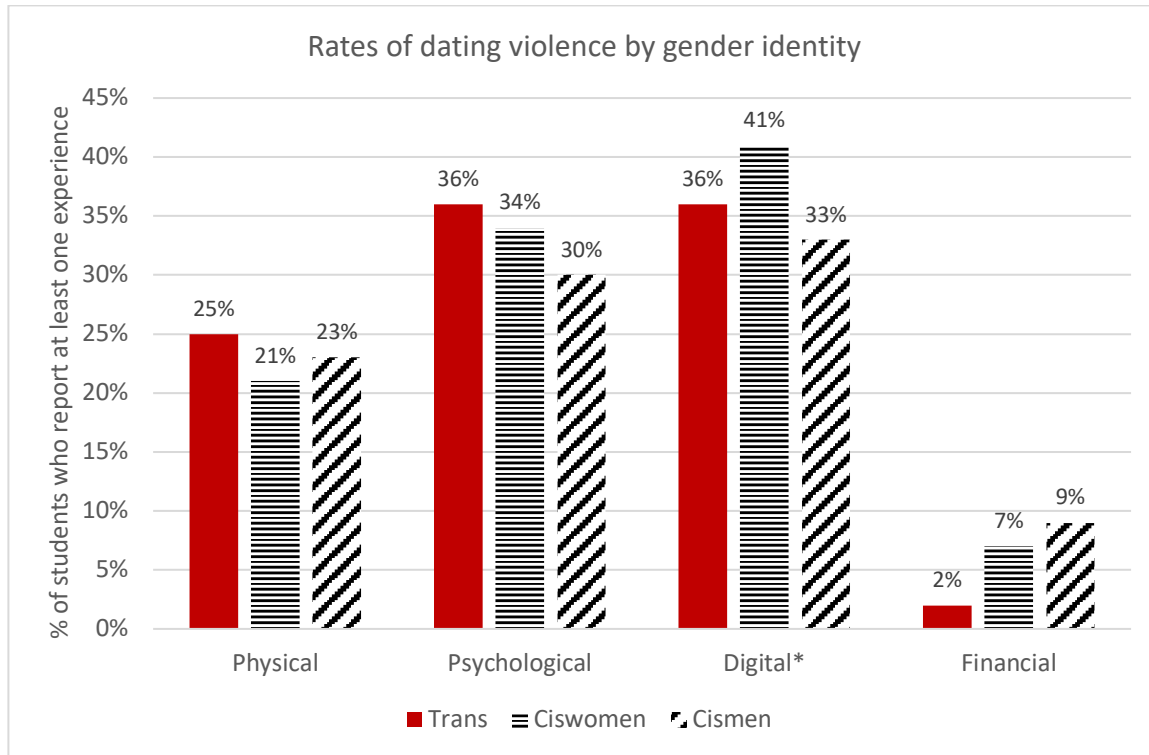


Figure 6. Rates of dating violence by gender identity.

* The difference is significant, $\chi^2(2) = 11.09, p = .004$.

3. Some queer-identified students are at greater risk than others.

Some queer-spectrum students were at greater risk of experiencing sexual violence than others. Specifically, 54% of lesbian and 50% of fluid-identified (i.e., bisexual, pansexual, or queer) students experienced sexual assault before coming to Rutgers University – New Brunswick compared to 35% of gay-identified students and 30% of asexual students (see Figure 7).

Since coming to Rutgers University – New Brunswick, 28% of fluid and 25% of gay students reported at least one incident of sexual assault, compared to 14% of lesbian and 7% of asexual students (see Figure 7). Although the risk of sexual violence dropped off for lesbian students after coming to Rutgers, those with a fluid sexual orientation remained at high risk of sexual violence, even when compared to other queer-spectrum identities.

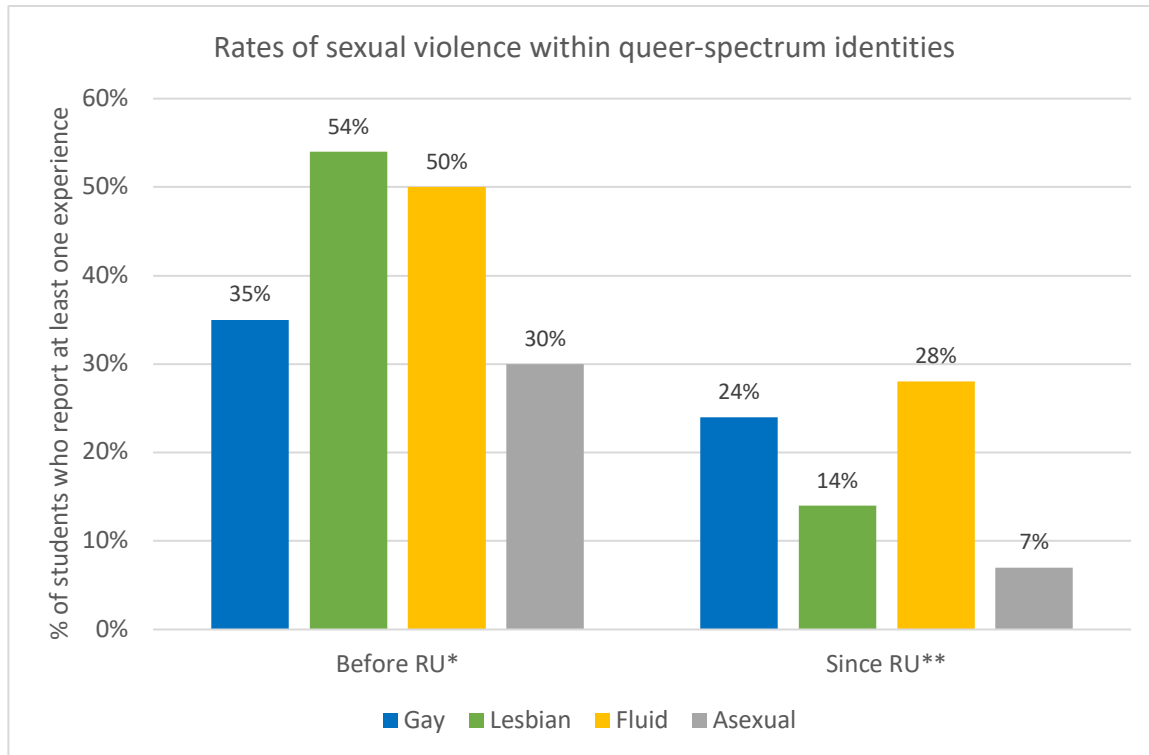


Figure 7. Rates of sexual violence before and since coming to Rutgers University–New Brunswick by queer identity.

*The difference is significant, $\chi^2(3) = 8.31, p = .04$; **The difference is significant, $\chi^2(3) = 8.27, p = .04$.

Rates of dating violence did not differ between queer identities (see Figure 8).

