WOMEN'S ACCOUNTS OF THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THE #METOO MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

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Although the collective power of women's voices was a driving force behind the #MeToo Movement, women's accounts are strikingly absent from systematic studies about the movement's impact to date. The present qualitative study examined women's motivations and experiences participating in the #MeToo Movement. Twelve women who reported that they had directly experienced sexual violence and who posted about these incidents using the #MeToo hashtag on social media completed semi-structured interviews. Content analysis of their accounts yielded six overarching themes that characterized: 1) women's motivations to post on social media, 2) the content of their posts and 3) other users' responses, 4) personal-level impacts of posting, 5) societal-level impacts of the movement, and their 6) perceptions of #MeToo's impacts on men. Women discussed their desire to express their thoughts, feelings, and stories about sexual violence and to offer support and validation to other survivors as motivations for posting their #MeToo posts. The content of their posts included details about their sexual violence experiences, statements directed towards others (e.g., offering support, calling out sexism), and general social justice commentary. Most women acknowledged feeling worried that they would receive negative responses to their posts, although less than half of participants indicated they received posts that expressed disbelief, insults, or threats from others. Positive impacts discussed by women included a personal sense of empowerment and opportunities to process their experiences. Most women also described emotional toll as a negative impact of their #MeToo posts. At the societal levels, participants identified women's empowerment, increased awareness of sexual violence, and a public dialogue about sexual violence as positive

impacts. Women described false accusations and disbelievers as negative societal impacts of posting using #MeToo. These women's accounts included a discussion of ways that the #MeToo Movement has positively and negatively impacted men in society. The present research is among the first studies to examine the #MeToo Movement directly through the accounts of women participants themselves. Implications of findings are discussed that include the ability for digitally mediated social advocacy to enable meaningful social dialogue and facilitate positive social change.

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INTRODUCTION

On Sunday, October 15, 2017, Alyssa Milano, an American actress posted on Twitter, asking anyone who saw the post to reply "Me too" if they had been sexually harassed or assaulted so that others would become aware of the "magnitude of the problem" (Milano, 2017). Within 24 hours, 53,000 people had responded to Milano's tweet, and the statement "Me too" had become a viral hashtag (#MeToo) that was shared by a million people in 2 days on Twitter and 4.7 million people on Facebook (CBS, 2017). The magnitude of the problem became rapidly and publicly apparent. A 2019 study by Holly Kearl and colleagues provided empirical support regarding the prevalence of sexual violence in the United States. In a nationally representative survey sample consisting of 2,219 adults, 81% of women reported they had been sexually harassed, with 23% of women reporting specifically that they had been sexually assaulted (Kearl et al., 2019). Sexual assault has numerous associated costs, including psychological and economic costs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that each sexual assault costs about $122,461 which includes medical costs, lost productivity, and costs associated with policing and the legal system (CDC, 2019).

Although psychologists have conducted numerous studies about the prevalence, impact, and recovery process for sexual assault survivors over the past four decades, few psychological researchers have examined the role that digital advocacy plays in survivors' lives. This lack of research is particularly striking in the field of community psychology, a field that values the empowerment of marginalized groups and the promotion of positive social change through advocacy and activism (e.g., Kieffer, 1983; Kloos et al., 2012; Prilleltensky, 2012). Community psychologists have been relatively slow to study social media when compared to other fields, despite the fact that 72% of American adults use some type of social media (Pew Research

Center, 2019) and a meta-analysis has found an overall positive relationship between SM and political participation (Boulianne, 2015). To date, only two articles have been published in community psychology journals that focus on the #MeToo Movement specifically (Lathan et al., 2019; Li et al., 2021), and neither included sexual assault survivors who participated in the #MeToo Movement in their sample.

The present qualitative study examined the accounts of adult women who participated in the #MeToo Movement. In the present research, women who posted on social media about their experience of sexual violence using #MeToo were asked about their motivations to participate in the #MeToo Movement, the psychological and behavioral consequences of their public posts, and the impact that they perceived that the #MeToo Movement has had at individual, group, and societal levels in the United States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rape Culture

Sexual violence has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines sexual violence as "sexual activity when consent is not obtained or not given freely" (CDC, 2019). This includes penetrative and non-penetrative acts, such as unwanted sexual contact (e.g., kissing or fondling) and noncontact (e.g., flashing), and stalking. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), a nationally representative survey conducted by the CDC in 2011, found that nearly 1 in 5 (19.3%) women had been sexually assaulted (i.e., forced penetrative sexual contact) and over 2 in 5 women (43.9%) had other unwanted sexual contact or noncontact experiences (Breiding et al., 2014). Sexual violence affects about twice as many women as men, with women reporting more experiences of sexual harassment (81%) and sexual assault (23%) than men (43% and 9% respectively; Kearl et al., 2019).

A recent collaborative research effort led by the University of California – San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH) and Stop Street Harassment (SSH) collected a nationally representative survey consisting of 1,182 women and 1,037 men in early 2019 about prevalence rates of sexual violence (Kearl et al., 2019). This 2019 study found higher rates of sexual assault (23%), unwanted sexual contact (49%), and unwanted noncontact sexual experiences (30%) and stalking (27%; Kearl et al., 2019) for women than the CDC's NISVS of 2011 (sexual assault 19.3%; unwanted sexual contact 27.3%; unwanted sexual noncontact 32.1%; stalking 15.2%; Breiding et al., 2014). The GEH/SSH study also found high rates of verbal sexual harassment (76%) and cyber sexual harassment (40%), which were not assessed by the CDC. Perhaps due to the expanded definition of harassing behaviors, nearly twice as many

women (81%) reported experiencing some form of sexual violence in their lifetime when compared to the findings of the NISVS (43.9%; Breiding et al., 2014; Kearl et al., 2019).

Although there is some variation in the findings of the NISVS and the GEH/SSH, both studies conclude that sexual violence occurs at unacceptably high rates in the United States. Moreover, these rates have been relatively consistent over the past four decades that systematic research into sexual assault has been conducted (Campbell & Wasco, 2005). The earliest prevalence rates of sexual assault in the 1980's likewise found that close to 1 in 4 women had been sexually assaulted (e.g., Koss et al., 1987; Russell, 1982). Despite government agencies, women's advocates, and researchers alike calling for increased prevention efforts, rates have barely moved (if they have moved at all) in decades.

One possible explanation for the relatively stable frequency of sexual assault in the United States is the dominant societal attitudes regarding sexual assault (Bohner et al., 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Feminist scholars have long asserted the existence of rape culture in the United States. The idea of rape culture arose in the 1970s along with second-wave feminism (Bohner et al., 2009; Campbell & Wasco, 2005). Social psychologist Martha Burt was one of the first researchers to develop a measure of the "importance of stereotypes and myths – defined as prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists – in creating a climate hostile to rape victims" (Burt, 1980, p. 217). That is, rape myth acceptance (RMA) results in the denial of or minimizing the injury to survivors and blaming the victim for their experience. Over half of Burt's (1980) sample of 598 participants (357 women and 241 men, with no significant differences in their responses) agreed with rape myths such as:

> A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date implies that she is willing to have sex.

> In the majority of rapes, the victim was promiscuous or had a bad reputation.
>
> 50% or more of reported rapes are reported as rape only because the woman was
>
> trying to get back at a man she was angry with or was trying to cover up an
>
> illegitimate pregnancy (p. 229).

Other examples of common rape myths include "Any healthy woman can resist a rapist if she

really wants to" and "Rapists are sex-starved, insane, or both" (Burt, 1980, p. 217). Burt found

that acceptance of interpersonal violence was the best predictor for RMA. Acceptance of

interpersonal violence refers to the belief that "force and coercion are legitimate ways to gain

compliance" in sexual relationships (Burt, 1980, p. 218) and that "women want and enjoy rough

sex" (Johnson & Johnson, 2017, p. 6).

Researchers have found that while both men and women believe rape myths, men are

more likely to do so than women (Edwards et al., 2011). The more prevalent RMA is in a

society, the more permissive that society is of sexual violence. It is unsurprising then that rape

culture is associated with persistently high rates of sexual harassment and assault. Rape myths

blame the victim, excuse the perpetrator, promote doubt to allegations of rape, and suggest that

rape is exclusive to specific groups of society (Bohner et al., 2009).

Implications of Rape Culture

The pervasiveness of RMA has tangible effects in American society, especially in the

legal system (Bohner et al., 2009; Campbell & Wasco, 2005; Coates & Wade, 2004; Dinos et al.,

2015; Patterson et al., 2009). The early research into the prevalence of sexual assault and RMA

identified a need for prevention efforts and better protection for survivors (Dinos et al., 2015).

During the 1980s and 1990s, laws in the United States were reformed to include oral and anal

penetration in addition to vaginal penetration in the legal definitions of rape. These laws also emphasized the importance of consent, and eventually included marital rape. Despite these changes, conviction rates remained consistent or even decreased in some cases (Dinos et al., 2015). Women's reports of sexual violence are often not believed, women are often blamed for crimes committed against them, and perpetrators who commit violence against women often receive relatively "light" sentences (Coates & Wade, 2004; Patterson et al., 2009).

In a systematic review, Sokratis Dinos and his colleagues found evidence in most of the studies they reviewed that rape myths influence juror decision-making (Dinos et al., 2015). In cases lacking physical or objective evidence, jurors must make decisions based on whom they believe: the victim or the perpetrator. These cases are particularly susceptible to the influence of rape myths (Bohner et al., 2009; Dinos et al., 2015). Researchers have used mock trials in their methodology to better understand the factors influencing jurors' decision-making process. They have found that jurors' attitudes toward witnesses are based more on the jurors' personal beliefs and attitudes than on what the witnesses actually say (Dinos et al., 2015).

Coates and Wade (2004) reviewed the court files of 64 sexual assault cases in which the male perpetrator was exonerated, and they identified the psychological attributions judges made that appear to be related to their acquittals. These perpetrators committed behaviors that were deemed to be out of their control due to alcohol use, sexual urges, pathology, emotions, stressful experiences, and past experiences. The judges' attributions appeared to hold the perpetrators as committing non-violent acts (e.g., having too much to drink) rather than violent acts. Acquittals and RMA, therefore, are linked in a perpetuating cycle (Bohner et al., 2009). Due to the belief in rape myths, jurors are more likely to acquit men alleged of sexual assault, and these acquittals are then seen as evidence supporting rape myths as facts.

Sexual assault is also associated with tangible and intangible costs (Campbell & Wasco, 2005; Waters et al., 2005). In terms of tangible costs, the CDC estimates that each sexual assault costs about $122,461 when accounting for medical costs, lost productivity, and costs associated with policing and the legal system (CDC, 2019). Research suggests that women who experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault are at higher risk for physical and mental health problems than individuals who do not have these experiences; these problems are likewise associated with financial costs to survivors (Briere & Elliott, 2003; Campbell & Wasco, 2005; Ellsberg et al., 2008). A 2005 review (Campbell & Wasco, 2005) summarized intangible costs, including psychological pain, impairments in functioning, increased rates of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in survivors, increased rates of both acute and chronic physical health problems, and increased risk for HIV. The survivor's family system is also impacted, as the aftermath of a sexual assault can cause significant stress.

Rape Culture Online

Social media (SM) has become part of the fabric of daily lives for a majority of Americans (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). Anyone with access to the internet can be a content creator on SM platforms. The ability for users to share content allows for rapid, real-time distribution of information. Thus, content creation on SM is a social and collaborative process between users creating, reading, and disseminating information (Baumer et al., 2011). SM creates spaces where individuals can connect with others who share similar interests, experiences, or values despite geographic barriers. When SM arose in the early 2000s, most users shared content that was personal to them. Over time, it has also become a source of news for about 68% of Americans, according to the Pew Research Center (Matsa & Shearer, 2018). SM has also been associated with real-world effects, such as in raising public awareness about

injustices like the disproportionate killing of black men, women, and children by police officers (Scott et al., 2017).

Although SM users have identified many positive aspects of "digital life," there are growing concerns about the downsides of SM. While users enjoy the connection they have with friends, family, colleagues, and knowledge via SM, overuse can lead to "connection overload," increasing stress and anxiety and decreasing sleep and attention to "real life" experiences (Anderson & Rainie, 2018). Furthermore, there are growing concerns about the trustworthiness of information shared on SM (Anderson & Rainie, 2018). Misinformation can spread as easily and rapidly as factual information, as seen prominently in the Russian interference campaign in the 2016 U.S. presidential election on Twitter, in which known Russian bot accounts were retweeted 83,719 times by 40,224 distinct users in the span of two months (Badawy et al., 2018).

Individually targeted cyber harassment campaigns are common on SM. A nationally representative survey of American adults found that 41% had directly experienced online harassment and 66% had witnessed harassing behaviors directed towards others on SM (Duggan, 2017). Women were twice as likely as men to report that they were targeted in online harassment due to their gender. Women (70%) were also more likely to feel that online harassment is "a major problem" than men (54%; Duggan, 2017). A majority of men (56%) expressed feeling that it is more important to "be able to speak their minds freely online," whereas a majority of women (63%) stated that they placed more value in "feeling welcome and safe online." Predictably, women encountered sexualized digital harassment more frequently than men, with 21% of women reporting they had been sexually harassed online and 53% had been sent unsolicited sexually explicit images (Duggan, 2017).

The content and activities on SM reflect the attitudes and experiences of the people who use it. Given the ubiquity of rape culture in "real life," it is naturally evident in digital life as well. For example, victim-blaming was a common theme arising in two studies using content analysis of comments on digital news stories about sexual assault (Whiting et al., 2019; Zaleski et al., 2016). In a qualitative study, Sophie Sills and her colleagues (2016) interviewed 15 women and one man about their views of rape culture on SM. Participants discussed the omnipresence of rape culture in their local communities, in mainstream media (i.e., news agencies and entertainment), and on SM. As in the aforementioned content analyses, two-thirds of participants in Sills' study reported witnessing victim-blaming and "slut-shaming" on SM (Sills et al., 2016). Many participants had observed misogynistic comments online and noted the existence of specific digital spaces that "celebrate" physical and sexual violence against women, such as the following Facebook pages identified by one participant: "Kicking sluts in the vagina" and "Riding your girlfriend slowly 'cos you don't wanna wake her up" (Sills et al., 2016, p. 942). Some of the participants reported these pages to Facebook, which refused to take the pages down, citing free speech. Engaging directly with such misogyny online can take an emotional toll on individuals. Women who call out sexism online are told that "they have no sense of humor" at best (Stein, 2016) or "you're just a stupid slut, you just need to get fucked" (Sills et al., 2016, p. 942).

Trolling is a major concern for SM users. "Trolls" are internet users who "bait and provoke other [online discussion] group members" diverting online forums from their intended topics and engaging them in "fruitless arguments" (Herring et al., 2002). Trolls cling to their freedom of speech rights online and actively seek to disrupt the lives of other SM users through actions ranging from pranks and insults to harassment and threats of physical or sexual violence

(Stein, 2016). The relative anonymity behind a computer screen is seen as a contributing factor

in trolling (Duggan, 2017; Stein, 2016). In a provocative article about "Why we're losing the

internet to hate," Time journalist Joel Stein described the unconscionable actions of trolls:

> In 2011, trolls descended on Facebook memorial pages of recently deceased users
>
> to mock their deaths. In 2012, after feminist Anita Sarkeesian started a Kickstarter
>
> campaign to fund a series of YouTube videos chronicling misogyny in video
>
> games, she received bomb threats at speaking engagements, doxing threats, rape
>
> threats, and an unwanted starring role in a video game called Beat Up Anita
>
> Sarkeesian. In June of this year, Jonathan Weisman, the deputy Washington editor
>
> of the New York Times, quit Twitter, on which he had nearly 35,000 followers,
>
> after a barrage of anti-Semitic messages. At the end of July, feminist writer
>
> Jessica Valenti said she was leaving social media after receiving a rape threat
>
> against her daughter, who is 5 years old (Stein, 2016).

In her article "Digitizing Rape Culture," Alexa Dodge (2016) described cases in which

perpetrators of sexual violence took photos of their victims during or immediately after being

raped, and then shared these images on SM. Rather than garnering empathy and support for the

survivor, these images often become the basis for ridicule and cyberbullying. In some of these

cases, such as 17-year-old Rehtah Parsons and 15-year-old Audrie Pott, the women survived the

assault, but the victimization from the subsequent cyber harassment, in which they were publicly

humiliated and blamed for their assaults, took a substantial toll resulting in their suicides. The

sharing of sexual assault photographs online perpetuates that trauma on the survivor:

> Each share, like, tweet, or comment… and the disturbing victim-blaming, slut-
>
> shaming, and refrains of "lol" [laughing out loud], that often accompanied [the

pictures'] proliferation, allowed these sexual assaults to be temporally extended

and to continue to haunt their victims in a very tangible way (Dodge, 2016, p. 68).

The online sharing of sexual assault photos is in itself an act of sexual harassment. In the case of Parsons, her parents reported that many of Parsons' close friends turned against her, and people she did not know started texting her asking her for sex. Perhaps most shocking, official investigators initially concluded that there was "insufficient evidence" to charge the boys (now men) who raped Parsons. However, they reopened the case following her suicide. Ultimately, two of the four perpetrators were charged, not with sexual assault, but with distribution of child pornography for the photo they shared on social media; they were sentenced to 12-month probation (CBS, 2014; Dodge, 2016; The Canadian Press, 2015). The photo from the assault pictured "one of the boys penetrating Parsons from behind while she was vomiting with her head stuck out of a window" (Dodge, 2016, p. 65). The boys shared the picture on social media using their own, identifiable accounts, seemingly without understanding or concern that their actions were culpable. In receiving only minimal consequences for their behavior, they were proved "right" in their lack of concern.

Digital Feminism

Rape culture is both performed and resisted in online spaces (Jackson, 2018; Sills et al., 2016). In Sills' interview study, her participants described the use of SM for feminist education online to challenge sexism and create positive change. SM has also created spaces wherein sexual assault survivors can connect with one another and share their stories with their peers and the larger public, particularly when they experienced marginalization following in-person disclosures or through official reporting processes (Gill & Orgad, 2018; Zaleski et al., 2016). Through education and community, women can engage in deliberate forms of citizen

participation and activism. Some have started to call this current wave of digital feminism a new, fourth wave (Ferreday, 2015; Jackson, 2018; Munro, 2013; Roberts, 2019). Like the salons and consciousness-raising groups in previous waves of feminism, this new fourth wave creates safe spaces on digital platforms to discuss experiences of sexism, offer a feminist critique of mainstream media, and rally around specific causes (Jackson, 2018; LeGates, 2001).

This so-called fourth wave is distinct from the previous waves of feminism due to the creation of global communities of feminists who use the internet for both social and political discourse and action (Ferreday, 2015; Jackson, 2018; Munro, 2013). For instance, the discourse around Facebook's policy that images of sexual assault did not meet their platform's definition of hate speech led to online campaigns gaining thousands of supporters seeking change (Munro, 2013). SM has fostered a "call-out culture" in which everyday sexism and misogyny can be publicly called out and challenged (Munro, 2013). Recognizing and embracing the intersectional identities of women is especially important in contemporary feminism, and has led to the development of new words and phrases, such as "cisgender" to describe a person whose gender identity and presentation are consistent with their sex assigned at birth, "TERF" an acronym standing for "trans-exclusionary radical feminists," a subset of feminists who exclude and denigrate transgender women, and "privilege checking," which refers to the practice of reminding someone (typically straight, middle class, white women) that they cannot speak for everyone (Munro, 2013). These phrases, which first emerged on SM, have begun to filter into the mainstream discourse.

Although there is some debate over the effectiveness of digital activism, including critiques that online activism is merely "slacktivism" (Cabrera et al., 2017; Morozov, 2009), there is growing evidence that online action is related to offline social change. A 2015 meta-

analysis that reviewed 36 studies found an overall positive relationship between SM and political participation (Boulianne, 2015). In another study with a nationally representative sample, 39% of adults reported engaging in some form of political activity on SM, and 83% of these reported that they also engage in traditional, offline civic behaviors (Smith, 2013). SM users (43%) have reported that they decided to learn more about an issue after reading it online, and 18% decided to take action on an issue because of something they learned on SM. About 69% of American adults felt that SM plays an important role in getting politicians to pay attention to issues, 67% said SM is important for creating and sustaining movements of change, and 64% believed that SM helps give voice to marginalized groups (Anderson et al., 2018).

Hashtag Activism

Although online activism can occur in myriad ways, the most attention is paid to forms of hashtag activism. Hashtag movements can be likened to grassroots activism, in that people create and share content around their issues of concern and garner support as these posts are disseminated. As more users interact with a hashtag by liking, commenting, or sharing posts with that hashtag, or by creating new posts with that hashtag, social media algorithms begin to promote those posts so that more and more social media users see these posts. Platforms such as Twitter even display hashtags that are "trending," that is, hashtags with which many social media users are currently interacting. As hashtags trend, more and more users take notice, resulting in the creation of more content and potentially exponential more attention from social media algorithms. Posts that experience this rapid dissemination across many users and even across platforms are said to have "gone viral." Feminist researchers who study hashtag activism have seen these campaigns highlight counter-narratives and promote feminist politics: "Individual

stories of oppression, when compiled under one hashtag, demonstrate collective experiences of structural inequality" (Baer, 2016, p. 29).

Although on the surface it may seem that hashtag activism would, therefore, require little work after the initial creation of the hashtag, hashtag feminist leaders interviewed in a qualitative study discussed the labor required in digital feminist movements (Mendes et al., 2018). These women described the "hidden labor" of unpaid and often unappreciated work in keeping the issues in the public consciousness, such as through media interviews. There is also an emotional toll associated with activism. Being exposed to stories of injustice, misogyny, harassment, and assault can be psychologically taxing and result in burnout. And, of course, hashtag feminist activists, in particular, must cope with online harassment from those who disagree and resist changes promoting gender equality. However, without the continued effort of these leaders behind the scenes, many hashtag movements quickly vanish from public view.

Digital activists identified positive aspects of their work as well (Mendes et al., 2018). Although trolls exist, digital feminist leaders reported that they still view online feminist communities as relatively safe spaces which create accessible opportunities to engage with topics that may be more difficult in offline contexts. For many of these digital feminists, SM was an introductory point for their feminist worldview. Digital feminists also report a sense of community with their online compatriots in meaningful discussions of the issues which affect them and in challenging systems of oppression.

One of the first feminist hashtags to go viral was #YesAllWomen in May 2014 (Baer, 2016). The hashtag started in response to the indiscriminate killing of six undergraduates near the University of California – Santa Barbara campus. Before going on the rampage, the shooter posted a video to YouTube stating that he planned to "punish women for refusing to have sex

with him." The phrase "Yes All Women" was chosen to reflect that all women are affected by sexism and misogyny. It was also a challenge to another hashtag that started trending in response to the shooting: #NotAllMen, meaning "Not all men are like that" (Plait, 2014). As mainstream discourse about the shooting focused on the perpetrator's misogynistic manifesto, men began taking to Twitter to point out that most men do not commit deadly assaults. #YesAllWomen took off with tweets such as, "No, #NotAllMen are violent against women, but #YesAllWomen have to navigate a world where those who are look the same as those who aren't" (Robinson, 2014). Within a few days, the hashtag had been used on a million tweets. The hashtag came to be about more than the violence which preceded its creation. It mobilized women to discuss sex discrimination and sexual harassment in all of its insidious, everyday forms (Thrift, 2014).

Another hashtag that trended in 2014 was #BeenRapedNeverReported. The hashtag started on October 30, 2014, in Canada after eight women reported they had been sexually harassed by Canadian radio host Jian Ghomeshi (Francis, 2015). Shortly thereafter in the United States, the first few women reported they had been sexually assaulted by comedian Bill Cosby. These news stories were associated with many in mainstream media questioning these women's motivations in coming forward with their historical allegations many years after the sexual misconduct had taken place. Through the hashtag, women shared their experiences of sexual harassment and the reasons why they did not initially report the assault. Within a few days, use of the hashtag had spread worldwide and 8 million people had encountered #BeenRapedNeverReported posts. Mendes and her colleagues (2018) conducted qualitative research, interviewing women who posted using the #BeenRapedNeverReported hashtag. These women described making and reading posts on this hashtag as "both triggering and comforting." Discussing sexual assault, even with the character limits on Twitter, brought up traumatic and

painful memories. Women shared that their tweets were not "flippant responses, but carefully produced testimonials that were scaffolded after sleepless nights." Women expressed surprise at the outpouring of social support they received from others who also participated in the #BeenRapedNeverReported hashtag. They described how these growing "networks of solidarity" helped them to understand sexual violence as a structural problem, rather than a personal problem. Their experiences engaging with this hashtag helped them to challenge the power of rape myths in their own lives.

The #MeToo Hashtag

The phrase "Me too" was first used by Tarana Burke, a feminist and black activist, in 2006 several years before hashtag activism existed in its present form. Through this phrase, she launched a movement seeking to raise awareness about the pervasiveness of sexual assault in society and to help survivors, particularly women of color, find pathways to healing (MeToo, n.d.). Burke had a vision of a community of advocates and survivors sharing resources and leading the charge of creating solutions and challenging problems with sexual violence in their local communities. From 2006 to October 14, 2017, the Me Too Movement was a local, grassroots endeavor.

On October 15, 2017, Alyssa Milano, a white actress with a large following on Twitter, used "Me Too" as a hashtag call to action in her now famous tweet (see Figure 1). Within 24 hours, 53,000 people had responded to Milano's tweet, and #MeToo was a viral hashtag that was shared by a million people in 2 days on Twitter. The upswelling cry of "Me Too" quickly spread to other social media platforms, with 4.7 million Facebook users worldwide making #MeToo posts. In the United States, 45% of Facebook users had friends who posted #MeToo (CBS, 2017). The small grassroots movement expanded to a global community (Mendes et al., 2018;

MeToo, n.d.). A primary goal of this new, worldwide #MeToo Movement was to draw attention to the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault in all walks of life, to address social and legal inequities, and to amplify the voices of women through the use of social media (MeToo Movement, n.d.).

When Time magazine named "the Silence Breakers," that is, the women and men of the #MeToo Movement, as their "Person of the Year" in December 2017 (Zacharek et al., 2017), they put a spotlight on sexual violence as a high priority concern facing our society that needed not only our attention and awareness of the problem but a commitment to make societal level changes. The Time article cemented the #MeToo Movement in the national consciousness, and a report by the Women's Media Center (WMC) in October 2018 revealed notable changes in the media over the first year since #MeToo launched (Ennis & Wolfe, 2018). The WMC completed a systematic search of headlines and articles from May 2017 to August 2018 from 14 of the United States' most widely circulated newspapers. They found a 30% increase in articles about sexual assault following the spread of #MeToo. Furthermore, women's issues more broadly (e.g., reproductive health, the wage gap) appeared more frequently in the news after #MeToo. The time since Milano's tweet on October 15, 2017 has been dubbed "the MeToo Era," and now, nearly four years later, an informal search for news headlines shows that #MeToo continues to be discussed in the mainstream media on a weekly basis, despite the current COVID-19 pandemic. While #MeToo is not the first feminist hashtag to demonstrate the pervasiveness of sexual assault and to promote justice for survivors, it appears to be unique in its staying power.

MeToo's impact has also extended into the legal sphere, with legislation passing at the state and federal levels to provide greater protection against workplace sexual harassment (Gingeleskie, 2019). Some states have prohibited non-disclosure agreements and have adopted

equal pay protections following #MeToo, which include protections not only for women but for other gender and racial minorities as well. In specific legal cases, survivors won legal battles against film producer Harvey Weinstein and Fox News chairmen Roger Ailes (Cooper, 2018). #MeToo inspired two lawyers (with the financial support of Hollywood celebrities) to create a new fund, dubbed the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, to cover the legal costs of working-class survivors, and within four months, the fund obtained $21 million and had 700 lawyers in 40 states willing to provide a free initial consultation to survivors (Cooper, 2018).

Almost immediately, there was a large and vocal backlash to the #MeToo Movement, typically citing common rape myths to discredit the movement. A key theme that emerged in the backlash was the concern about false allegations of sexual assault. Despite the rarity of false allegations (Dinos et al., 2015; Kelly et al., 2005; Peck, 2019), fear of being falsely accused has led men in managerial positions to pull away from mentoring female colleagues (Peck, 2019). Some feminists have also expressed concerns about who speaks and who is heard in the #MeToo Movement (Zarkov & Davis, 2018); as with mainstream feminist movements, the #MeToo Movement is seen by some as a movement for middle and upper class cisgender heterosexual white women that has excluded the voices of women of color, of sexual and gender minorities, of the working class, and of male victims (Clark-Parsons, 2021; Gill & Orgad, 2018; Williamson et al., 2020; Zarkov & Davis, 2018). Furthermore, "call-out culture" is seen to be taken to an extreme in the #MeToo Movement, dubbed "cancel culture," wherein women publicly identify the names of their perpetrators. Men who are called out have experienced quick and severe consequences, including termination from positions of power. This can lead to a "trial by media" in which the accuser is believed and the accused is "canceled" and not provided the opportunity to make a case for his defense (Zarkov & Davis, 2018).

#MeToo Research

Within months from the launch of the #MeToo hashtag, feminist scholars (e.g., Kearl, 2018) were undertaking new research studies to lend empirical support to #MeToo's core message: sexual assault remains shockingly common and affects women across social and cultural groups. Other studies emerged, particularly in feminist and technology journals. To date, research on the #MeToo Movement has largely focused on metadata relating to digital posts, such as the number of posts and patterns of distribution (Deal et al., 2020; Manikonda et al., 2018). Some studies (e.g., Clark-Parsons, 2021; Deal et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; Manikonda et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2019) have analyzed the content of #MeToo social media postings, typically by exploring word frequency and associations. Content themes identified in these studies broadly include survivors' stories (Deal et al., 2020; Manikonda et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2019), sharing support and resources (Li et al., 2021; Manikonda et al., 2018), the affordances of #MeToo (Clark-Parsons, 2021; Deal et al., 2020), the challenges of #MeToo (Clark-Parsons, 2021), maintenance of the #MeToo Movement (Clark-Parsons, 2021; Xiong et al., 2019), discussion of news and current issues and calls to action (Li et al., 2021; Manikonda et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2019).

There have been a few quantitative, survey-based studies considering reactions to the #MeToo Movement (e.g., Jaffe et al., 2021; Kende et al., 2020; Szekeres et al., 2020). Results from an international survey sample of 366,706 individuals from Hungary, Israel, and Germany at the onset of the #MeToo Movement found that individuals who believed the movement was empowering for women and an opportunity for moral improvement among men were more supportive of the movement, whereas men who perceived #MeToo as causing an increase in false accusations and a slight against men's moral reputation were less supportive (Kende et al.,

2020). In another online survey-based study collecting data at multiple time points (two before the #MeToo Movement went viral and two afterward), Hanna Szekeres and colleagues (2020) observed that for both men and women, dismissal of sexual assault reports decreased following initiation of the #MeToo Movement. This finding suggests that belief of survivors' disclosures of sexual assault increased with the #MeToo Movement, and notably, this increase in believing women persisted through their six month post-MeToo data collection period.

In an intriguing cross-sectional study challenging rape narratives that was collecting data from the fall of 2016 through the spring of 2019, lead author Anna Jaffe and her colleagues (2021) asked questions via an online survey about participants' experiences with behaviors that constitute sexual assault, as well as questions determining to what extent these participants would label those experiences as assault. While there was no meaningful change in the number of behavioral reports, the study did find an increase in labeling these incidents as sexual assault following the initiation of the #MeToo Movement. Given that a pre-MeToo meta-analysis found that 60% of women who have experienced sexual acts consistent with the definition of rape did not label those experiences as "rape" (Wilson & Miller, 2016), Jaffe's (2021) findings suggest that the #MeToo Movement may have widened the mainstream narrative of rape to include manipulative or coercive behaviors that were previously overlooked.

There have been a few qualitative studies (e.g., Callender & Klassen, 2020; Gueta et al., 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020) involving the #MeToo Movement. Linzi Williamson and her colleagues (2020) explored the perspectives of 56 undergraduate students (38 women and 18 men) in Canada about the #MeToo Movement through a series of focus groups. Less than a quarter of these participants endorsed experiencing sexual violence themselves. Key themes in the results of this study suggest that the #MeToo

Movement has both positive and negative effects. Positive effects included raising awareness and support for those making assault disclosures. Negative effects included the possibility for false allegations or for survivors bringing up historical allegations (i.e., allegations of sexual violence from many years ago that were not reported at the time), which in the eyes of these participants was undesirable. These undergraduates also cited inaccessibility for those without social media accounts, as well as the exclusion and potential harm to other survivor groups. Although some of these participants acknowledged that sexual and gender minorities, racial minorities, and individuals of lower socioeconomic status may be excluded, participants were primarily concerned with the exclusion of men from participation in the #MeToo Movement.