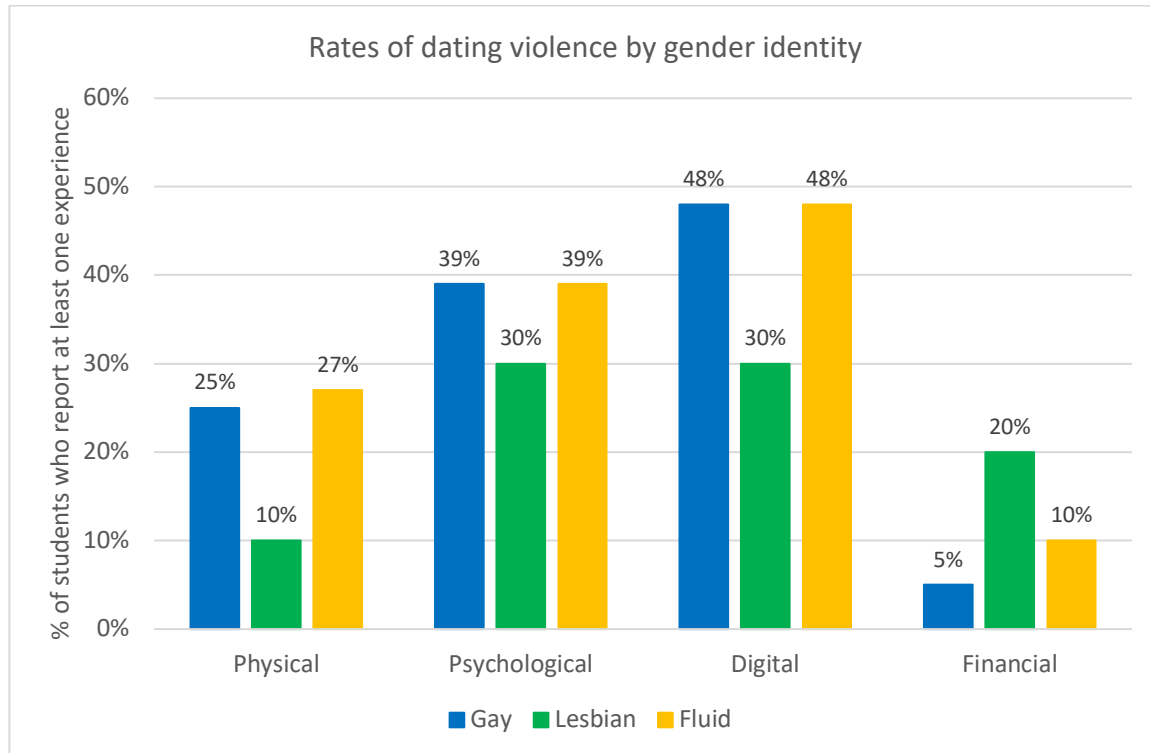


Figure 8. Rates of dating violence by queer identity (asexual not included due to small sample size).

Note: The sample of non-cisgender students was not large enough to examine sexual or dating violence within non-cisgender identities.

4. Perpetrators tend to be men, regardless of the gender/sexual orientation of the victim.

Participants were asked follow-up questions about the one incident of sexual or dating violence that had the greatest impact on them. Queer-spectrum men and women tended to report that sexual violence was perpetrated by a man: 76% of queer-spectrum men and 90% of queer-spectrum women reported the perpetrator was a man. Trans students also tended to experience sexual violence perpetrated by a man: 60% of trans students reported that their perpetrator was a man.

The pattern is similar for dating violence: 71% of queer-spectrum men, 84% of queer-spectrum women, and 60% of trans students reported that their perpetrator was a man.

Of note, questions about the perpetrator were asked only about the incident of sexual/dating violence that had the greatest impact on the victim; therefore, these results do not imply that victims never experienced violence from people of other genders.

5. Survivors tend to disclose to their friends and romantic partners, regardless of sexual orientation.

Disclosure of sexual violence

Heterosexual and queer-spectrum victims were equally likely to disclose the most serious incident of sexual violence to someone (58% of heterosexual victims and 63% of queer-spectrum victims told someone about the most serious incident). The most common disclosure sources were a friend and a romantic partner (see Figure 9). Queer-spectrum students had nearly three times greater odds of disclosing to a non-Rutgers therapist than heterosexual students, which may be because queer-spectrum students are better connected to therapy.

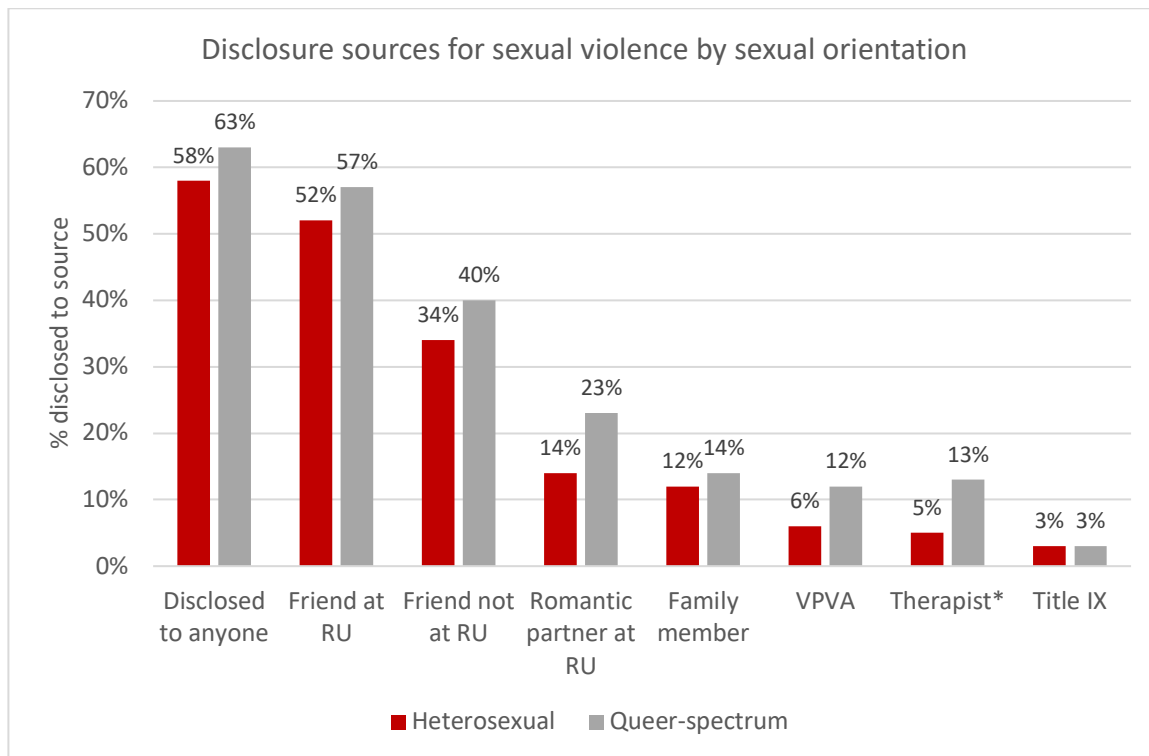


Figure 9. Percentage of students who disclosed unwanted sexual contact to anyone, and to particular disclosure sources, by sexual orientation.

*The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 8.38, p = .004$.

Among heterosexual students, greater awareness of the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) and Title IX was associated with greater likelihood of disclosing to VPVA and Title IX. Awareness mattered less for queer-spectrum students: they were equally likely as their heterosexual peers to disclose to VPVA and Title IX regardless of whether they had low or high awareness. A pictorial description of this relation is found in Figures 10 and 11. In both figures, awareness of the resource is displayed on the horizontal axis and ranges from 1 (not at all aware) to 5 (extremely aware). Probability of disclosing to the resource is depicted on the vertical axis. The lines depict the relation between awareness and probability of disclosure. The gray lines represent queer students and are relatively flat, which indicates that queer students were equally likely to disclose at all levels of awareness. The red line depicts heterosexual students and has an upward slope, which indicates that heterosexual students were more likely to disclose as their awareness of the disclosure source increased.

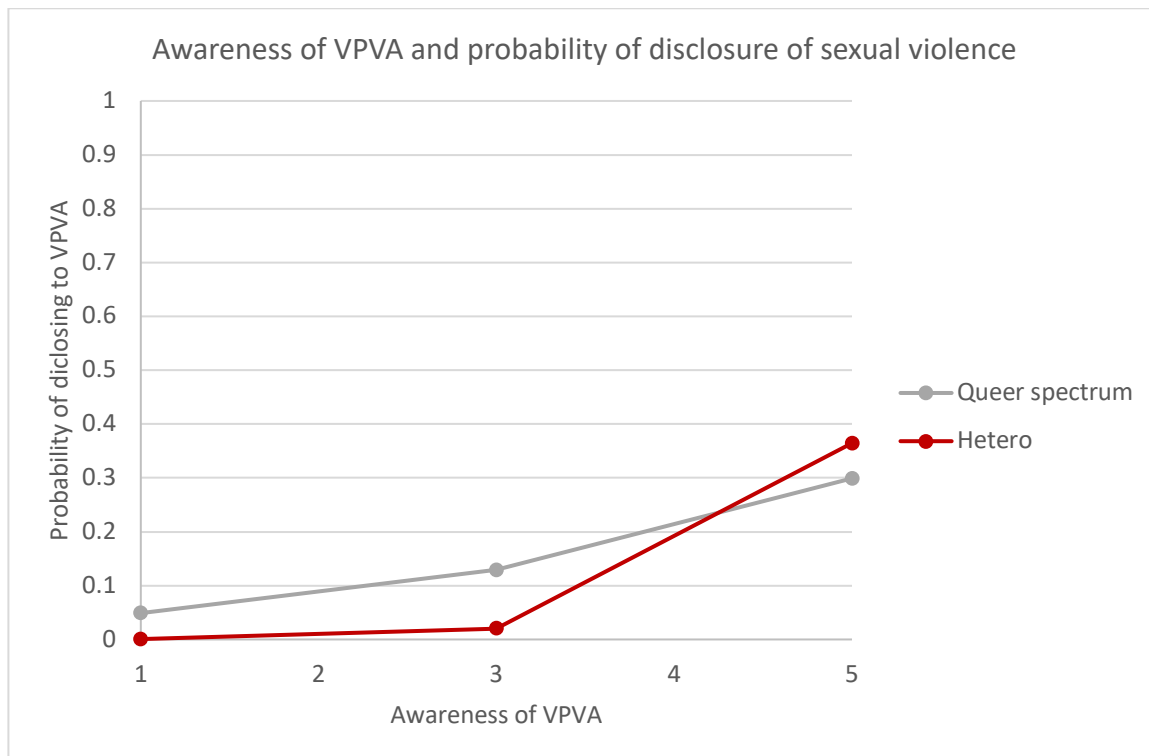


Figure 10. Relation between awareness of VPVA and probability of disclosing sexual violence to VPVA by sexual orientation.

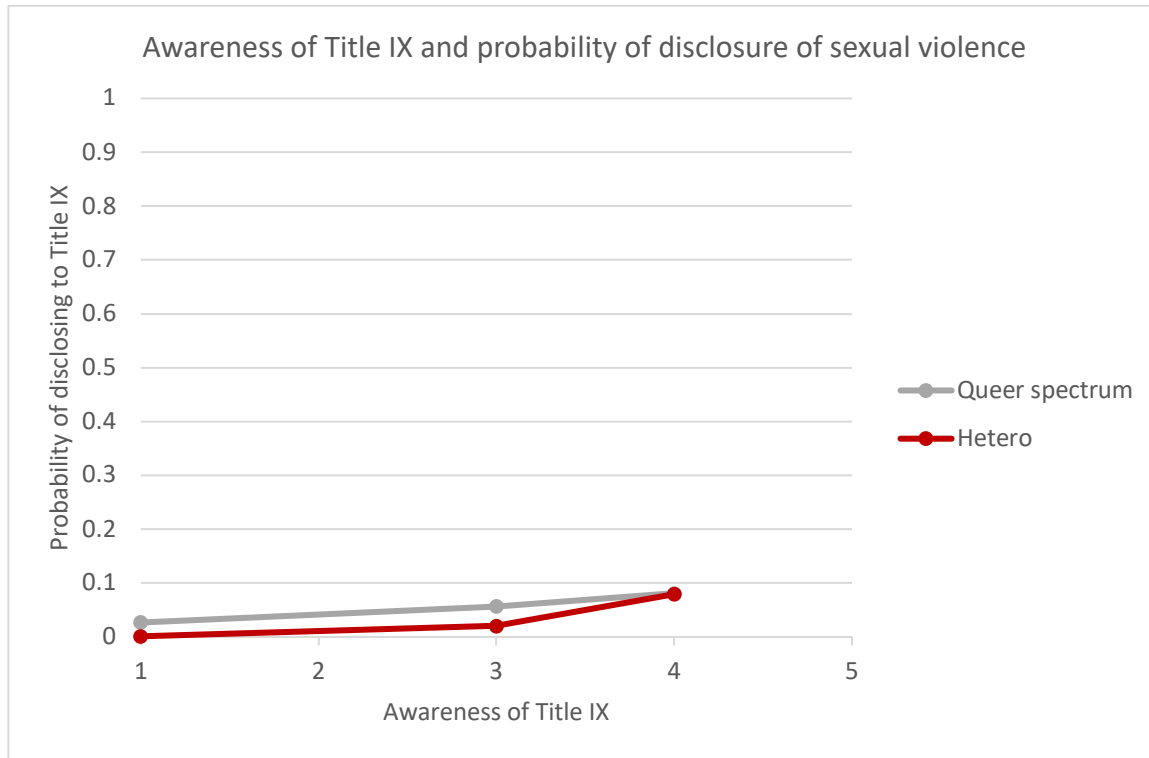


Figure 11. Relationship between awareness of Title IX and probability of disclosing sexual violence to Title IX by sexual orientation.

Disclosure of dating violence

Although students disclosed dating violence less frequently than sexual violence the pattern of results was similar: students were most likely to tell a friend, followed by a family member, and a romantic partner (see Figure 12). Compared to heterosexual students, queer-spectrum students were more likely to tell someone, to tell a friend not a Rutgers, and to tell a therapist (odds ratios ranged from 1.4 to 2.5).