The three remaining qualitative studies (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Gueta et al., 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020) recruited and interviewed sexual violence survivors to address their research questions of interest. Charlotte Strauss Swanson and Dawn Szymanski (2020) interviewed 13 women and 3 genderqueer individuals (N=16) about the role of activism in their post-sexual violence recovery process. All participants engaged in a range of advocacy activities, which for some participants included participation in the #MeToo Movement. Results broadly suggest that activism helps survivors process and cope with their experiences, speak out against rape culture, provide support and connection to others, and feel a sense of meaning and fulfillment. Participants further indicated that mainstream movements (e.g., #MeToo) increased awareness. Downsides to anti-sexual violence advocacy engagement include risks of being triggered, feeling inundated with media coverage and personal accounts of sexual violence, and experiencing burnout.

In Karisse Callendar and Samantha Klassen's (2020) work, six women were interviewed about how the #MeToo Movement had impacted their health-seeking behaviors after

experiencing sexual violence. Only three participants (50%) reported active participation in the #MeToo Movement by making a post, while others reported more passive or observational interactions with the Movement. These participants found #MeToo to be "necessary" and "empowering," giving women a voice and connection to other survivors. Like the other qualitative studies on #MeToo, these participants noted that the movement helps to raise awareness of sexual violence. They also noted that it calls for increased accountability of perpetrators for their actions.

The study by Keren Gueta and her colleagues (2020) was conducted in Israel. The researchers interviewed 14 Israeli women who had made public disclosures of their sexual assault through various media outlets about the impact of these disclosures on their recovery. Nine women made disclosures on social media, including four women who made #MeToo postings. These women reported they were motivated to post to advocate for social change and engage in meaning-making, which would facilitate their healing. Participants perceived these disclosures as helping their recovery through the formation of a resilient, activist identity, reframing of their sexual assault narrative, and improvement of interpersonal relationships. However, these disclosures were also perceived to make victimization a central part of their identity, and they also undermined their sense of security.

The results of these four qualitative studies broadly identified impacts of the #MeToo Movement, both positive and negative, and at individual, group, and societal levels. At the individual level of analysis, positive impacts of the #MeToo Movement included empowering and giving voice to survivors (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020) and reframing sexual assault narratives (Gueta et al., 2020). At the group level, #MeToo helped in connecting and supporting survivors (Callender & Klassen, 2020;

Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020). At the societal level, #MeToo

increased awareness of sexual violence (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Strauss Swanson &

Szymanski, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020), called for increased accountability of perpetrators

(Callender & Klassen, 2020), and was a catalyst for social change (Williamson et al., 2020).

Three of these studies identified negative impacts of the #MeToo Movement, such as survivors

being triggered and experiencing emotional burnout (Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020),

making victimization a central aspect of survivors' personal identities (Gueta et al., 2020), and

risks of slacktivism, false or historical allegations of sexual violence, and the exclusion of certain

survivor groups (Williamson et al., 2020). Keren Gueta and her colleagues (2020) also explored

women's motivations for self-disclosing their sexual assault on SM, finding that women are

motivated by a desire to advocate for social change and engage in meaning-making.

Research related to the #MeToo Movement has started to appear in scholarly journals

over the past few years. However, it remains notable that while the movement's stated objective

is to give voice to women who have historically been marginalized, these women have seldom

been given a voice in a systematic way through research about their experiences speaking for

themselves online (Gueta et al., 2020). To date, four qualitative studies have started to create

spaces for research participants to speak up about their views of the #MeToo Movement.

However, this existing research is limited in several ways. Three of the four existing studies

specifically recruited sexual assault survivors (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Gueta et al., 2020;

Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020), and only one of these stated the number of participants

who actually participated in the #MeToo Movement by posting content on social media (4/14

participants; Gueta et al., 2020). Only two of the four previous qualitative studies (Callender &

Klassen, 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020) were based in the United States. Given the

systemic and cultural components salient in addressing rape culture, additional research is needed to understand the perspectives of sexual assault survivors who participated in the #MeToo Movement in the United States.

The relative silence of community psychologists on #MeToo has been striking. In an informal search from October 2017 to August 2019 of the three flagship journals of community psychology (i.e., the American Journal of Community Psychology, the Journal of Community Psychology, and the Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology), there were a total of seven published articles which referenced the #MeToo movement at all. Five of these articles alluded to the #MeToo Movement in the context of research on sexual violence (Bond, 2020; Mapes & Cavell, 2021; Shaw & Lee, 2019), psychological sense of community (Buckingham et al., 2018), and mattering (Prilleltensky, 2020), but did not directly consider the #MeToo Movement in the primary aims of the research. In a publication in the Journal of Community Psychology, Emma Lathan and her colleagues (2019) assessed the relation between rape myth acceptance (RMA) among police officers and their awareness and perspectives of the #MeToo Movement, finding high rates of RMA (even among officers whose caseloads primarily consisted of sexual assault cases) and low familiarity with the #MeToo Movement. Manyu Li and colleagues' (2021) study, also published in the Journal of Community Psychology, included a thematic analysis of the content of tweets using the hashtags #WhyIDidntReport and #MeToo, finding that these tweets included discussion of relevant political and social issues, sharing of resources to help sexual assault survivors, and promotion of social actions like protests or voting. Neither of these studies included the voices and perspectives of the individuals who participated in the #MeToo Movement, that is to say, the motivations, thoughts, feelings, and reactions of the sexual assault survivors writing #MeToo posts. Despite stated values of empowering

marginalized individuals and promoting positive social change (Kieffer, 1983; Kloos et al., 2012;

Prilleltensky, 2012), community psychologists have yet to systematically study hashtag activism

in general and the #MeToo Movement in particular.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study examined the personal accounts of women who participated in the #MeToo Movement by posting on social media using this hashtag. Qualitative inquiry was used to examine their perceptions of the #MeToo Movement and its role in giving voice to survivors. In individual interviews, women who identified as being survivors of sexual violence were asked to share their accounts of the nature of their experiences as participants in the #MeToo movement and their views about the potential impact of the movement at individual and societal levels. t

The present study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do women describe their motivations to post about their experiences on social media using #MeToo?

2. What information do women include in their #MeToo disclosures of sexual assault and harassment, and what types of responses do they receive from others?

3. What are women's views of ways that the #MeToo Movement has impacted their personal experiences and shaped the conversation about harassment and violence against women at a societal level?

METHOD

Participants

Participants were recruited from a Midwestern university via a combination of public advertisements and snowball sampling techniques. Individuals were eligible to participate in this study if they met the following criteria: 1) Were at least 18 years old, 2) Lived in the United States, 3) Identified as female, 4) Had experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault, and 5) Had posted on social media using the hashtag #MeToo. Participants were informed that steps would be taken to protect their identity, including the use of pseudonyms. Sample demographic characteristics can be found in Table 1 (Appendix A).

The sample consisted of 12 young adults between the ages of 18-35 years old ($M = 23.9$, SD=5.2) who identified as female and who had publicly identified themselves as having experienced sexual harassment or assault through participation in the #MeToo Movement on social media (SM). Nine participants identified as non-Hispanic White, one participant identified as Hispanic White, one participant identified as Black, and one participant identified as Biracial. Most women in the sample reported their marital status as single/never married (n=9), with three women reporting they were married/in a domestic partnership.

In terms of education level, participants had an average of 15.8 (SD=1.7) years of schooling, with most participants being current undergraduate students (n=9), graduate students (n=2), or recent college graduates (n=1). Most women reported they were not currently employed (n=6) or were employed part-time work (n=4), and two women reported full-time employment. Half of the sample (n=6) reported they were financially independent of their family of origin. Nearly half of the participants reported a household income of $39,999 or less (n=5), with three women reported a household income of $40,000 to $79,999 and three women reported

a household income over $80,000 (one participant was uncertain of her family's household income). On an item assessing socioeconomic status, women primarily consider themselves to be middle class (n=9) or upper class (n=3).

Participants primarily reported growing up in micropolitan areas (n=6), with four participants growing up in rural communities and two participants growing up in metropolitan environments. Participants reported that their parents were married (n=6), had divorced (n=4), or were never married (n=2). Most participants (n=10) reported growing up in a two-parent household. Most participants grew up with siblings (n=11), including sisters (n=7) and/or brothers (n=6).

Procedure

This study received approval from the Bowling Green State University IRB. Recruitment flyers were shared by email with the general campus population, student organizations for women and diverse students, and specific psychology classes. Interested individuals were invited to contact the principal investigator to learn more about the study and complete a phone screen to determine eligibility. Individuals would be eligible to participate if they were over 18 years old, identified as a woman, had directly experienced sexual violence, and had used the #MeToo hashtag on social media.

Participants completed informed consent to participate in the research via Qualtrics before being interviewed. All interviews were conducted remotely via secure video conferencing software (i.e., Webex) due to COVID-19 contact restrictions, between April 2020 and January 2021. Interviews lasted for about an hour and 20 minutes on average (range 45 minutes to 2 hours). As a token of appreciation, all women who completed the interview received a $20

Amazon gift card. All participant interviews were video-recorded via Webex and transcribed verbatim. Atlas.ti software was used to assist in qualitative data analysis.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the United States at the same time as research activities on this project began, delayed participant recruitment. A total of 44 women contacted the principal investigator about the study; 26 women expressed interest in participating and were screened for eligibility; upon completion of screening, 16 women were determined to be eligible and completed the semi-structured interview. The final sample included 12 women. Four women were excluded from data analyses for the following reasons: two women reported sharing #MeToo posts, however, they did not write their own posts, nor did they self-identify on social media as a survivor of sexual violence; one woman indicated that she only made one #MeToo post identifying herself as a survivor, which she deleted within seconds; one woman was excluded due to her chronological age relative to other individuals in the study sample.

Measures

Semi-structured interview protocol

The semi-structured interview protocol developed for the present study consisted of seven main content areas that include: 1) demographic information, 2) women's experiences using social media to engage with social and political issues, 3) information about the general nature of women's experiences of sexual harassment, 4) women's experiences speaking up about sexual harassment to known others or authority figures, 5) women's use of social media to speak up online about sexual harassment, 6) women's perspectives on the #MeToo Movement and its impact at individual and societal levels, and 7) women's attitudes towards systemic sexism and feminism. A complete list of interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

The protocol began with an introduction explaining the purpose and procedure of the study, including informed consent. Participants were then asked to provide basic demographic information. The next section of the interview assessed women's experiences and attitudes toward social media through five questions. These questions collected information about their patterns of SM use (e.g., "What social media platforms do you use?" and "How much time do you spend on social media in a typical day?) as well as their engagement with political and social issues on SM (e.g., "On which platform do you feel most comfortable expressing your opinions about political or social issues? Why?").

The interviewer then asked a set of six broad questions to better understand the nature of the sexual violence experienced by the participant. These questions were designed to understand the general nature of the assault or harassment experiences and did not require participants to disclose specific information about the circumstances of the assault or harassment. For this reason, five of the six questions were closed-ended questions. The final open-ended question in this section asked participants about how they coped with their experiences of sexual violence.

The next two sections focused on participants "speaking up" about their experiences of sexual violence. The first of these sections consisted of three core questions asking participants about sharing their experience with known others (e.g., family and friends) or making reports to authorities, (e.g., police or school officials), with several prompts to contextualize their responses. Participants were asked to reflect on their reasons for deciding whether or not to disclose their experiences, to whom, and when. They were asked to describe the responses they received and any action that was taken by others. Questions in this section also prompted participants to describe how sharing with others in traditional (i.e., face-to-face) contexts affected their emotional experiences (e.g., "How did talking to others about what happened play

a role in processing your thoughts, feelings, and reactions about your experiences [of sexual

harassment]?").

The second "speaking up" section pertained to participants discussing their experiences

of sexual harassment on social media. There were four central questions in this section, with

additional prompts for clarification purposes. As in the previous "speaking up" section,

participants were asked about their decisions to post online about their experiences, including

what they shared, when, and why, as well as how others responded to their posts. In this section,

participants were invited to describe the positive and negative aspects of sharing their stories on

social media, and how this fit into their processing of their experiences. The section concluded

with a question comparing the experience of disclosing in-person versus disclosing online.

The next section directed participants to think about their views of the #MeToo

Movement. There were 11 questions in this section. Participants were asked about their initial

and later reactions to the #MeToo Movement going viral. Two questions prompted them to share

their understanding of #MeToo as a movement, and how they contextualize this movement

within a larger framework of activism. This section also explored the #MeToo Movement's

perceived effects at an individual level (i.e., What impact, if any, did the #MeToo Movement and

posting a #MeToo tweet have on you personally?), at the group level (e.g., impact of the

#MeToo Movement on specific groups in society, such as women, men, and survivors of sexual

violence) and at societal levels (i.e., "What impact, if any, do you think #MeToo has had on our

society?"; and "Do you think that the #MeToo movement has changed the nature of the

conversation about harassment and violence against women? How?"). The section concluded

with a statement regarding the backlash against #MeToo in the mainstream, specifically the idea

that #MeToo has negatively impacted men (e.g., who have faced false allegations), and two questions about participants' views of and reactions to this backlash.

The final section of the interview considered participants' views on sexism and feminism in the United States. Participants were asked questions regarding their views of systemic oppression and their identity as a feminist (if applicable).

The interview protocol concluded with a statement thanking participants for sharing their stories and allowing them to provide additional information or ask questions about the study.

Data Analysis

This qualitative study used thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), to describe participants' responses to the open-ended interview items. As a method, thematic analysis is typically used to find patterns and themes across responses from participants. Given the lack of a theoretical framework in the existing literature, interview questions that related to aspects of the three central research questions of the present study were approached from an inductive, or "bottom-up" approach.

Thematic analysis was used to find patterns and themes in the personal accounts of study participants. A six-phase procedure to thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used in the present study. The principal investigator initially read and reread interview transcripts and made notes of initial ideas relating to commonalities across participants' responses. Next, an initial coding system was articulated in a coding manual and implemented systematically across the dataset. This manual was refined with each iteration of the coding process. Participants' semantic utterances were collated into meaningful groups and assigned a code. Then, the principal investigator reviewed these codes and identified how the combination of different codes may reflect an overarching theme. In the final phases of the process,

preliminary themes were further reviewed, defined, and consolidated. The principal investigator returned to the coded data to review the "internal homogeneity" and "external heterogeneity" within the coded data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). Internal homogeneity refers to the fact that data within a theme should form a coherent and meaningful pattern with similarities to other data contained in the theme. External heterogeneity means that the data within one theme should be meaningfully distinct from data that was outside the theme. This coding process was iterative, such that the principal investigator revised themes and returned to the entire dataset several times until the themes seemed to accurately reflect participants' accounts and to ensure that all relevant data had been coded appropriately.

Once the principal investigator completed coding, a 20% random sample of quotes was identified for reliability coding by a qualified and trained research assistant. Upon the first cycle of reliability coding, percent agreement was 87.1% overall, with agreement varying by section (i.e., Motivation quotes = 77.3% agreement; Content Posted quotes = 100%; Responses quotes 82.4%; Individual Level Impact quotes = 72.0%; Group and Societal Level Impact quotes = 90.7%; and Impact on Men quotes = 100%). The principal investigator met with the research assistant to discuss and resolve discrepancies by consensus. Additional quotes were selected at random for the second round of reliability coding for categories with less than 85% agreement in round one. Percent agreement improved to 94.5% with the second round of reliability coding, with greater agreement on Motivation quotes (100% agreement), Responses quotes (88.2% agreement), and Individual Level Impact quotes (88.0%).

RESULTS

Social Media Use

All 12 participants reported daily use of social media that ranged in frequency

from one to ten hours per day (*M*=4.3, *SD*=3.1). Five participants reported changes in their social

media habits due to COVID-19 lockdowns, with three reporting a decrease in time spent online

and two reporting an increase. Most participants reported currently maintaining a Twitter

account (n=11). Other social media platforms used by participants including Instagram (n=11),

Facebook (n=10), Snapchat (n=7), and TikTok (n=4). When asked "On which platform do you

feel most comfortable expressing your opinions about political or social issues," participants

reported with Facebook (n=4), Instagram (n=3), Twitter (n=2), and TikTok (n=2). Ten

participants stated that they see social justice content on social media "almost every time I use

social media," while two participants see this content "about half of the time I use social media."

All participants reporting that they had made a #MeToo post on social media on

platforms including Twitter (n=10), Instagram (n=4), Facebook (n=3), TikTok (n=1), and

Tumblr (n=1). Strikingly, one-third of participants (n=4) stated that they deleted their #MeToo

posts. Table 2 includes information about each participants' social media habits.

Personal Experiences of Sexual Violence

Although women were purposefully not asked to share specific details about their

experiences of sexual harassment or assault, they did provide general information about their

experiences. Participants' personal experiences of sexual violence are summarized in Tables 3.