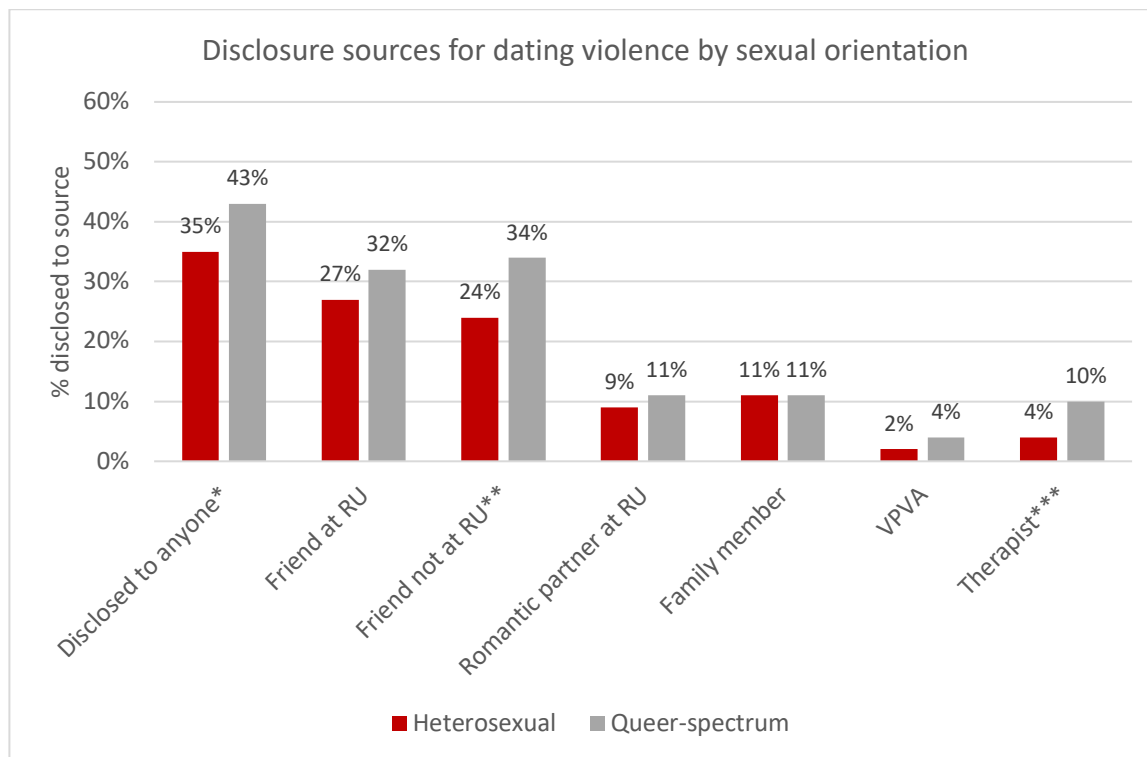


Figure 12. Percentage of students who disclosed dating violence to anyone, and to particular disclosure sources, by sexual orientation (Title IX is not included in the figure because of low overall disclosure rates).

*The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 4.53, p = .03$; **The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 4.31, p = .04$; ***The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 10.51, p = .001$.

The relation between awareness of VPVA and disclosure to VPVA was not affected by sexuality. The relation between awareness and disclose was not examined for Title IX because so few students disclosed sexual violence to Title IX.

The sample of trans students was not large enough to make any comparisons between cis and trans students' disclosure sources.

6. Queer-spectrum and heterosexual students cite similar reasons for nondisclosure.

Non-disclosure of sexual violence

The most common reasons for not disclosing the most serious incident of unwanted sexual contact to someone else were generally the same for queer-spectrum and heterosexual students. The five most common reasons were: “it is a private matter,” “I didn’t think it was serious enough to talk about,”

“I had other things to focus on,” “I wanted to forget it happened,” and “I didn’t want others to worry about me” (see Figure 13). Compared to heterosexual students, queer-spectrum students had 2.3 times greater odds of citing a fear of not being believed as a reason for non-disclosure.

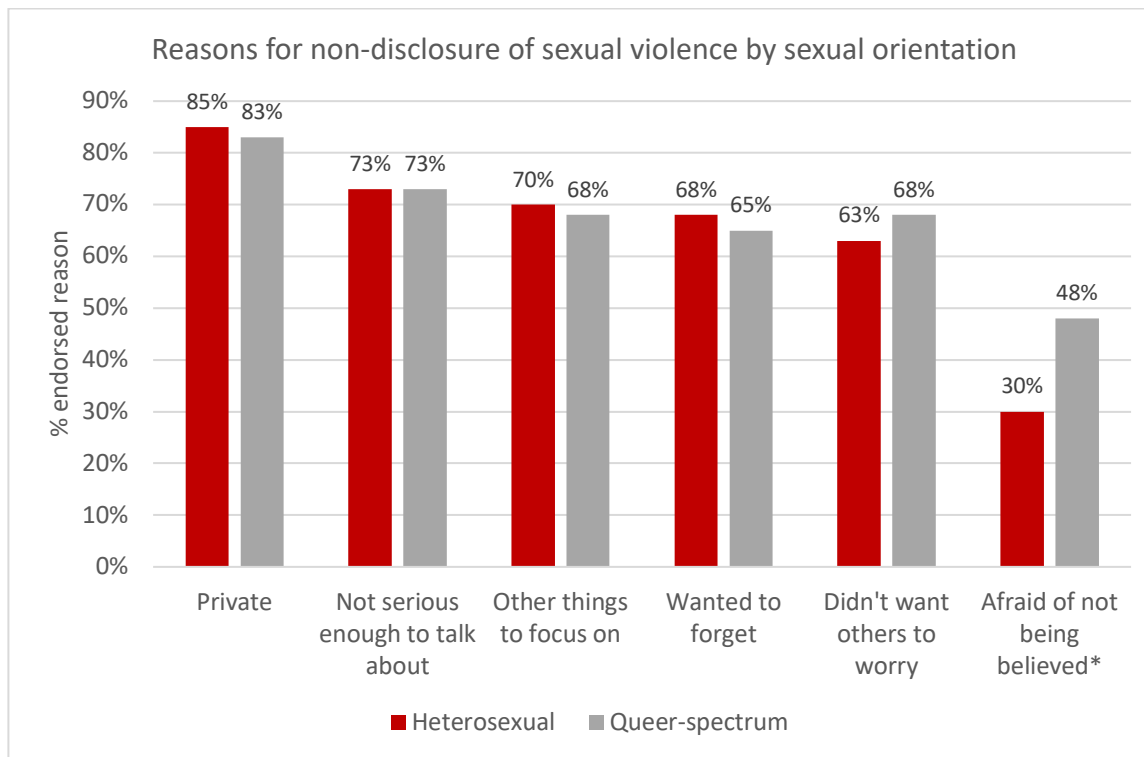


Figure 13. *Percentage of students who cited reasons for nondisclosure of sexual violence by sexual orientation.*

*The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 4.77, p = .03$.

Non-disclosure of dating violence

The most common reasons for not disclosing the most serious incident of dating violence were generally the same for queer-spectrum and heterosexual students. The five most common reasons were: “it is a private matter,” “I didn’t think it was serious enough to talk about,” “I had other things to focus on,” “I didn’t think other people would think it was serious,” and “I didn’t want others to worry about me” (see Figure 14).

Compared to heterosexual students, queer-spectrum students were more likely to cite the following reasons for not disclosing dating violence: “it is a private matter,” “I didn’t want others to worry about me,” “I wanted to forget it happened,” “I didn’t think others would understand,” “I didn’t want the person to get in trouble,” “I felt ashamed/embarrassed,” “I thought others would tell me what to do,” “I was concerned others would find out,” and “I was afraid I would be blamed for what happened” (odds ratios ranged from 1.6 to 2.1).