On average, women reported first experiencing sexual harassment at the age of 12 (M=12.1

years, SD=4.3), with two women reporting sexual assaults occurring before the age of 10.

Women reported experiencing the worst or most persistent sexual violence between the ages of 10 and 28 (M=16.6 years, SD=4.4).

Women were asked to categorize the types of sexual violence they had experienced, based on a list of 10 types of sexually violent behaviors. All 12 women reported having experienced verbal sexual harassment (e.g., someone calling them a sexist slur, making disrespectful comments that made them feel unsafe, talking about their body parts inappropriately or offensively, making sexually explicit comments, asking sexually inappropriate questions, repeatedly asking for their personal information when the women told them "no" or ignored them, or bullying or coercion of a sexual nature in exchange for something such as a good grade, a promotion, etc. or instead of something such as paying rent or a citation) and physically aggressive sexual harassment (e.g., someone flashing or exposing their genitals to the participant, stalking, or purposely touching them in an unwelcome, sexual way). Eleven women reported experiences of street harassment or cat-calling.

Eleven women reported having unwanted consensual sex, that is, being pressured to have sex with a partner, even when they did not want to do so. Three of the women who reported unwanted consensual sex spontaneously noted that they engaged in unwanted sexual encounters after saying "no" to prevent the situation from escalating (i.e., being raped) and adopted an attitude of "just get it over with." Ten women reported they were sexually assaulted (i.e., raped), which was defined as being forced to engage in sexual acts without giving consent or when they were unable to say no. Ten women also reported experiences of cyber sexual harassment, such as someone repeatedly texting or calling in a harassing way, electronically sending or sharing sexual content without participants' consent, or taking and/or sharing pictures or videos of the

participant without permission. Seven women reported they were the victim of physical assault or violence because of their gender.

Four women reported gender-based discrimination in their workplace (e.g., passed over for a position or promotion due to gender). Two women reported they witnessed physical or sexual assault directed toward a female relative, such as a mother or a sister. Four women reported experiencing some other form of sexual violence. Two of these women reported experiencing discrimination in school programs. One of these women reported that she was blackmailed by an abuser. Another reported that a man once doctored explicit messages which he then shared with the woman's boss and boyfriend in an attempt to sabotage her relationship and get her fired from her job after she refused to sleep with him. Lastly, one woman reported that an abusive boyfriend forced her to have sex with other people.

Women reported experiencing a mean of 7.2 (SD=1.2) out of 10 different categories of sexually violent behaviors. When asked about how many times they had experienced sexual violence, most women indicated "more times than I can count" (n=8), with a few stating "a few times" (n=3), and one woman reporting "one time." Women who had experienced multiple incidents of sexual violence described these as both isolated events (n=10) and patterns of persistent harassment involving repeat perpetrators (n=8).

During the semi-structured interview, participants were also asked about their experiences reporting sexual violence to authority figures, such as the police, work supervisors, and school administrators. Nine women indicated that at least one incident of sexual violence had been reported to authority figures, with two women indicating they made the report themselves, six women indicating the report was made by another person (e.g., a friend, coworker, or parent); one woman indicated that multiple incidents had been reported to

authorities, with one report being made by herself and another being made by her parents. Of the seven women whose sexual assaults were reported by another person, about half (n=4) engaged with the reporting process. Only three women had legal cases opened against their perpetrators. For two of these three women, the legal cases resulted in conviction and imprisonment of their perpetrators.

Thematic Analysis

Each of the 12 participants completed a semi-structured interview which resulted in a combined total of 15 hours and 23 minutes' worth of qualitative data. The interviews were transcribed verbatim for the thematic analysis, which ultimately consisted of 756 coded quotations and 57 themes across multiple iterative coding cycles. The results of the thematic analysis are grouped in the following categories: 1) Women's motivations to make a #MeToo post, 2) Content of participants' #MeToo Posts, 3) Responses to participants' #MeToo posts, 4) The #MeToo Movement's impact at the individual level of analysis, 5) The #MeToo Movement's impact at group (e.g., women and sexual violence survivors) and societal levels of analysis, and 6) The #MeToo Movements impact on men.

Women's motivations to make a #MeToo post

Eight themes emerged from women's discussions of their motivations for making a #MeToo social media post, which were broadly classified into two categories: motives "for myself" (n=11) and motives "for others" (n=12). Four themes comprised the "Made the #MeToo post for myself" category: "to express" (n=11), "inspired by others" (n=9), "it's easy to post" (n=8), and "to challenge my shame" (n=5). There were four themes in the "Made the #MeToo post for other people" category: "to validate others" (n=9), "college discussions" (n=8), "it's bigger than myself" (n=5), and "camaraderie" (n=4). See Table 4 for a complete list of the

themes of participants' motivations to post #MeToo, with operational definitions and representative quotes.

Eleven participants reported they were motivated to make a #MeToo post because they wanted "to express" their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about sexual violence. Some women discussed #MeToo as a "coming out moment" when they openly talked about their personal experiences of harassment or assault publicly for the first time. Others discussed wanting to send a public message about their values (e.g., believing survivors). Still others discussed feeling a "need" to get their thoughts and feelings out there. Lastly, some participants, like Jasmine, an 18-year-old survivor of childhood sexual assault, stated that the #MeToo movement helped them to realize that "I do still have a voice" and "my voice does matter." Jasmine said,

> I feel like what motivated me to post it was just never feeling like I was advocated for. I was young. I wasn't taught to speak against authorities, and so now I'm like, wow! I can speak up against it and about it. I have a voice, [and] I'm older now. I just felt like nothing was holding me back.

Nine women discussed ways they were "inspired by others" to make a #MeToo post. Participants reported posting #MeToo because they were inspired by other social media posts and/or by being directly encouraged to post by people they knew in their life. Participants specifically discussed being inspired by posts that were made by celebrities as well as by acquaintances. For example, Faith, a 20-year-old survivor of sexual assault, stated, "Social media allowed access to seeing the inside of more people's lives. Seeing how these strong celebrity women or even just other people who [posted], you see them, and it's able to motivate you."

A total of eight participants mentioned that "it's easy to post" a #MeToo statement. Participants reported that the simplicity and brevity of the #MeToo hashtag made disclosure

easier than sharing their experiences in other ways. Participants discussed that it felt more "inclusive" and accessible to be able to just say "Me Too" rather than having to try to label their experiences in more specific ways. As Kelsey, age 24, who was sexually assaulted reflected, "I can just tweet the hashtag and acknowledge that something like this has happened to me. But I don't have to go into the details… Just saying 'me too' was able to signal so much by saying so little."

Five women endorsed that their #MeToo postings were intended "to challenge my shame" (n=5). These women reported posting #MeToo as a way to challenge or let go of the sense of shame they had been carrying ever since they were assaulted. Beth, a 20-year-old survivor of sexual assault said, "I was nervous about sharing that experience, and then I thought that I probably shouldn't be ashamed of it anymore, so I decided to post something."

Women also reported they "Made the #MeToo post for others." The motivations that fit in this theme involved participants wanting to post as a way of helping or connecting with others. The desire "to validate others" was the motivation "for others" endorsed by the most women (n=9). These women reported posting #MeToo because they wanted to send a message to other women that they are "not alone," as well as to offer comfort, support, and inspiration. For these women, it was important to send a message of hope and acceptance to other survivors, letting them know that whatever thoughts, emotions, and reactions they were having in response to their experiences were valid. Harmony, a 27-year-old woman who was sexually assaulted, said that she hoped her posts would "help others realize that they are also not alone that they can speak about it, and they can heal from it too."

Eight women discussed the role that "college discussions" played in their motivation to post about #MeToo. These women reported that discussions they had in college during classes

(e.g., women's studies, ethnic studies, history) or campus events, such as when the founder of the MeToo Movement, Tarana Burke, gave a talk on campus, made them more open to using the #MeToo hashtag. These campus activities and events motivated participants to speak up more, both online and offline. Katie, age 35 who experienced unwanted consensual sex, shared that,

> Once I started going to school and meeting all of these young people, it gave me hope that the future is bright for our youth. It just gave me hope, and it made me voice my opinion more verbally now… In classes, I questioned things, like, "Why did you say that?" Or I tried to address situations that I feel need to be addressed. Or if I want to learn more, and ask questions, and have a conversation about it. So yeah… going to college has definitely helped me be a voice.

Some women (n=5) also stated that they wanted to make a #MeToo post because it connected them with something "bigger than myself" and they wanted to be a part of the #MeToo Movement. These women stated that making a #MeToo post would "fold them into" the larger movement for women's rights and challenging rape culture. Posting would make them part of the collective calling for change, which in turn would challenge their individual feelings of isolation and oppression. "When you see a movement starting, it's really exciting. If you can be a part of something that's bigger than you, then yeah, I want to do that," said Cassidy, 22-year-old sexual assault survivor.

Four women indicated that they were inspired to make their posts out of a sense of "camaraderie" with other survivors. Participants in the present study reported that they posted #MeToo as a way of coming together with other sexual violence survivors. The word "camaraderie," which was used by two participants, reflects the idea of fellowship, loyalty, and deep connection with like-minded others. These women had a sense of "fighting the good fight"

against sexual violence together. Participants described a sense of safety and community "with thousands of strangers" on social media. Elena, age 22 and sexual assault survivor, explained the bond among women who joined the #MeToo Movement: "You can relate to [other survivors] on a very unfortunate, unfortunate level, but it's a gift to be able to give the comfort to somebody else, no matter what the circumstances. So, the gift is 'me too.' The gift is, 'We're doing this together.' "

Content of participants' #MeToo posts

The content of posts with the #MeToo hashtag that participants described was coded into three categories, namely the "level of self-disclosure" (n=11), posts that made "statements directed towards specific others" (n=7), and posts that offered "general commentary" relevant to #MeToo (n=8). The "level of self-disclosure" referred to the amount of detail participants shared about their own sexual assault experiences. This category contained three themes: "MeToo as acknowledgement" (n=5), "general descriptions" of their experiences (n=5), and posting specifically about "my personal story" (n=6). "Statements directed towards specific others" referred to posts that were sending a message to other social media users. The two themes in this category were "statements of support" (n=4) and posts "calling out" specific people or companies that held sexist views (n=4). "General commentary" included relevant postings about the #MeToo, with two themes: "social justice commentary" (n=6) and posts specifically about MeToo Movement founder, "Tarana Burke" (n=3). See Table 5 for a complete list of the content themes of participants' #MeToo posts, with operational definitions and representative quotes.

In terms of "level of self-disclosure," five women discussed posting "#MeToo as an acknowledgement" of their experiences of sexual violence. These women made posts that only contained the words "Me Too" without any further elaboration. These words signified to other

social media users that these women were sexual violence survivors, but their posts included no other information about the specific circumstances they had experienced. "I know that the first time I ever posted was just the words 'Me Too.' I didn't put anything else. I remember that specifically, because I remember debating it, whether I should put anything else," said Allison, age 32 and sexual assault survivor. The same number of participants (n=5) reported sharing "general descriptions" of their experiences of sexual violence. These women made posts that included general references and basic descriptive information about their experiences of harassment or assault but did not contain any specific details about these events. For example, Maureen, a 21-year-old and sexual assault survivor, shared, "I haven't really posted much to the #MeToo Movement [about] the sexual assault. It was more when I was experiencing cat-calling and verbal [harassment] stuff. I dated somebody in high school who did some stuff and so I made reference to it [in my posts]." Lastly, six participants discussed that their #MeToo posts described "my personal story" of sexual violence in detail. One participant, Harper, a 20-year-old survivor of unwanted consensual sex and cyber harassment, described her post during the interview in this way:

> I had seen a post done by another woman where she had burned her ex's stuff as a cleansing ritual of her soul. I had a bunch of stuff [from my ex] that I had no clue what to do with. I was like, "I am gonna follow what she did." I had [posted a] screenshot [of] her post with my post. I had taken a picture of the fire pit of his stuff burning… It was old pictures, the poster board that he asked me to prom with, and this old hoodie that he gave me. I had taken a picture of everything burning. I posted it online with this long paragraph explaining what I was doing,

how I was inspired to do it, how it made me feel empowered. I [posted] that he

had taken advantage of me in the "unwanted consensual sex" way.

Aside from using the #MeToo hashtag to self-identify as survivors of sexual violence, participants also reported posting "statements directed towards specific others" using the #MeToo hashtag. The two themes in this category were "statements of support" and "calling out." Four women reported that they used the #MeToo hashtag on their posts to make "statements of support" to offer comfort or share resources with other social media users who made #MeToo posts. Nicole, a 20-year-old who had experienced sexual assault, said that in her posts, she would send supportive messages intended for other sexual assault survivors, such as, "There's so many people. This isn't something that [means] you're weird. Me Too. It's not okay, but you're not alone. You are not alone in any of it. Me too." Other women (n=4) used the #MeToo hashtag on posts "calling out" specific individuals or companies that had expressed sexist views. These "call out" posts were addressed to specific others that perpetuated gender inequality or minimized the severity or prevalence of domestic violence. After being sexually harassed by a teacher, Faith, who had already experienced a sexual assault in another relationship, posted " 'Instructors shouldn't be allowed to do this to people… You should be allowed to trust authorities in any position that you're in,' and I posted, '#MeToo. They shouldn't be allowed to take advantage of you.' "

The third category of content that women reported that they posted reflected "general commentary" regarding the #MeToo Movement, social justice, and women's rights. Participants' (n=6) "social justice commentary" posts contained information or perspectives about general social justice-related issues, such as commentary about the #MeToo Movement, information about current events related to social justice and feminism, or information, data, or statistics

about violence against women and gender-based inequality. For example, Kelsey said "My Twitter was very active when it came to Dr. Ford and the Brett Kavanaugh hearings. If it wasn't for the #MeToo Movement, I don't think that the general population probably would have felt comfortable tweeting about that." Three women reported that they specifically discussed Tarana Burke's recent presentation on campus about the history and direction of the #MeToo Movement in their #MeToo posts. Elena stated that some of her #MeToo posts "were actually promoting the creator of MeToo. She was coming to the school. I was promoting that event… The hashtag started, I believe, in 2008. As early as that! Can you believe it? And it didn't go viral until many years later."

Responses to participants' #MeToo posts.

Eleven of the twelve participants reported that other social media users responded to their #MeToo posts. Participants' accounts about these social media responses reflected five categories that focused on the "method of response" (n=11), "individuals who responded to posts" (n=10), the "valence of responses" (n=11), the "content of responses" (n=8), and the participants' "concerns and reactions to response backlash" (n=10). The "method of response" broadly consisted of two approaches: "likes" (n=6) or "comments" (n=9). Response methods were also categorized into two mutually exclusive categories: whether these responses led to back-and-forth interactions between participants (n=6) and other social media users or no such interactions (n=5). Six participants indicated they engaged in online "interactions," that is they received comments or messages that led to a dialogue (either on- or off-line) about what they had posted. Five participants reported having "no interactions," that while their posts were "liked" or commented on by other social media users, they did not engage with any written or verbal responses to their posts.

Ten women identified specific "individuals who responded to their posts" via likes or comments, and who were categorized as "known others" (n=9) or "strangers" (n=5) based on their relationship with the participant. "Known others" included individuals from participants' family of origin (n=5), current partners (n=2), friends or acquaintances (n=7), and former partners who had engaged in abusive behaviors (n=3). "Strangers" included "anti-feminists" (i.e., unknown or anonymous online "trolls" who expressed anti-feminist views; n=5) and other social media users from the #MeToo community who are not personally known by the participant (n=2).

Participants (n=11) also described the "valence of responses" they received. All 11 women who received responses on their #MeToo posts reported receiving some positive feedback from other social media users, although most (n=8) also reported receiving negative feedback. When considering all of the responses they received, most participants reported that feedback was more positive overall (n=8) than negative (n=2).

Eight participants described the "content of the responses" they received, and these were coded into three themes: to "offer or receive support" (n=6), "posting is controversial" (n=6), and "disbelief, insults, and threats" (n=5; see Table 6 for a list of these themes with operational definitions and representative quotes). Six women indicated that they received responses to "offer or receive support." These responses were from individuals wanting to express support to the participant or who had similar experiences and were seeking mutual support. Katie shared that she received online messages from acquaintances that said, " 'Oh my gosh, I'm sorry you went through that,' and they were all genuinely wanting to know what I went through at that time, and then also share their stories."