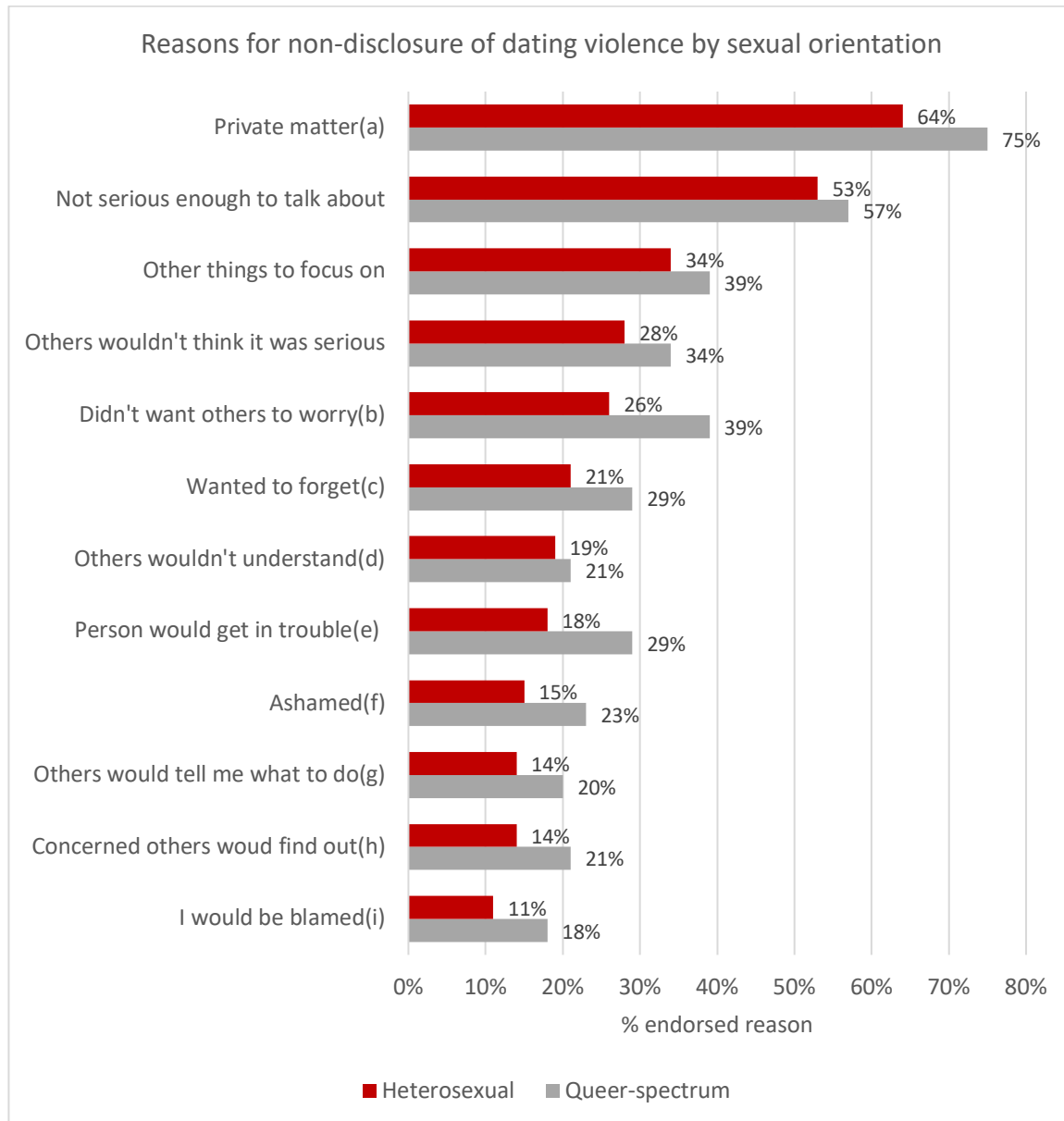


Figure 14. *Percentage of students who cited reasons for nondisclosure of dating violence by sexual orientation.*

^a The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 7.80, p = .01$; ^b The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 12.88, p < .001$; ^c The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 4.35, p = .04$; ^d The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 4.90, p = .03$; ^e The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 9.71, p$

= .002; ^f The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 7.51, p = .006$; ^g The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 3.87, p = .049$; ^h The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 6.21, p = .01$; ⁱ The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 5.14, p = .02$.

Of note, 23% of queer-spectrum students who did not disclose sexual violence and 7% of queer-spectrum students who did not disclose dating violence cited “I was afraid it would reflect badly on the LGBT community” as a reason.

The sample of trans students was not large enough to make any comparisons between cis and trans students’ reasons for not disclosing.

7. Queer-spectrum and trans students perceive the university and their fellow students less positively than heterosexual and cisgender students.

Students were asked seven questions to assess their perceptions of how the university would handle a report of sexual violence or dating violence. Students were also asked three questions to assess their perceptions of how fellow students would handle a report of sexual violence or dating violence. Scores ranged from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions of the university/fellow students.

Both queer-spectrum and heterosexual students had positive perceptions of the university as demonstrated by their relatively high overall scores (the average score was nearly 4 on a 1 to 5 scale for both sexual and dating violence). Although perceptions of the university were positive overall, heterosexual students had more positive perceptions than queer-spectrum students (see Figure 15) and cisgender students had more positive perceptions of the university than trans students (see Figure 16).

Similarly, heterosexual students had more positive perceptions of fellow students than queer-spectrum students (see Figure 15) and cisgender students had more positive perceptions of fellow students than trans students, even after accounting for victimization rates (see Figure 16).

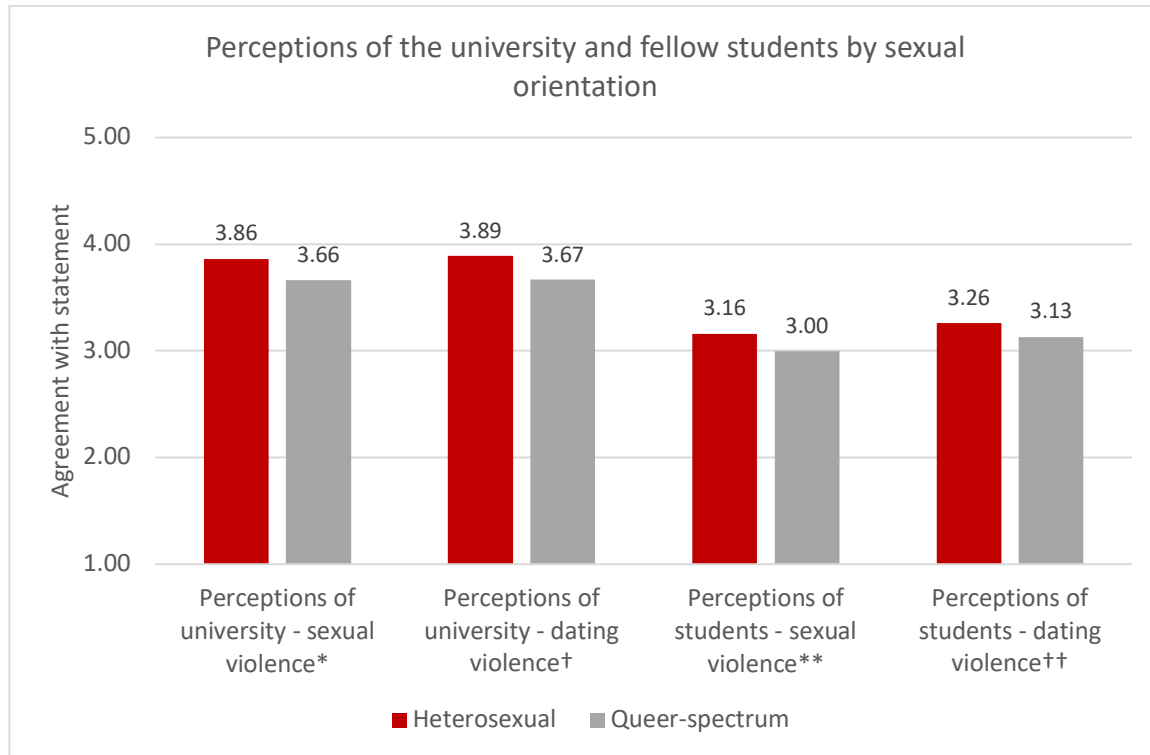


Figure 15. *Perceptions of how the university and fellow students would handle a report of sexual violence and dating violence by sexual orientation, after accounting for victimization rates.*

Note: victimization was included as a control variable.

*The difference is significant, $F(1,2745) = 19.22, p < .001$; ** The difference is significant, $F(1,2740) = 10.08, p = .002$; † The difference is significant, $F(1,1885) = 20.48, p < .001$; †† The difference is significant, $F(1,1880) = 7.02, p = .008$.

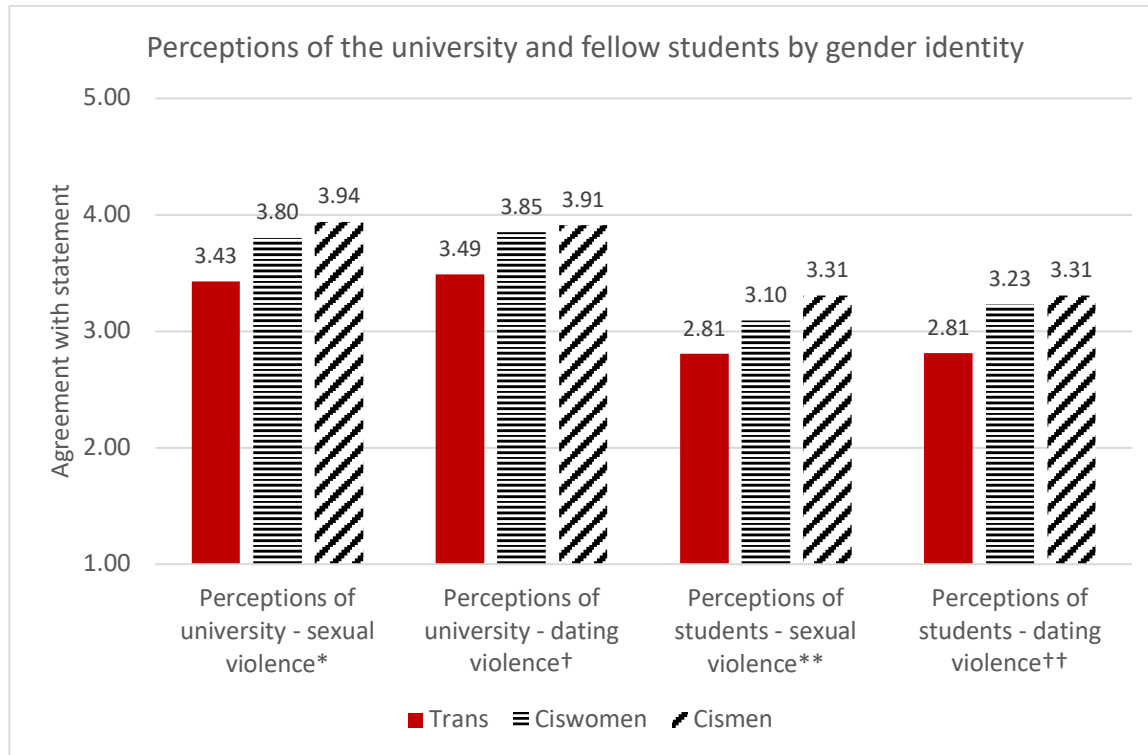


Figure 16. *Perceptions of how the university and fellow students would handle a report of sexual violence and dating violence by gender identity.*

Note: victimization was included as a control variable.

*The difference is significant, $F(2,2767) = 6.89, p = .001$; ** The difference is significant, $F(1,2762) = 7.02, p = .001$. The difference between trans students and ciswomen is not significant; † The difference is significant, $F(2,1893) = 6.34, p = .002$; ** The difference is significant, $F(2,1888) = 7.93, p < .001$.

8. Queer-spectrum students tend to be more knowledgeable of resources on campus related to sexual and dating violence than heterosexual students.

Students were asked whether they know where to get help on campus if they or a friend were to experience unwanted sexual contact or dating violence. Students rated their knowledge of where to get help on a 1 to 5 scale, with higher scores indicating more knowledge.

All students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, were moderately knowledgeable about where to get help for sexual violence and dating violence, as demonstrated by their overall average scores (about 3.5 on a 1 to 5 scale). Queer-spectrum students demonstrated greater knowledge of where to get help for sexual violence than heterosexual students even after accounting for victimization rates. Queer-spectrum and heterosexual students were equally knowledgeable about where to get help for dating violence, even after accounting for victimization rates (see Figure 17).

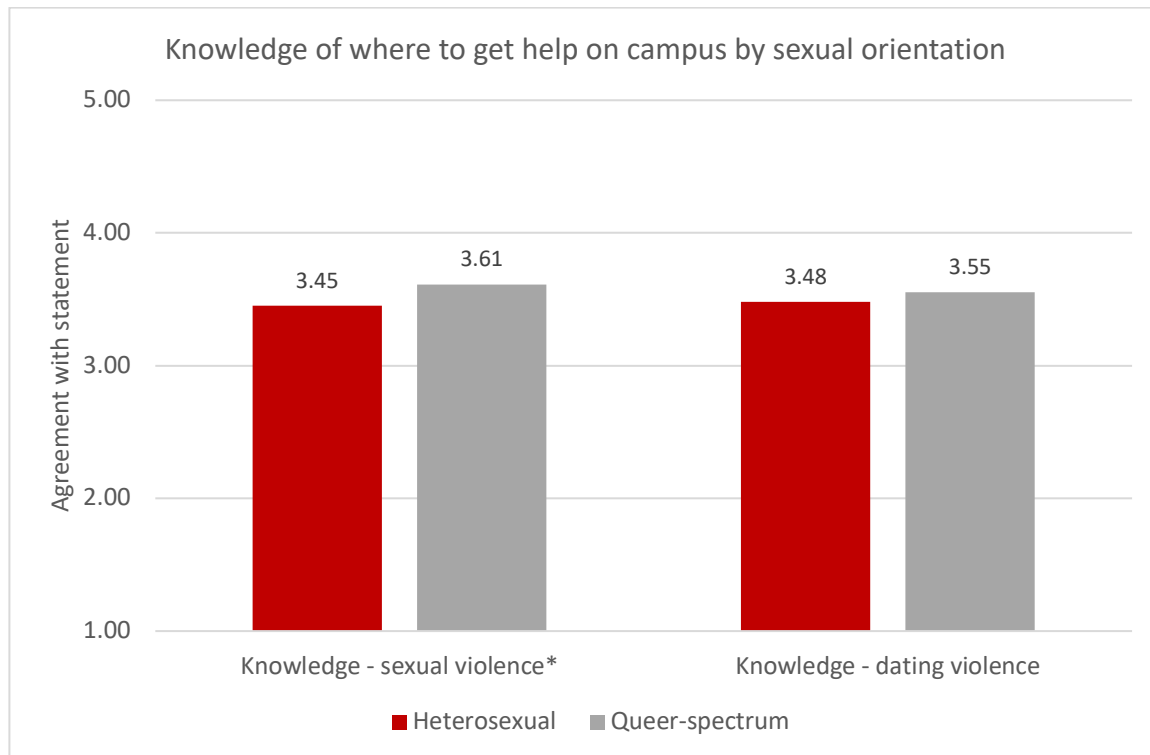


Figure 17. *Knowledge of where to get help on campus by sexuality.*

Note: victimization was included as a control variable.