Six participants received feedback from others that using the #MeToo hashtag is "controversial." These women were told that "some things are private" and should not be posted online or that #MeToo postings may have unintended negative consequences. Participants noted that in some instances, these responses seemed to come from a place of genuine concern for the participant, though the participants tended to find these comments to be judgmental or misunderstanding their intent in posting. For example, Harper described a conversation she had with a friend about her #MeToo posts:

> [She said,] "Hey, I just want to make sure you know what this means." And I was like, "Yeah, I posted the hashtag because, like, 'Me too,' you know? Because I know what it means, and because I feel so strongly towards it." And she was like, "Okay, I just wanted to make sure. It's a very controversial, touchy subject." And I was like, "Thank you for asking and making sure. It does mean a lot to me..." At first, I thought she was trying to attack me. And I was like, "Is she trying to call me out… Or is she just making sure that I'm conscious of what I am posting?" [Because] people do blame victims and do attack women when they come out about their sexual assault… She ended up being very supportive.

Five women shared that they received "disbelief, insults, and threats" in response to their #MeToo posts. These responses were from individuals challenging participants' experiences, such as expressing disbelief that the participant was actually harassed or assaulted, or who insulted or threatened participants for speaking out. Faith shared some of the comments she received and her reaction to them:

> There are also people that say, "Are you serious? You really expect me to believe this?" Or [they] tell you that it's your fault… Normally somebody saying [things]

like, "You're stupid, you probably deserved it," you [respond] like, "Yeah, okay.

Whatever Twitter-head, just troll somewhere else." But when you're in a fragile

state, you look at that [comment] and you rethink everything. You're like, "Oh,

my gosh. Maybe I shouldn't have [posted] this. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I do

deserve all of this." And you start to revert back into your shell.

Ten women described their "concerns and reactions to response backlash" that they

anticipated or received on their #MeToo posts (see Table 6 for themes, operational definitions,

and representative quotes). Eight participants reported they were worried about backlash, with

some noting that they hesitated to even post #MeToo due to worries about receiving negative

responses from others. Harmony shared that she debated whether or not to make a #MeToo post,

saying that she asked herself, "Would this be received well? Would it be shit on? Would people

think I'm just looking for attention?" Many women did receive negative responses on their posts,

and some women (n=5) indicated that they either changed their social media settings or deleted

their social media posts in reaction to backlash. Nicole shared an example of both changing

privacy settings and deleting posts:

> I had to change some privacy settings on all of my accounts, because one of my
>
> perpetrators direct messaged me on Facebook and said, "I finally remembered
>
> your last name." I was like, "Uh oh!" So, I [changed posts to] private [on]
>
> Instagram, delete[d] my Twitter [account]… It was just like, "Nope, gotta go on
>
> lockdown for a little bit."

The #MeToo Movement's impact at the individual level of analysis

Participants discussed individual level impacts the #MeToo Movement had in their lives.

All 12 women reported experiencing positive impacts, and these accounts were coded into seven

themes: "individual empowerment" (n=11), "processing experiences" (n=11), "it helped me open up" (n=8), "my experiences were validated" (n=8), "it felt good" (n=6), "regained sense of control" (n=4), and "strengthened feminist values" (n=3). All negative impacts described by participants (n=11) fit into the theme "I felt an emotional toll." Refer to Table 7 for a complete list of individual level impact themes, operational definitions, and representative quotes.

Most participants (n=11) reported that the #MeToo Movement and posting a #MeToo tweet made them feel empowered, which was coded as "individual empowerment." Many women used the word "empowered" to describe this effect, going on to explain that the Movement gave them the strength and confidence to stand up, speak their truths, and take back the power after feeling powerless for so long. Allison described her experience of individual empowerment in this way:

> It was very empowering... I was not ready to talk about specific things yet, but I felt like I wanted to be known… I wanted to feel seen and recognized, and it made me feel like that, even though all I did was post those two words, initially. It really made me feel like it was going to matter to anyone. So, I would say it felt very empowering… It gave an "out" of the really painful stuff, for me at least, and it gave me an empowering moment… When I post online… I feel like I'm sharing things about myself, but I feel like I have some authority.

Most women (n=11) reported that the #MeToo Movement and posting a #MeToo Tweet helped them "process experiences" of sexual harassment and assault. These women discussed how they came to accept and integrate their experiences of sexual violence into their sense of self, redirecting blame away from themselves and towards their perpetrators, and finding new, more adaptive ways of coping. Maureen shared that,

> Being told by the #MeToo Movement that just because you're in a relationship
> with somebody doesn't mean that you owe them anything [e.g., sex], that was a
> big reason that I was able to not blame myself [anymore]… I had never been told
> that before.

Many participants (n=8) shared that #MeToo "helped me open up" about personal experiences of sexual violence. These women stated that the #MeToo Movement created a context in which they felt more able to open up about their personal experiences and share their thoughts and feelings about sexual violence, rather than feeling the need to stay silent to protect themselves. Cassidy discussed a newfound comfort in making an online disclosure about her sexual assault when she noticed the #MeToo hashtag was going viral: "I mean, immediately, I felt like I can be a little more open about it. When you see the collected movement starting with people like you, it shows you do have a voice."

Eight women found that their "experiences were validated" by the #MeToo Movement. These participants reporting that the reading #MeToo posts written by other social media users made them realize that some of their experiences of harassment or assault, which had previously been dismissed or minimized were "serious enough" to "actually matter" or "counted" as sexual assault. These women had experienced sexual assaults that did not fit the common rape narrative in society, which says that sexual assault only happens to certain kinds of women, and is usually perpetrated by a stranger in alleyways, at frat parties, or in empty public restrooms. Because their experiences did not fit this narrative, these women often did not label these experiences as assault until the #MeToo Movement challenged the narrow understanding of sexual assault in society. Beth explained how she experienced this sense of validation:

[At first], I didn't consider that I had a part in [the #MeToo Movement], even though I had previous experiences, [but] I didn't consider them to be harassment or anything. I thought they were just, you know, average experiences. But then, I started looking into it a little bit more and I realized that [sexual violence] was a little bit more broad [than I had realized]. And I've [experienced] those things, so it definitely connected me to the movement that way.

Half of the participants (n=6) said that the #MeToo Movement and writing a #MeToo post "felt good" and brought about other positive emotions, such as feeling "light," "joy," and "excited." Jasmine described the feelings that she experienced: "I was kind of proud of myself. I don't really post stuff necessarily that private. I was happy and calm. I wasn't sad or remorseful. I was just calm. I was happy."

Some participants (n=4) said that making a #MeToo post helped them to "regain a sense of control" over an experience that had left them feeling powerless. For Faith, writing a #MeToo post not only was a way to help others, but it was a way to help herself through that recovered sense of control: "When you can post something out there, you just feel more in control. You feel like you're taking control of your life back, because you're starting to help other people and you're starting to understand what you're going through."

Another theme that reflected positive individual level impacts of posting, described by three participants, focused on how the #MeToo Movement "strengthened their feminist values." These participants stated that the #MeToo Movement helped them to connect more deeply with feminist values and become more interested in women's issues in general. Harper shared that

I had never really thought of myself as part of what was going on, and why we were fighting the patriarchy, until that moment. I just felt so much more

connected with feminism, and with the Women' March and with the women and

the men of the Women's March or who have been part of the #MeToo Movement.

A majority of participants (n=11) also reported experiencing negative individual impacts, which fit into one theme: "I felt an emotional toll." These participants reported that at times reading or writing #MeToo posts, following the #MeToo Movement in the media, or interactions with misogynistic trolls took an emotional toll or caused feelings of burnout. However, four participants explicitly stated that the emotional toll was "worth it," that is it was worthwhile to endure the emotional toll and periods of burnout, because of the other positive impacts associated with the #MeToo Movement at individual, group, and societal levels. Katie provided an example of experiencing an emotional toll, while also feeling that it was worthwhile:

> It can certainly take an emotional toll, just because if you keep reading all of the stories out there, it's just never-ending, and it's very depressing. It can indirectly cause you to be more depressed than you might already be about your own situation… There are probably some negative feelings that could come from reading so many experiences, but it's still important. The importance behind the #MeToo Movement outweighs any kind of negative feelings you might have. I think it just causes more good than harm.

The #MeToo Movement's impact at group and societal levels of analysis

Participants discussed the impacts of the #MeToo Movement that reflect group and societal levels of analysis. Group level impacts affected sexual violence survivors and women more broadly, while societal level impacts affected larger sociocultural norms. All 12 participants discussed positive group or societal level impacts, and these were coded into eight themes: "group level empowerment" (n=11), "raise awareness of sexual violence" (n=11),

"opens discussion about sexual violence" (n=11), "changed the conversation about sexual violence" (n=10), "increased accountability for perpetrators" of sexual violence (n=9), "camaraderie among survivors" (n=8), "believing women" (n=6), and "other cultural changes" (n=8). All 12 participants also discussed negative group and societal level impacts, which were coded into two themes: "naysayers" (n=11) and "false accusations happen" (n=10). The "false accusations happen" theme was associated with one subtheme, namely "false accusations are rare" (n=6). See Table 8 for a complete list of themes with operational definitions and exemplar quotes.

The first of the group level impacts noted by participants (n=11) was that the #MeToo Movement resulted in "group level empowerment." These women reported that the #MeToo Movement has empowered women and survivors at the group level and/or has changed larger systems of power and oppression in our society. Elena observed that "Absolutely," the #MeToo Movement empowers not only the women and survivors who actively participated in it by making a #MeToo post; "Even those who are not [actively] a part of it can find solace in the fact that they too deserve the same rights."

Most women (n=11) also discussed that the #MeToo Movement "raises awareness of sexual violence" at the societal level. Quotations coded into this theme explored how #MeToo has raised awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence, expanded the definition of what behaviors constitute sexual violence, and spread the truth about common rape myths. As Faith stated, "I think [MeToo] opened a lot of people's eyes to how much [sexual violence] does happen… When this went viral and people saw this, everyone started to realize 'Oh, this happens a lot more than we know.' "

Similarly, a majority of participants (n=11) indicated that the #MeToo Movement "opens a discussion about sexual violence." These women said #MeToo has created a culture wherein there are more discussions about sexual violence at the public level, and women are more likely to speak up when they are harassed or assaulted. These women indicated that there used to be a "shame culture" around discussions of sexual violence, but now after the #MeToo Movement, these discussions have moved into the mainstream. Kelsey provided an example of this theme when she said,

> I think that [#MeToo] has trudged up complex, conflicting, hard types of conversations on how do you deal with perpetrators who make a lot of money, who are powerful, who are famous? Are they allowed to do their time and then come back and make millions of dollars?

Ten women noted that not only has the #MeToo Movement opened a cultural discussion about sexual violence, it has "changed the conversation about sexual violence" in this country at societal levels. Participants stated that #MeToo has changed the very nature of the public discussion about sexual violence, such as in discussions about cancel culture and celebrity culture. Allison noted that it has changed

> How we talk about women, how we talk about the workplace, how we talk about sexual violence… The thing that matters deeply and culturally is it is shifting the perspective that now it *is* normal to talk about these experiences, and it's normal to talk about women's experiences in a broader way.

Many participants (n=9) found that the #MeToo Movement has resulted in "increased accountability for perpetrators" of sexual violence. These participants discussed how men have not historically been held accountable for sexual violence and that male privilege has also

extended into the judicial system. Some women pointed to specific cases where perpetrators were acquitted or received light sentencing as examples of male privilege in the justice system (one participant noted that this privilege only extended to white men). These participants identified a need for increased accountability, and they discussed how #MeToo helps to hold men responsible for their actions through a perceived increase in legal and social punishments for perpetrators. Some participants also indicated that the #MeToo Movement prompts men to reflect on poor behavior towards women and choose to behave better. Maureen explained:

> I think it's made a lot of women wake up to unacceptable behavior in men that's usually just tossed under the rug of, "Oh, boys will be boys…" The #MeToo Movement has given a bigger sense of accountability for men to check in with themselves and be like, "Hey, am I being creepy?" It makes it a lot harder for men to be able to get away with things, without at least being called out for it somewhere.

Eight participants observed that the #MeToo Movement has fostered a sense of "camaraderie among survivors" of sexual violence. These women described this new sense of connection among survivors as they take collective action on an equal plain. The #MeToo Movement creates a community where survivors are stronger together. For example, Katie shared, "It really helped bring us all together to take a stand against any kind of harassment, sexual violence, any of that stuff, and [knowing] that you're not alone in doing it."

Half of the women in this study (n=6) indicated that the #MeToo Movement has fostered a greater sense of "believing women." These women observed a cultural shift in that women's stories about sexual violence are more likely to be heard and believed by others who may previously have doubted or challenged them. Some participants said that this does not mean that

all women or survivors are believed of course, but that they are less likely to be immediately dismissed out of hand. Nicole said that since the #MeToo hashtag went viral,

> I think with a lot of people, the first thing they want to do if someone tells them that they were assaulted is to believe them and to not try to investigate their story… The likelihood that that person is lying is so small, and it's not worth the damage that you're going to do to them [by] not believing them.

Eight women discussed other cultural changes that they have observed that did not fit neatly into one theme. These statements were collated into the theme "other cultural changes." These participants asserted that #MeToo has fostered other types of cultural change, such as in the workplace, in gender norms and the ways boys are socialized (e.g., hypermasculinity, attitudes towards sex), #MeToo's impact on minority communities, cancel culture, etc. Cassidy discussed a decrease in the cultural acceptability for sexist jokes or jokes about rape, and the creation of the Time's Up legal defense fund. Katie identified changes in the ways men in power (e.g., in the workplace) address and interact with women, and has perhaps decreased the occurrence of sexual harassment in these settings. Faith described the impact of pop artists releasing songs about women empowerment. Allison noticed an increase in female leads in movies and TV shows. Kelsey opined about famous cases, such as Harvey Weinstein, Matt Lauer, and Kobe Bryant. Nicole observed generational differences in the way police officers responded to reports of sexual assault. An exemplar quote from this category comes from Harper, who said:

> I believe that it has done a lot of good… I feel like it's just the next step to getting where we need to be with human rights and equal rights. It's a big step… [Now, there are] women [that] create their own companies where it's okay to fight out

against sexual harassment and it's good to speak up… It's helped. I feel that it has

helped create a better culture.

In terms of negative impacts at the group or societal level of analysis, participants'

quotations fell into two themes. The first of these themes was "naysayers," endorsed by 11

participants. This code was used for participants' quotes about #MeToo's detractors, who

continue to blame and disbelieve women's reports of sexual violence, who may hold

misogynistic views, or who feel that #MeToo has been needlessly divisive and harmful. These

women stated that while the MeToo Movement did not *cause* this naysaying attitude, it may have

made individuals who had already held these views become more vocal in their opposition to

feminism and women's rights movements. Cassidy said, "Changing people's opinions is really

hard to do, if at all possible. With any movement, you're going to get naysayers, and [you] just

have to keep pushing on." Katie, Faith, Kelsey, Harper, and Maureen all described specific

encounters with naysayers who expressed disbelief when they heard women's stories of sexual

violence. Others, like Elena, indicated that she had encountered individuals in person and online

who feel that women who report being sexually assaulted are "attention-seeking."

Participants (n=10) also referred to the occurrence of false accusations, wherein men are

wrongfully accused of sexual violence, noting that "false accusations happen." Again, these

women did not claim that the #MeToo Movement created the problem of false accusations,

however, they acknowledge that as the frequency of reported sexual assaults increases, so too has

the frequency of false reports. However, six of these women also specifically noted that "false

accusations are rare." These participants conveyed that while false accusations do occur, most

women who report experiences of sexual violence are being truthful, and that false accusations

are relatively uncommon. Beth provided an example for both codes relating to false accusations:

"I understand that there have been false accusations, and I think that telling the truth is the most important… And obviously, that can be hurtful for some people if they're [falsely accused], and I do think that's bad." However, she went on to say,

> I just don't think [false accusations are] as prevalent. I think a lot of women's stories mean so much more than just to be seen as "Oh, probably 20% of these are false. I might as well not even read through them because you'll never know which one is true." I think that's the wrong viewpoint to take.

Elena and Kelsey also speculated about the ratio of true versus false reports of sexual assault, with both predicting that false rates were even less common than Beth's estimate, asserting figures of 1% and 2% respectively.

The #MeToo Movement's impact on men

Women were asked to consider the impact of the #MeToo Movement on men. Their accounts reflect three perspectives: #MeToo "harms men" (n=5), #MeToo "doesn't harm men" (n=3), and #MeToo "helps men" (n=3). These themes, along with their operational definition and exemplar quotes, can be found in Table 9.