*The difference is significant, $F(1,2712) = 5.31, p = .02$.

Trans students were equally as knowledgeable as cisgender students about where to get help for sexual violence and for dating violence (see Figure 18).

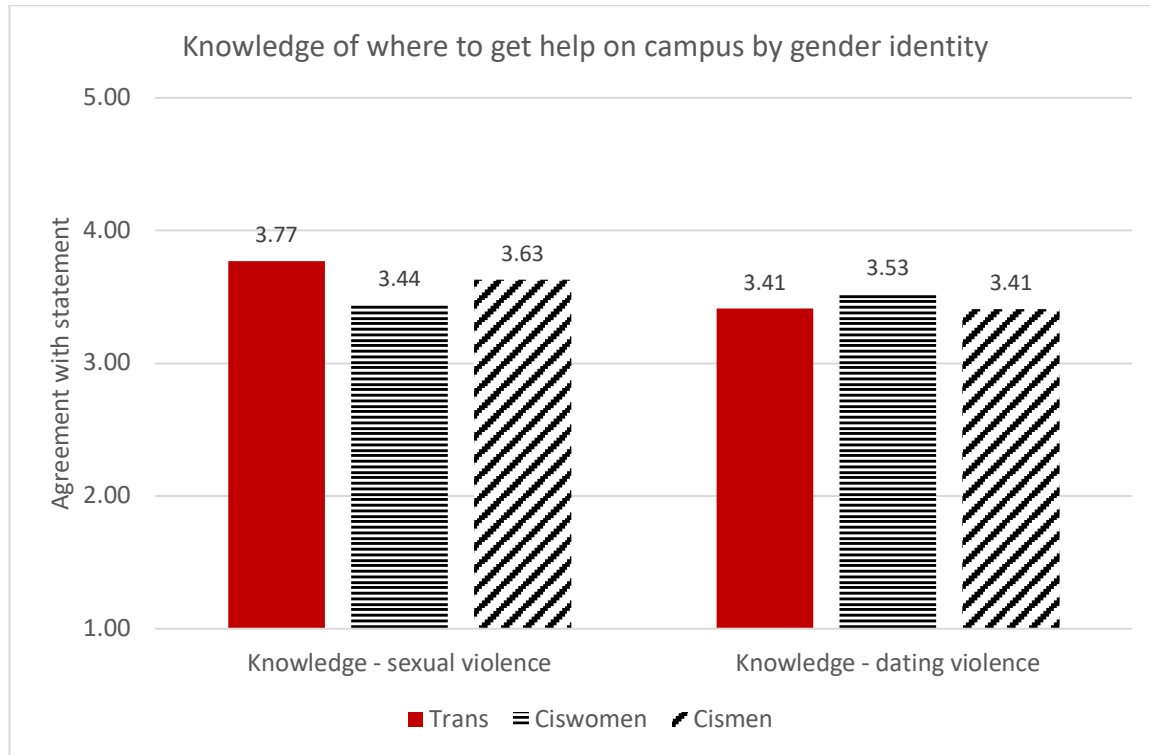


Figure 18. *Knowledge of where to get help on campus by gender identity.*
Note: victimization was included as a control variable.

Students were also asked to rate their awareness of 11 different resources on campus as they relate to sexual and dating violence (e.g., VPVA, Students Affairs Compliance & Title IX). Students were most aware of Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) and Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD), and this was true for queer-spectrum, heterosexual students, cisgender, and non-cisgender students.

There are differences in awareness of resources for several specific resources: compared to heterosexual students, queer-spectrum were more aware of VPVA, Title IX, SCREAM Theater, and CAPS. This greater awareness may be a reflection of the Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities' work to connect queer-identified students to VPVA and other resources on campus. For example, the Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities includes a SCREAM Theater presentation at their LGBTQA extended orientation every summer. In addition, several members of the VPVA and CAPS staff are also LGBTQA Liaisons through the center.

Queer-spectrum students were less aware than heterosexual students of the Office of Employment Equity, Dean of Students, Division of Student Affairs, and RUPD (see Figure 19). Although awareness of Division of Student Affairs was low, awareness of several programs that fall under Division of Student Affairs, including SCREAM Theater, CAPS, and Student Health, was high.

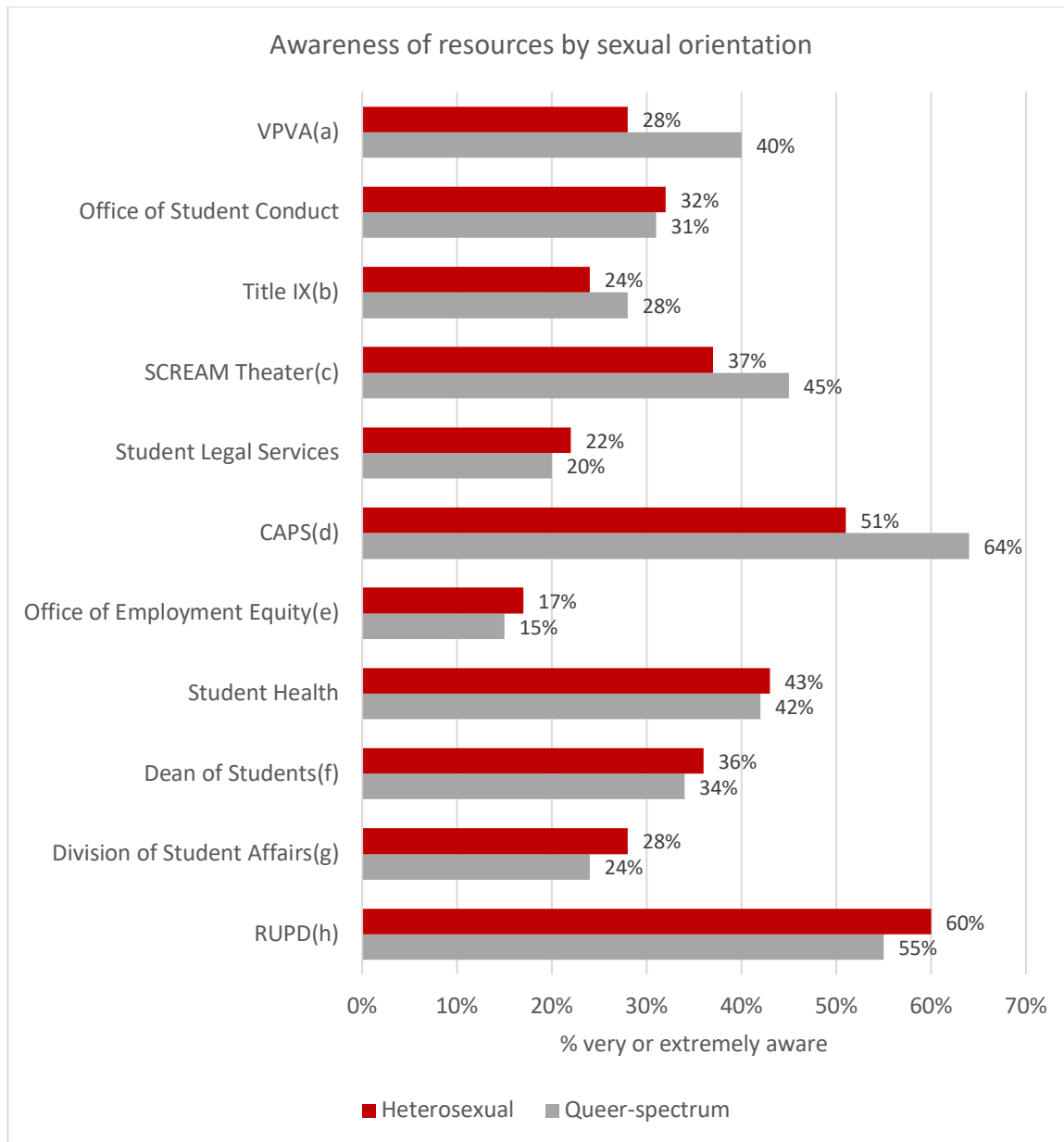


Figure 19. Percentage of student 'very aware' or 'extremely aware' of resources on campus.