Nearly half of the women in the sample (n=5) indicated that the #MeToo Movement has harmed men as a group. These participants stated that #MeToo has negatively altered men's experiences in some instances, such as men who are now held accountable for behavior that they were taught as children or that they previously did not face consequences for. In some cases, innocent men may be harmed by false accusations. For example, Kelsey said,

> I would probably say, yes, it's harmed men, capital M-E-N, as a whole, because men have been socialized incorrectly. I think that the issue is systematic. So yes,

of course, it's affected all men, because there is a systematic socializing problem, that we socialized men that they should get whatever they want.

Three women believed that the #MeToo Movement has not harmed men as a group. These participants stated that while some individual men may have been harmed, Men as a group retain their privilege and power within society. Some pointed out that there have continued to be recent, high-profile legal cases, where perpetrators have managed to avoid time in prison. Nicole endorsed this view when she shared how she responds to people who believe #MeToo has harmed men: "Where is it? Where is the harm? I don't see any. I don't see people just left and right just getting thrown into jail. Are you? I don't see it."

Lastly, three women shared that they feel the #MeToo Movement helps men as well as women. These participants commented about the ways the #MeToo Movement helps and empowers men (e.g., discussing how #MeToo also empowers male survivors of sexual violence, or how #MeToo can improve relationships between men and women). Allison hesitated, acknowledging that this view may be unusual, but she went on to explain her perspective.

> I think it's empowering for everyone. I think it's empowering for men. I do, I think it's empowering for our entire culture… There is a lot that we accept as normal in our culture. In a lot of ways, men are also a victim of that because if men are raised as boys to believe that certain behaviors are fine and acceptable and part of being a man, they also are being taught a lie. They're being taught norms for behavior that are not okay. And then when they are punished for them and they don't understand why what they did was wrong, *that* is harmful. It doesn't mean it's not justified to punish the behavior. We have a bigger problem than just [saying] men [are] causing the problem. I think that's what people don't

like, that the problem is so much bigger than just saying, "Oh, men need to be

better." We need to be better to men also.

DISCUSSION

The #MeToo Movement created a collective uproar in the fall of 2017, that is still reverberating today as new voices take up the call. It is striking that a social movement whose stated purpose is to provide a platform for women's voices is largely absent from academic research. There has been invaluable introductory research into topics relevant to #MeToo, that include prevalence of sexual violence (e.g., Kearl et al., 2019), distribution patterns of #MeToo tweets (e.g., Deal et al., 2020; Manikonda et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2019), semantic and content analyses of #MeToo tweets (e.g., Clark-Parsons, 2021; Li et al., 2021), surveys of #MeToo's impact (e.g., Jaffe et al., 2021; Kende et al., 2020; Szekeres et al., 2020), general perspectives of #MeToo (Williamson et al., 2020), and even preliminary exploration of the views of sexual assault survivors on the #MeToo Movement (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Gueta et al., 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020). However, there have been no studies to date that directly ask women who participated in the #MeToo Movement what they hoped to accomplish with their posts, how the #MeToo Movement has touched their lives, and how they feel that it affected the social systems in which they are embedded.

The present study sought to better understand these women's motivations, experiences, and perspectives about the #MeToo Movement in their own words. This study constitutes the next step in examining fundamental components that relate to online disclosures of sexual assault in the context of the #MeToo Movement. In the present research, qualitative methods were chosen to consider the phenomena of interest to enable participants to speak directly to their own experiences, rather than forcing them to conform to the researcher's expectations and suppositions (Rappaport, 1990).

Present results suggest that the 12 women who participated in this research were all too typical in their experiences of sexual violence (Breiding et al., 2014). All of the women in the present study reported exposure to multiple forms of sexual harassment and assault, and with all but one woman indicating her first experience of sexual violence occurred when she was less than 18 years old. The participants in this study were also typical social media users in these digital times, with all 12 women reporting daily use of social media, and frequent views of political or social justice content on their newsfeeds or timelines (Jackson, 2018; Perrin & Anderson, 2019).

Content of #MeToo Posts

Similar to posts on Twitter analyzed in previous research (Deal et al., 2020; Manikonda et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2019), most women in the present study (83.3%) chose to post information about their sexual violence stories, either in non-specific or more explicit forms. In the present study, most women (75%) also discussed that it was important to them to offer support and validate other women who participated in the #MeToo Movement, with one-third of the sample (33.3%) describing the content of specific posts that underscored this goal. These present findings are consistent with tweets analyzed by Li (et al., 2021) and Manikonda (et al., 2018), which also identified a theme of sharing support and resources.

Another relatively common theme of posts' content identified by women (50%) in the present study was that they used the #MeToo hashtag to share general social justice commentary, such as discussing news and current events, similar to finding in three previous studies (Li et al., 2021; Manikonda et al., 2018; Xiong et al., 2019). Additionally, women (33.3%) in the present study discussed the use of the #MeToo hashtag to "call out" perpetrators of sexual violence and companies that engage in behaviors that promote rape culture. A common criticism of the online

social justice movements, and digital feminism in particular, is that these movements have taken "call-out culture" too far, leading to men accused of patriarchal and misogynistic behaviors being "canceled." Being "canceled" is rooted in Black vernacular and refers to the choice to "withdraw one's attention from someone or something whose values, (in)action, or speech are so offensive, one no longer wishes to grace them with their presence, time, and money" (Clark, 2020). Although there is anecdotal evidence that online "call-outs" have had a detrimental impact on men (Banet-Weiser, 2021), findings from the present study suggest the need for more research to examine the extent that digital forms of communication have helped to propagate a "cancel culture" and the degree to which potential benefits of #MeToo may outweigh negative effects that result from "call-outs" and "canceling."

The present study also examined participants' views of social media users' responses to their #MeToo posts. Most women (75%) in the present sample reported receiving comments from other users. Three main themes emerged in the coding of comment content, namely comments expressing support (50%), ambivalence associated with the perceived "controversial" nature of #MeToo (50%), and disbelief, insults, or threats from online trolls (41.7%). This mix of positive, ambivalent, and negative comments may reflect the differing views about the #MeToo Movement in the mainstream.

All of the participants in the present study who received feedback on their posts encountered some positive reactions from others, although most (72.7%) also encountered negative comments. Notably, a large proportion of women (83.3%) reported that they have directly experienced cyber-harassment at some point in their lives before the launch of the #MeToo Movement online. The proportion found in this study was higher than that found by Duggan's (2017) nationally representative sample, in which 53% of women had encountered

sexualized forms of digital harassment, such as the sending of unsolicited sexually explicit images. Perhaps it is unsurprising then that so many women in the sample (66.7%) spontaneously stated that worries about potential backlash and encounters with trolls weighed heavily on their minds as they decided whether or not to post #MeToo.

A majority of women (72.7%) reported that the responses they received in response to their #MeToo posts were overall more positive than negative, with only two women (18.2%) indicating they received more negative comments than positive responses. Five women (41.7%) noted that they changed account or privacy settings on their social media accounts due to comments or messages they received after posting. In the present study, findings suggest that some women (25%), after posting their #MeToo thoughts and experiences, deleted these posts either due to receiving backlash or having growing doubts about how their #MeToo posts could negatively impact them (e.g., if future employers saw them). More research is needed to understand the degree to which women choose to delete posts with hashtags like #MeToo that indicate sensitive, personal experiences in the form of a public disclosure.

Motivations and Impact of Posting with #MeToo

Another important contribution of the present study is an examination of women's accounts of motivations for participating in the #MeToo Movement. To date, there has only been one study that has considered women's motivations (Gueta et al., 2020). Present study findings build on results of a qualitative study by Keren Gueta and colleagues (2020) of 14 women in Israel suggests that women broadly are motivated to make online disclosures about their sexual assault experiences for individual (i.e., meaning-making) and prosocial (i.e., advocating for social change) reasons. In the present research, women discussed a total of eight motivations for sharing their sexual violence experiences as part of the #MeToo Movement.

A common motivation discussed by women (91.7%) in the present study was that they posted because they felt they had something important to express. Rape culture pervades the mainstream culture in the United States, in which sexual violence was the subject of jokes and ridicule and the victims of sexual assault were presumed to be attention-seeking and manipulative liars (Bohner et al., 2009). Several women explained that they rarely or never discussed their experiences of sexual harassment and assault before October 2017 when the #MeToo Movement went viral. Having to contain their pain, their sadness, and their rage for so long, these women felt that using the #MeToo hashtag was like breaking a dam open, as they finally felt that they had permission to express years of unexpressed thoughts and feelings. For example, Katie shared her attempts to open up before and after #MeToo:

> At the time, I never told anybody what happened exactly… I didn't think anyone would believe me. And when I did start talking about it, [my friends] were just like, "Oh, my God, you had sex?" They didn't even let me talk about it… I was trying to share because I just wanted to know if what I was going through was normal, like how I was feeling about it. But because it just got laughed off, [I felt] I shouldn't have said anything, because it made me feel even worse… It wasn't until I actually described everything in detail in my post, and then my mom, everyone, reached out to me [saying], "Oh my gosh, I didn't even know this happened."

The accessibility of social media and the simplicity of the movement's call to action (merely stating "Me too" was enough to participate) was a reason that two-thirds of women in the present study gave as a motivation to get involved in the movement. For example, participants Cassidy, Kelsey, and Allison all discussed how this ease of participation helped

them to feel safe and capable of sharing when they did not feel comfortable to reveal more details, or perhaps did not have the words yet to describe their experiences. Before #MeToo, these women discussed how they found themselves making comparisons to other survivors to see how their sexual assault "measured up." There was a sense that perhaps their own experiences "weren't as bad" as other survivors, leading to women staying silent to "keep the spotlight" on the "real" victims. #MeToo took away the need for the specificity that contributed to these comparisons. It no longer mattered if an assault was "better" or "worse" than someone else's; instead of women feeling pitted against each other on a hierarchy of misery, they were all folded into a collective where everyone's pain was valid and mattered and was worth speaking up about.

Participants (75%) described a sense of inspiration as they saw the #MeToo Movement blossoming around them, feeling inspired by the posts of other women, previously unknown to the participants, who had been through similar situations, or by friends and family members who encouraged them to open up and share their stories. Witnessing ordinary women open up about their experiences and being supported by others online had a ripple effect empowering those reading their posts to likewise speak up. As seen historically in peer-led groups for survivors of sexual abuse (Konya et al., 2020), membership in survivor groups increases understanding, emotional connectedness, and healing. Involvement in survivor groups increases an individual's ability to heal at the individual level while also creating positive change and healing for others at the group level. Through #MeToo, this process of group healing moved into the public sphere, where it impacted not only the survivors actively participating through posting, but also could affect others encountering these disclosures.

Aspects of this survivor group healing process were also evident in the present study in the prosocial motivation theme of validating others. For the women (75%) who discussed this topic, it was important to them to not only speak up for themselves, but also speak up for others, offering social support, recovery resources, and affirming other survivors. These women explained that after they felt the pain of invalidation, they wanted to be able to inspire and validate young women currently experiencing that pain and uncertainty. Faith compared these online affirmations to a similar offline occurrence: "The best girls you're gonna meet are the girls in the bars who are supporting other girls when they're crying in the bar bathrooms, and that's kind of what [MeToo] did for everyone." For Faith, the #MeToo Movement was about "hyping each other up." A third of women (33.3%) even stated that this sense of camaraderie was what they were seeking when they decided to participate, and 50% of participants discussed the kinds of supportive comments they received from other social media users themselves.

Two-thirds of women (66.7%) in the sample indicated that the inspiration also came from their local environment, namely their college campus. Class discussions, books, and articles read for class, attending campus anti-violence events (including a speaking engagement with Tarana Burke, founder of the MeToo Movement), and feeling surrounded by other like-minded and justice-oriented students and faculty seemed to mentally stimulate these women intellectually, getting them to think about sexual violence in new ways, and in an environment where it felt safe to ask questions and take a stand. This sense of having a secure base helped women in taking these discussions online as well. This finding is in line with previous research showing that feminist-oriented college courses are related to feminist identity development among college students (Bargad & Hyde, 1991).

The present study is among the first to describe woman's overall perceptions of the #MeToo Movement's social impact. Four studies to date have examined perceptions of the impact of participation in the #MeToo Movement (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Gueta et al., 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020), however, none of these studies' samples consisted exclusively of individuals who had participated in the #MeToo Movement. Most women in the present study (91.7%) described a sense of individual empowerment, which several also mentioned they had observed in other women they knew. Women also discussed that the #MeToo Movement helped them to open up (66.7%) and regain a sense of control over their narrative (33.3%). These reported impacts directly align with the stated purpose of the MeToo Movement (MeToo, n.d.) and the findings of previous studies (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Gueta et al., 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020). Writing a #MeToo post recalled to mind some of the worst experiences these women have encountered, and previous research has noted that a potential downside to #MeToo participation is being triggered (Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020) and an "undermined sense of security" in recalling victimization experiences (Gueta et al., 2020). It was therefore surprising that half of the participants (50%) said that the #MeToo Movement also brought about positive feelings, which can perhaps be explained by the various other helpful effects women reported experiencing. Future research could explore these positive emotions in more depth to better understand their source and related variables.

Similarly, results suggest that most women (91.7%) in the present study felt that witnessed empowerment for sexual assault survivors and women more broadly was an important aspect of the #MeToo movement. Participants discussed having a sense of connection to others, and a sense of camaraderie (67.7%) that they were in this fight against sexual violence and the

patriarchy together. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests a greater connection and support for survivors may be an impact of #MeToo participation (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020). Present study findings suggest that women saw empowerment manifested through a larger discussion in society about sexual violence where women's voices were particularly valued. For example, Maureen describes #MeToo as a new space for women in this way:

> I think that the #MeToo Movement encourages, but doesn't pressure women to step forward and speak out about situations that they've been in…This study even is something that wouldn't be a thing without the #MeToo Movement. So yeah, it gives women the opportunity to speak, and I think that any platform that gives women the right to speak is so important.

Others (83.3%) shared that #MeToo has changed the very nature of these discussions by challenging rape myths and taking women's reports of sexual violence more seriously. In fact, several women (50%) also noted that #MeToo has fostered a greater belief in women's accounts of sexual violence. All participants (100%) in the present study observed various ways that #MeToo is changing the culture around sexual violence. These empowering group-level effects have made a positive difference in many women's lives.

The call to action in Alyssa Milano's post on Twitter was intended to send a message to those people who believed that sexual violence was uncommon, and present research findings suggest participants (91.7%) feel that the #MeToo Movement did indeed help raise awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence. Present study findings are in line with previous research in this regard (Callender & Klassen, 2020; Strauss Swanson & Szymanski, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020). Consistent with previous research (Gueta et al., 2020) participants' accounts suggest that

reading and writing #MeToo posts helped them process their sexual violence experiences in ways that may have contributed to their healing. Several participants (67.7%) discussed how reading other women's stories helped them recontextualize some of their own experiences that were less "clear cut" sexual assaults, such as unwanted consensual sex. For these women, the #MeToo Movement helped them to realize that while their experiences might not meet legal definitions of sexual assault, what happened to them was not "okay." In that way, #MeToo validated their experiences of assault. This finding offers support for a study by Jaffe et al, 2021 that suggests that the #MeToo Movement expanded the mainstream narrative of rape to include more than violent sexual assaults perpetrated by strangers in alleyways.

Of course, not all of the effects women have discussed about their participation in the #MeToo movement were positive. At the individual level, most women (91.7%) reported that they have at times felt an emotional toll; Strauss Swanson and Szymanski (2020) similarly found burnout to be a challenge faced by the 16 anti-sexual violence who participated in their study. In the present study, this emotional toll most commonly appeared to arise when women encountered individuals who held sexist views and who felt the #MeToo Movement has gone too far. One participant, Cassidy described these individuals as "naysayers." While there has always been opposition to women's rights movements, many participants (91.7%) felt that naysayers have become more vocal in their opposition to the #MeToo Movement, and engaging in debate with these individuals can be mentally and emotionally draining. Participants found that men who continued to believe rape myths after #MeToo went viral were no longer merely ignorant of the prevalence and deleterious effects of sexual violence, but "willfully ignorant."

A common critique leveled against the #MeToo Movement is that it may increase false or historical accusations (Williamson et al., 2020), which are known to be a rare occurrence (Dinos

et al., 2015; Kelly et al., 2005). Of the 83.3% of women in the present study who discussed the reality that false accusations do happen, most (60%) spontaneously added that the number of veracious reports of sexual assault generally far outnumber (and outweigh) the false reports. These discussions of false accusations fit into a larger question facing society and that was posed to participants in the present study, namely, "How does the #MeToo Movement impact men?" A total of 83.3% in the present study weighed in on this question. Most women (60%) acknowledged that they are aware of individual men who have been harmed, or they recognize ways that the status of Men as a group could be "harmed" by the empowerment of women. These women may ascribe to the idea that empowerment is a zero-sum game; for Women as a group to be more empowered, Men as a group must be disempowered. Other women (30%) noted that although some individual men may be harmed by the #MeToo Movement through loss of power or status following accusations of perpetrating sexual violence, Men as a group have not lost their privilege in the patriarchal society of the United States. These women point to the fact that sexual violence does still occur, and many perpetrators are not held responsible for their actions as evidence that the privilege of Men remains intact.

Perhaps among the most intriguing responses that women (30%) in the study voiced were the ways that they felt that the #MeToo Movement has actually helped men. This perspective involved acknowledgement of male sexual assault survivors and the recognition that if #MeToo is about empowering survivors, these men should be included. At a deeper level, this viewpoint appreciates that toxic masculinity, rape culture, and the patriarchy not only harm women and gender minorities, but limit and at times punishes men as well. In the case of male sexual assault survivors, rape culture and rigid gender roles deny men the opportunity to be vulnerable and emotional, as these would render them "weak." Perhaps Allison said it best:

If you asked me, you are empowering men if you're helping them learn what is appropriate. [MeToo] is reshaping what is appropriate so that men and women can have healthy relationships. I'm 100% of the mindset that feminism is for everyone and that the more we strive for equity among the sexes (which includes how we're treating one another and how we're being treated), then there is happiness. There is more happiness and productivity and success for everyone. If we are changing the culture, we're going to be changing from the bottom up, you know. Boys are going to be raised in a different way, and that is positive. That is helpful to men. That helps men in every capacity and area in life. That helps our society in every area of life. So, if the men it's hurting are men that have done harm or want to continue doing harm, then I'm okay with that. But for the most part, I think that [being concerned that #MeToo is harming men] is a short-sighted view. Looking long term, if there's going to be major improvements made by men becoming more educated and accountable for their actions, there's nothing bad that can happen there.

Allison's statement reflects a main finding of the present study regarding the #MeToo Movement's impact on men: #MeToo is a call for increased accountability for perpetrators, and in a way, all of the bystanders who witness sexual harassment and remain silent. This finding is consistent with women's call for accountability for sexual violence found in previous studies (Callender & Klassen, 2020). Historically, the rape culture prevalent in the United States has propagated sexual violence (Bohner et al., 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 2017); repeat perpetrators are common and victims often do not see justice for the harm done to them (Coates & Wade,

2004; Dinos et al., 2015; Patterson et al., 2009). In calling for greater accountability, #MeToo represents a demand for justice.

Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although the present study examines important and previously unexplored issues related to women's participation in the #MeToo Movement, study limitations need to be considered. The present study consists of a small sample of women who were sexual violence survivors and who posted about their experiences with the #MeToo hashtag on social media. It is unclear how well these women's views reflect the larger community of sexual assault survivors and #MeToo advocates. These women self-selected to participate in the present study and may be more motivated to share their views. The qualitative, exploratory nature of the present study helped to dictate the size of the present sample and provided useful insights into participants' views of women's motivations to make a #MeToo post and their perception of #MeToo's impacts on women and survivors. Larger and more diverse future studies are needed to extend present findings, particularly through the inclusion of black women, the demographic that Tarana Burke originally envisioned the MeToo Movement as helping. It will also be critical for future research to examine the perspectives and experiences of sexual and gender minorities, as these individuals face higher rates of sexual violence than cisgender heterosexual women (Flores et al., 2020). Future research could also consider the differences in the manifestation of the #MeToo Movement across different social media platforms, considering the characteristics of individuals who are attracted to different types of social network platforms and logistics of different platforms, such as the common medium of posts (e.g., text, images, audio, video, etc.) and character limitations on text posts.

This study was also limited due to its exclusive reliance on self-report. Although an analysis of participants' #MeToo posts was initially proposed for the present study, several unforeseen circumstances made this aspect of the research untenable. A majority of women in the present study either changed their account privacy settings or deleted their #MeToo posts outright so the actual content of #MeToo posts for the sample could not be collected. Future research could better anticipate these types of issues when considering the collection of participant data from multiple sources.

Findings in the present study reflect a specific point in time, with data collection exclusively occurring during the global Covid-19 pandemic that dramatically impacted the lives of the majority of the United States population. It was also a time of divisive political turmoil in the United States, being an election year in a particularly contentious social and political environment. It should be noted that the insurrection of January 6, 2021 on the Capital Building in Washington DC occurred during data collection. These major sociopolitical events may have impacted who was willing to participate in research at the time (indeed, one woman screened and deemed eligible for this study decided not to participate due to feeling a current lack of mental and emotional energy as a result of the pandemic), and it may have affected the topics on the minds of the women who did participate. For example, all participants but one (91.7%) discussed former President Donald Trump at some point in their interview, in particular referencing the Access Hollywood tape where he discussed "grabbing women by the pussy," allegations of sexual assault made against him, and disrespectful and sexist comments that he has made about women. The sociopolitical context is particularly relevant to research done on social movements of any significance. As research has shown (Bohner et al., 2009; Burt, 1980; Johnson & Johnson, 2017), the United States is dominated by rape culture, so there is unlikely to be a "neutral" time

to collect data on sexual violence against women in the United States. However, it must be noted that it is unclear how the nature of current local, national, and world events may have shaped the views of study participants about their perspectives of the #MeToo Movement.

The #MeToo Movement is a grassroots, social media driven platform that can enable sexual violence survivors to make their voices heard in an outcry for systemic social and institutional change. It is critical to include these women's voices in research into this phenomenon. The present study created a space for women who participated in the #MeToo Movement to share their perspectives on their motivations and describe the impact, both positive and negative, that they feel that #MeToo has had in their lives and in society more generally. The #MeToo Movement is exemplary of fundamental values of community psychology, such as the empowerment of marginalized groups and promoting positive systems-level change. Future research would do well to examine links between active and passive #MeToo participation, as well as links to individual recovery, wellness, stress-related growth, empowerment, or meaning-making to better understand positive changes people who participate in this social movement may experience. Research would benefit from studies that examine both similarities and differences in women's experiences disclosing their sexual violence history online in a public (e.g., with the #MeToo Movement) and discussing these experiences in person with trusted others (e.g., romantic partner, family, friends) or in a therapeutic context (e.g., individual, couples, group, psychotherapy). The present research represents an important first step in the systematic study of digitally mediated social advocacy to enable meaningful social dialogue and facilitate positive social change.

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APPENDIX A. TABLES

Table 1.

Sample Demographics

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Relationship Status	Education	Current Student Status	Current Employment	Household Annual Income	Hometown
Cassidy	22	White	Single	HS Graduate	Undergrad	Full Time	$20,000-39,999	Micropolitan
Kelsey	24	White	Single	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Student	Not Employed	<$19,999	Rural
Katie	35	White	Domestic Partnership	Vocational Degree	Undergrad	Full Time	$40,000-59,999	Metropolitan
Harper	20	White	Single	HS Graduate	Undergrad	Not Employed	Unsure	Micropolitan
Elena	22	White/Hispanic	Single	Bachelor's Degree	N/A	Not Employed	>$170,000	Metropolitan
Faith	20	White	Single	HS Graduate	Undergrad	Part Time	$80,000-99,999	Micropolitan
Harmony	27	White	Married	HS Graduate	Undergrad	Part Time	<$19,999	Rural
Beth	20	White	Single	HS Graduate	Undergrad	Part Time	>$170,000	Rural
Maureen	21	White	Single	HS Graduate	Undergrad	Part Time	<$19,999	Micropolitan
Jasmine	18	Black	Single	HS Graduate	Undergrad	Not Employed	$20,000-39,999	Micropolitan
Allison	32	White	Domestic Partnership	Master's Degree	Doctoral Student	Not Employed	$60,000-79,999	Rural
Nicole	20	Biracial	Single	HS Graduate	Undergrad	Not Employed	$60,000-79,999	Micropolitan

Table 2.

Social Media (SM) Habits

Participant Pseudonym	Hours/Day on (SM)	Change in time on SM due to COVID	Preferred SM for Social Justice	Frequency Sees SJ Content on SM	SM Platforms for #MeToo Posts	Deleted their #MeToo Post
Cassidy	4	Did not report	Twitter	Almost every time on SM	Twitter	No
Kelsey	3	Did not report	Twitter	Almost every time on SM	Twitter	No
Katie	1-2	Has decreased	Facebook	Almost every time on SM	Facebook & Twitter	No
Harper	9	Has increased	Pinterest	Almost every time on SM	Instagram & Twitter	Yes (from Instagram)
Elena	3+	Did not report	TikTok	Almost every time on SM	Instagram, TikTok, & Twitter	Yes (from Twitter)
Faith	9-10	Has increased	Tumblr & Facebook	Almost every time on SM	Tumblr & Twitter	Yes (from Twitter)
Harmony	5-8	Did not report	Facebook	Almost every time on SM	Facebook	No
Beth	1-2	Did not report	Instagram	Half the time on SM	Twitter	
Maureen	1	Did not report	Instagram	Almost every time on SM	Instagram & Twitter	No
Jasmine	1	Has decreased	Instagram	Half the time on SM	Instagram	No
Allison	1-2	Has decreased	Facebook	Almost every time on SM	Facebook & Twitter	No
Nicole	5-6	Did not report	TikTok	Almost every time on SM	Twitter	Yes (deleted Twitter account)

Table 3.

Personal Experiences of Sexual Violence (SV)

Participant Pseudonym	Current Age	Age SV was First Experienced	Age Worst SV was Experienced	How Many Times Experienced SV	Isolated SV Events	Persistent Pattern of SV	Types (N) of SV Experienced	Reporting Experiences
Cassidy	22	14	16-17	A few times	Yes	No	7/10	Reported to school
Kelsey	24	19	19	A few times	Yes	No	7/10	Court proceedings
Katie	35	16	16	More times than I can count	Yes	No	5/10	Reported to police
Harper	20	14	14	More times than I can count	Yes	Yes	7/10	Reported to work
Elena	22	7	15	More times than I can count	Yes	Yes	9/10	Court proceedings
Faith	20	2	16	More times than I can count	Yes	Yes	7/10	Court proceedings
Harmony	27	10	10	More times than I can count	No	Yes	7/10	Not reported
Beth	20	14	19	A few times	Yes	No	6/10	Not reported
Maureen	21	15	20	More times than I can count	Yes	Yes	9/10	Reported to school & work
Jasmine	18	10	10	One time	No	Yes	7/10	Reported to school
Allison	32	11-12	26-28	More times than I can count	Yes	Yes	9/10	Not reported
Nicole	20	12-13	16-17	More times than I can count	Yes	Yes	6/10	Reported to school

Table 4.

Women's Motivations to Make a #MeToo Post: Themes, Operational Definitions, and Representative Quotes

Theme	Definition	*N*	Representative quote
	Made the #MeToo post for myself (*n*=11)		
To express	Participants wanted to express their inner thoughts, feelings, and opinions about sexual violence or their experience.	11	"[MeToo] made me realize the importance of speaking out, even if it isn't necessarily about my sexual assault [directly]. My voice still matters. – Maureen
Inspired by others	Participants were inspired by other social media posts and/or were directly encouraged by people they knew in their life.	9	"I was so excited that it was happening. I'm getting chills right now talking about it actually. Seeing [the movement] come to life and seeing all these women [posting]. It was so miraculous, and I wanted to be a part of that." – Allison
It's easy to post	The simplicity of the hashtag made disclosure easy and accessible.	8	"With how simple the hashtag is, it's easy to add it [on posts]. You know, it's very inclusive" – Harper
To challenge my shame	Posting the MeToo hashtag was a way to challenge or let go of the sense of shame they had been carrying ever since they were assaulted.	5	"I don't have a reason to be [ashamed]. I would never be ashamed if there was any other thing like I got robbed, or someone burnt my house. I would never be ashamed to say those things. So why would I be for this?" – Nicole
	Made the #MeToo post for other people (*n*=12)		
To validate others	Participants wanted to offer comfort, support, and inspiration to other survivors.	9	"I posted it because I wanted people to know they weren't alone. I want people to know that there's other people out there just like them who had similar situations. That was the icing on the cake to posting, that it can help other people as well." – Katie
College discussions	Women had discussions in classes or at campus events that motivated them to use the MeToo hashtag	8	"I took a women's studies course and we talked about the MeToo Movement, and it just got my gears going." – Cassidy
It's bigger than myself	Using the MeToo hashtag made participants a part of something "bigger than myself."	5	"I want to speak to something bigger than myself, and [posting] is a way that I can do that." – Kelsey
Camaraderie	Posting #MeToo was a way of coming into a community with other survivors.	4	"I would be judgment-free from anyone in that community of people because it's a lot of people uplifting each other and being able to go through the same thing. You're not alone anymore." – Faith

Table 5.

Content of #MeToo Posts: Themes, Operational Definitions, and Representative Quotes

Theme	Definition	*N*	Representative quote
		Level of self-disclosure (*n*=11)	
MeToo as acknowledgement	Participants' posts that only contained the words "Me Too" without any further elaboration.	5	"[MeToo meant] a spectrum of things. I wasn't necessarily coming out that I had been raped. It could have been saying I was harassed on the street. So, I [just] retweeted '#MeToo.' I felt more comfortable doing it [that way]." – Cassidy
General descriptions	Participants' posts that included vague information about their experiences of sexual violence but did not contain any specific details of these events.	5	"I posted, but not [with] really any detail, just saying that "Yes, it's happened to me too." – Harmony
My personal story	Participants' posts that described their experiences of harassment or assault in detail	6	"Before actually hitting the 'Post' button, I typed [my story] up in a Word document, to be honest, because I just wanted to make sure that everything was accurate, and everything was exactly how I wanted it to be and was very truthful to happened." – Katie
		Statements directed towards specific others (*n*=7)	
Statements of support	Participants' posts expressing support for other survivors	4	"I've just posted supporting people. I supported people before I even remembered my own situation." – Jasmine
Calling out	Participants' posts addressing specific others that perpetuate gender inequality or minimize the severity or prevalence of sexual violence	4	"There was another [post] where I was just publicizing [the] proper use of it because Dominos had tweeted, they used the hashtag MeToo to say like 'Who wants pizza? Hashtag MeToo.' That's very problematic." – Elena
		General commentary (*n*=8)	
Social justice commentary	Participants' posts about general social justice related issues, events, statistics, or information.	6	"[My posts] were more general, like stating the importance of [the] #MeToo [Movement]. So, being like, 'Yeah, this is really important, and I'm glad that this is happening.' " – Maureen
Tarana Burke	Participants' posts about Tarana Burke's visit to campus	3	"The woman that had founded the MeToo Movement came to [campus] and talked. She interacted with me on Twitter really quick. I [posted] 'Thanks for coming' and she [responded]." – Nicole

Table 6.

Responses to #MeToo Posts and Reactions to Backlash: Themes, Operational Definitions, and Representative Quotes

Theme	Definition	*N*	Representative quote
	Content of responses to posts (*n*=8)		
Offer or receive support	Responses expressing support and/or seeking mutual support.	6	"Even the small group of people that would see my posts, a couple people would check in based off the posts and be like, 'Hey, so, you good chief?' and that helped immensely" – Maureen
Posting is controversial	Feedback that posting MeToo may have unintended negative consequences.	6	"I had been told by men 'Don't fight on the internet. Don't be too polarizing. It doesn't look good to fight on [social media].' " – Kelsey
Disbelief, insults, and threats	Negative responses expressing disbelief that the participant was harassed or assaulted, or that insulted or threatened participants for speaking out.	5	"[He commented] saying that I was a liar, that I had raped him, that I was a slut for leaving him. All sorts of stuff." – Harper
	Concerns and reactions to response backlash (*n*=10)		
Worried about backlash	Participants who hesitated to post #MeToo due to worries about receiving negative responses from others	8	"I expected to get a lot of backlash. Because I do have a lot of friends that are like, 'There's just some stuff you don't talk about in a public way.' " – Katie
Changed or deleted posts	Participants changed their social media privacy settings, blocked users, deleted inflammatory comments/messages that they received, or deleted their #MeToo post after receiving negative comments	5	"Oh my God, I had to change my profiles at times to use my partner's picture, so I appear like a boy, and then I find that I get so much less hate when I post things. It's insane." – Elena

Table 7.