^a The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 53.13$, $p < .001$; ^b The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 4.39$, $p = .04$; ^c The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 14.94$, $p < .001$; ^d The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 46.45$, $p < .001$; ^e The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 4.24$, $p = .04$; ^f The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 4.42$, $p = .04$; ^g The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 8.25$, $p = .004$; ^h The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1) = 15.73$, $p < .001$.

Compared to cisgender students, trans students were less aware of Office of Student Conduct, Office of Employment Equity, Student Health, Division of Student Affairs, and RUPD. Trans students were more aware than cisgender students of CAPS (see Figure 20).

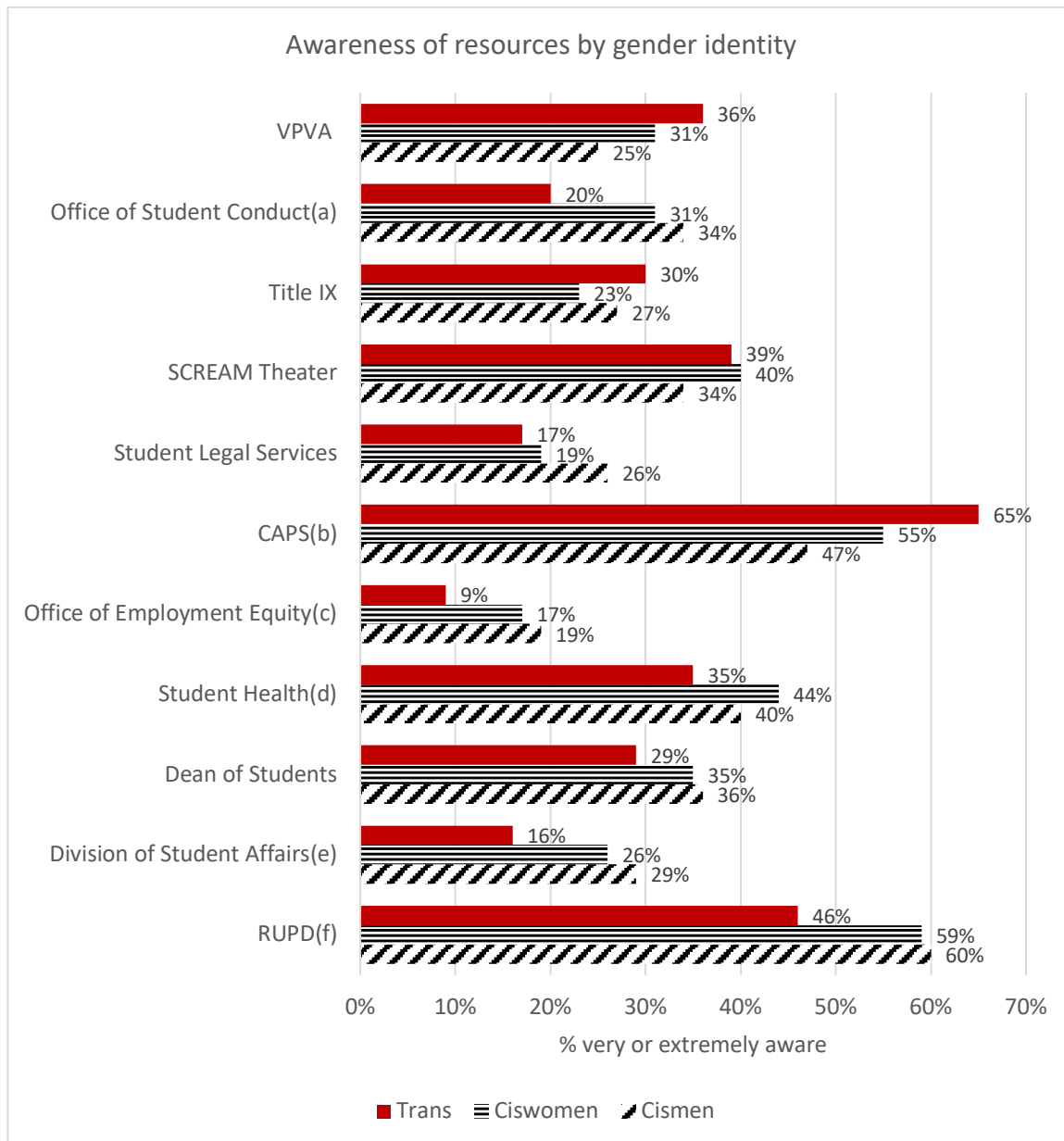


Figure 20. Percentage of student 'very aware' or 'extremely aware' of resources on campus.

^a The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 9.98, p = .002$; ^b The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 6.51, p = .01$; ^c The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 5.69, p = .02$; ^d The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 3.91, p = .048$; ^e The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 8.34, p = .004$; ^f The difference is significant, $X^2(1) = 11.56, p = .001$.

Conclusion

Results of the 2018 iSPEAK survey revealed that rates of sexual and dating violence are higher for members of the queer-spectrum and trans communities at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. Those with fluid sexual orientations (e.g., bisexual) were at even greater risk than other queer-spectrum identities. These findings are consistent with literature on rates of sexual violence among LGBT folks.^{3,4} Further, the results from the iSPEAK survey suggest that most queer-spectrum students – both women and men – are victimized by men as the perpetrator of violence.

Students who identify on the queer-spectrum felt less positively about how the university would handle a report of sexual violence or dating violence, and less positively about how their fellow students would respond to an incident of sexual violence or dating violence.

Although they were more knowledgeable about several resources on campus, queer-spectrum students were not more likely than heterosexual students to disclose sexual and dating violence to these formal sources. This finding, combined with their lower perceptions of the university and fellow students, suggests that queer-spectrum students may not feel as supported or trusting of the university community. Indeed, queer spectrum students were more likely to cite “fear of not being believed or understood” as reasons for not disclosing sexual and dating violence to someone else.

³ Johnson, N. L., & Grove, M. (2017). Why us? Toward an understanding of bisexual women's vulnerability for and negative consequences of sexual violence. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 17(4), 435-450. doi:10.1080/15299716.2017.1364201.

⁴ Seabrook, R. C., McMahon, S, Duquaine, B. C., Johnson, L. & Desilva, A. (In press). The B in LGB: Sexual assault victimization and perceptions of university climate among bisexual women compared to heterosexual and gay women. *Journal of Bisexuality*.

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