Impact at the Individual Level of Analysis: Themes, Operational Definitions, and Representative Quotes

Theme	Definition	*N*	Representative quote
		Positive impacts (*n*=12)	
Individual empowerment	The MeToo Movement made participants feel empowered	11	"I didn't think I would feel any different after posting, but it did make me feel empowered…The situation was years ago, but it gave me the power over that situation in a mental way… It gave me the power instead of letting them have all the power. I think that's probably the biggest thing I took away from it. And that was helpful. " – Katie
Processing experiences	The MeToo Movement played a role in participants' processing personal experiences of sexual violence	11	"When I can't figure out what's going on in my brain, I write everything down. I just type until I don't have any words left in my brain, and just kind of reading it helps me see, 'This is where I'm at.' " – Faith
It helped me open up	The MeToo Movement created a context in which participants felt more able to open up about their personal experiences	8	"I think that [MeToo] definitely was the first stepping stone of, 'Oh, I can talk about this publicly.' Clicking on the hashtag and [reading #MeToo posts], it… made me feel like I could be open about it." – Kelsey
My experiences were validated	The MeToo Movement made participants realize that their experiences "counted" as sexual violence	8	"It was part of seeing the stories that sounded like me when I was in high school. I [was] like, 'Wait, that counts?' It connected [with me] because I [realized] I would consider that [to count] if it happened to any other person… I need to see mine the same way." – Nicole
It felt good	Participating in the MeToo Movement felt good or brought about other positive emotions	6	"It feels really good… that I could help other people who might not necessarily know about the movement and the resources available to them. It felt like a big sister kind of thing." – Cassidy
Regained sense of control	The MeToo Movement helped participants regain a sense of control over their experiences	4	"When I post online about MeToo… I feel very much in control of the narrative in a way I like. I can tailor my posting, and I can really perfect it in my mind." – Allison
Strengthened feminist values	The MeToo Movement helped participants to connect more deeply with feminist values and become more interested in women's issues.	3	"Because even if you're not [a sexual assault survivor], me too. Me too, I'm also a female. Me too, I'm also struggling with feminist [and] with female issues. I, too, am an ally." – Elena
		Negative impacts (*n*=11)	
I felt an emotional toll	At times, aspects of the MeToo Movement took an emotional toll or caused emotional burn-out	11	"The emotional toll I have is [from] seeing some of those comments from some of the bigger post [that are] like, 'Really?! What did happen?' and stuff like that. I just got so frustrated looking at all of them, so I would just stop [reading posts]." – Beth
The emotional toll was worth it	Participants who said that the benefits of the MeToo Movement are worth feeling burned out.	4	"It does get exhausting, especially with everything that's going on right now. But I feel like it feeds a fire within me to continue." – Harper

Table 8.

Impact at the Group and Societal Levels of Analysis: Themes, Operational Definitions, and Representative Quotes

Theme	Definition	*N*	Representative quote
			Positive impacts (*n*=12)
Group level empowerment	The MeToo Movement has empowered women or survivors at the group level or has affected systems of power/oppression in society.	11	"It gives the power back to the person that was affected by any kind of sexual violence. I think it's an important movement for women especially. Because we've just historically have been crapped on… I just think the primary thing of the movement is to feel empowered to stand up against the person that has done these horrible things to you. Empowerment is what the movement, I think, represents the most." – Katie
Raises awareness of sexual violence	MeToo has raised awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence and expanded the common narratives of sexual violence.	11	"[MeToo] and the Women's March [are] more of a team of feminists going to fight and explain and just bring awareness to this enormous problem." – Harper
Opens discussion about sexual violence	Because of MeToo, there are more discussions about sexual violence at the public level and women are more likely to speak up.	11	"I personally have seen a change in the openness of some people talking about [feminism and sexual violence]." – Harmony
Changed the conversation about sexual violence	MeToo has changed the nature of the public conversation about sexual violence.	10	"I think it's brought on interesting conversations about cancel culture, which I view as 'Does this person who did something very bad deserve to make millions and millions of dollars a year,' sort of thing. There are conversations about cancel culture and celebrity culture that have their complexities that go hand-in-hand with the #MeToo Movement." – Kelsey
Increased accountability for perpetrators	MeToo helps to hold men accountable for sexual misconduct and prompts men to reflect on poor behavior towards women.	9	"At some point, you have to start holding it accountable, whether that's legally or socially… Somebody may not get legally prosecuted, but there's still social fallout if you treat people like shit and there should be…The #MeToo Movement is kind of making up for places that the legal system isn't covering yet. And people need to be held accountable for their actions, whether or not, they were fully aware of the harm they were causing." – Allison

Camaraderie among survivors	MeToo has fostered camaraderie and collective action among women, who validate and support each other.	8	"It's definitely a way to connect and [to] not feel alone," Beth shared. "I feel like that's such a big thing among so many different issues is not feeling alone in it. Especially [with] the MeToo [Movement] you have so many different women to look up to and feel strong with." – Beth
Believing women	Because of MeToo, women's stories about sexual violence are more likely to be heard and believed.	6	"I think in most circles, it has fostered a greater sense of believing women because they see this is happening to so many women in the hashtag." – Cassidy
Other cultural changes	MeToo has fostered other types of cultural change such as in the workplace, gender norms, impact on minorities, pop culture, etc.	8	"It changed the way that sexual assault is approached. Some of my older family members were talking about how they even went to the police [about their sexual assault], and the police [said], 'Well, what were you wearing? Why were you letting them in your house? Why is there beer on the table?' MeToo was a call-out that we're not going to accept that anymore." – Nicole

Negative impacts (*n*=12)

Naysayers	MeToo's detractors blame and disbelieve women's reports of sexual violence and may feel that MeToo has been needlessly divisive.	11	"When women come out saying, 'I was raped,' or, 'Somebody assaulted me,' it had a very negative connotation. I didn't realize this until I went through it. A lot of people say, 'Well, are you sure? He's such a good kid.' When people say rape culture isn't real, I'm like, "No, trust me, it is. I've been through it." – Faith
False accusations happen	Quotations about the occurrence of false accusations, wherein men are wrongfully accused of committing sexual violence.	10	"I have a friend who went to jail because his girlfriend at the time accused him of rape. He was innocent, and that entire process [was] terrible for him." – Maureen
False accusations are rare	Quotations about the low frequency of false accusations occur and the veracity of most women's reports of sexual violence.	6	"Imagine if we focused on the percentage of women that were being affected [by sexual assault]. It's one in every four, at least last I checked. And we're talking about less than one in every 100 men tare [falsely] accused. It isn't, those, their stories are important, but are they more important than all of the victims whose lives have been ruined?" – Elena

Table 9.

The MeToo Movement's Impact on Men: Themes, Operational Definitions, and Representative Quotes

Theme	Definition	N	Representative quote
Harms Men	Quotes about how MeToo has negatively altered men's experiences, such as by false accusations.	5	"I haven't a doubt that innocent people's lives have been ruined… It is very unfortunate…This movement is really changing the game and causing people to cancel others that they believe are perpetrators." - Elena
Doesn't harm men	Quotes about how the MeToo Movement has not caused harm to innocent men and/or it has not harmed men at the group level of analysis.	3	"I don't believe it's necessarily harmed Men. I think there are individuals who were harmed by it, sure. But I don't believe overall, it had this negative impact on men where now they're automatically not believed because there are still plenty of cases where a guilty person does walk free. So, you can't necessarily say that it's negatively impacted all men." - Faith
Helps men	Quotes about the ways the MeToo Movement helps and empowers men.	3	"Men have been part of the #MeToo Movement [too], you know. It's not just women. Anyone can be part of #MeToo who has experienced [sexual violence]." - Harper

APPENDIX B. FIGURES

Figure 1.

Alyssa Milano's #MeToo Tweet

Note: Alyssa Milano's tweet launched the #MeToo Movement in 2017 and resulted in widespread mainstream attention being paid to the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment (Milano, 2017).

APPENDIX C. RECRUITMENT FLYER

Participants Needed for a research study on the experiences of women who posted online with the #MeToo Movement.

Participants are asked to share their views on sexism, feminism, and the #MeToo movement in a confidential, one-hour interview.

Each participant in the study will receive a $20 Amazon gift card.

In order to be eligible for the study, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old.

- Identify as a woman. Trans women are eligible to participate.

- Have experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault.

  o You will be asked to describe the general nature of these experiences during the interview, but you will NOT be asked to describe these experiences in detail.

- Have tweeted using the #MeToo hashtag.

Questions? Interested in participating?

Contact Jessica Hartl Majcher, the principal investigator, at jhartlm@bgsu.edu

APPENDIX D. PHONE PRE-SCREEN SCRIPT

Hi, is this [name]? This is Jessica Hartl Majcher. I'm a clinical psychology doctoral student at BGSU. I am calling because you expressed interest in learning more about the #MeToo Interview Study, which focuses on the experiences of survivors of sexual harassment or assault who have participated in the #MeToo movement. If you are still interested in learning more, do you have about 5 to 10 minutes to talk about the study and answer some questions for me? *(If not: Is there a better time I can call back?)*

Okay, let me start by describing the study for you. Just as a reminder about the purpose of the study, we are interested in learning more about your perspectives of the #MeToo movement as someone who has directly experienced sexual harassment or assault.

If you decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete an interview that will last about 60 minutes. As a token of appreciation for participating in the study, you would receive a $20 Amazon gift card. In this study, I would be asking you to share how the #MeToo movement has affected you and our society. I will NOT ask you to discuss your experience of harassment or assault in detail, however I will ask some general questions about your experiences, such as when the incident occurred, the approximate number of incidents you have experienced, etc. Although we will not talk through the specifics of your experiences, this discussion may bring up uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, or memories for you. Most of our discussion will focus on your experiences sharing with others what happened to you, both online and offline. Talking about these things can be helpful and empowering, too.

While I analyze the results of this study, I may contact you by telephone to ask clarifying questions about the topics you discuss during the interview. You will have the choice whether or not you are willing to take part in this phone call.

I will also look at your Twitter account to see some example tweets and collect metadata, such as the total number of tweets or likes you have. I will keep your Twitter handle private, and I will not link it to your real identity in any way or include it in any publication or presentation of this study. I will paraphrase your posts to protect your identity. I also will not directly quote any of your Twitter posts in any publications or presentations. I may include quotes of things you say during the interview, but these will be completely removed from your identifying information.

After hearing more about the study, do you have any questions about it or what would be involved?

Does this sound like something you would be interested in participating in?

- *If NO:* Okay. Thank you for your time today. Goodbye.

- *If YES:* Okay, great! I just have a few questions for you to determine whether or not you are eligible to participate.

Eligibility Questions

1. What is your full name?

2. How old are you?

3. How would you describe your gender identity?

4. What town and state do you live in?

5. How did you hear about this study?

6. Have you tweeted using the MeToo hashtag?

7. What is your Twitter handle?

8. Are you a student? Undergraduate Student, Graduate Student, Not a student?

9. Have you experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault, or gender-based violence?

Eligible to participate: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If eligible to participate: Great, thank you for sharing that information. You are eligible to participate in the study. I will ask a few more questions so we can schedule a time and place to conduct the interview.

10. What is the best phone number to reach you?_____

11. What is your email address?_____

12. Are you able and willing to travel to Bowling Green State University to complete the interview?

    a. *(If not):* Is there another location more convenient?

        i. *(If yes):* Where would be convenient for you? _____

        ii. *(If not):* Do you have access to a computer with internet, a microphone, and a webcam?

If not eligible: Thank you for sharing that information. Unfortunately, you do not meet the eligibility requirements to participate in this study. Thank you for your interest and your time today! I hope you have a nice day.

APPENDIX E. CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent for the #MeToo Interview Study

Summary

The goal of the #MeToo Interview Study is to learn what it was like to take part in the #MeToo movement online. You are eligible to participate in this research if you have experienced sexual harassment or assault, and you posted online using the hashtag MeToo. You must identify as a woman to be eligible to participate. You must be at least 18 years old to take part in the research.

If you take part in this study, you will meet with the researcher and answer interview questions. The researcher will also look at the #MeToo content that you have posted on Twitter. The interview will take about 60 minutes of your time. You will receive a $20 Amazon gift card for completing the interview. This interview will be audio recorded. You will be asked about what it was like for you to post during the #MeToo era. You will also be asked how the #MeToo movement has affected you and how you think it has affected our society. There will be a few questions about the general nature of your experiences of sexual harassment or assault. You will NOT be asked to describe these experiences in detail.

Talking about these kinds of experiences can sometimes bring up uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, or memories. It is possible that certain interview questions may cause discomfort or distress. You may choose to skip questions or to end the interview at any time. We will give you a list of places where you can go to discuss any negative thoughts or feelings that

come up during the interview. Sharing these kinds of experiences and your views about the #MeToo movement can also be useful and empowering.

A few months after the interview, the researcher may contact you by phone to clarify the topics you discussed in the interview. If you are contacted, the phone call will last 10 to 20 minutes. This phone call will also be audio recorded. You will have the option to agree or disagree to be contacted on the phone at the end of the interview.

The risk of participating in this study is no greater than the risks encountered in everyday life. All information you share during the interview and phone call will be kept confidential. A code will be assigned to your responses during the interview and phone call. This code will be linked to your identifying information in a master list. Your name or identifying information will not be stored with your responses. The master list will be kept on a password-protected computer with access limited to the researchers. The master list will be destroyed after five years. Only the researchers will have access to the audio recordings. These recordings will be kept on a password-protected computer in a locked office. These files will be destroyed after three years.

The research will only look at information on your Twitter account that is publicly visible. The researcher will not directly quote any of your Twitter posts in any articles or presentations of the research. Your posts will be reworded in a way that will protect your identity.

The results of this study may help researchers develop a better understanding of the impact of the #MeToo movement at personal and societal levels.

Introduction

This research is being done by Jessica Hartl Majcher. Ms. Hartl Majcher is a doctoral student in the Psychology Department at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). Dr.

Catherine Stein is a professor in the Psychology Department at BGSU, and she is the research advisor. This research looks at the impact of the #MeToo movement at personal and societal levels. You are being invited to participate in this study because you saw a flyer advertising this study or heard about the research from another person and expressed interest in taking part. You are eligible to participate in this study if you are over the age of 18 years old. You must also be a woman who has experienced sexual harassment or assault. You must have posted using the hashtag #MeToo on Twitter.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to learn about what it was like to take part in the #MeToo movement online. The results of this study can help researchers to understand the impact of the #MeToo movement at individual and societal levels. Results may also help activists or advocates develop other movements for positive social change. There is no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study. This study will give you a chance to share your views about sexism, feminism, and the #MeToo movement. You will receive a $20 Amazon gift card for completing the interview. This gift card will be sent to you via email or given to you in person.

Procedure

You will meet with the researcher and answer interview questions. The interview will take about 60 minutes of your time. The interview will be scheduled at a location that is convenient to you on Bowling Green State University's campus or in the local community. Interviews can be completed via online video call if it is not possible to meet in person. You will receive a $20 Amazon gift card for completing the interview. This interview will be audio recorded. You will be asked what it was like for you to post during the #MeToo era. You will also be asked how the #MeToo movement has affected you, and how you think it has affected

our society. There will be a few questions about the general nature of your experiences of sexual harassment or assault. You will NOT be asked to describe these experiences in detail.

Talking about these kinds of experiences can sometimes bring up uncomfortable thoughts, feelings, or memories. You may choose to skip questions or to end the interview at any time. We will give you a list of places where you can go to discuss any negative thoughts or feelings that may come up after the interview. Sharing these kinds of experiences and your views about the MeToo movement can also be useful and empowering.

The researcher may contact you by phone to clarify topics you discussed in the interview. This phone call would occur 3 to 12 months after the interview. If you are contacted, the phone call will last 10 to 20 minutes. This phone call will also be audio recorded. You will have the option to agree or disagree to be contacted on the phone at the end of the interview.

In addition to the interview, the researcher will look at #MeToo content that you have posted on Twitter using your Twitter handle. This will not require any time on your part. The researcher will only look at the information on your Twitter account that is publicly visible. The researcher will not directly quote any of your Twitter posts in any articles or presentations of the research. Your posts will be reworded in a way that will protect your identity.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions (or not do a particular task) or end participation at any time without explanation or penalty. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University (BGSU). For BGSU students, your decision whether to participate will not affect your grades or class standing.

Confidentiality Protection

Your identifying information will be kept confidential. This information will be kept

separate from your interview responses. A code will be assigned to your interview responses. A master list linking the code to your identifying information will be kept in a password-protected file. This file will be kept on a password-protected computer on BGSU's campus. Only researchers will have access to this computer. The master list will be deleted in five years. We will take steps to protect your identity in any articles or presentations of the research.

The signed consent form will be kept in a file cabinet in a locked room in the BGSU Psychology Building. Only the researchers will have access to this cabinet. No other information collected as part of this study will be kept in that file cabinet.

Audio recordings will be deleted from the recording device after they have been uploaded to a password-protected computer. These audio recordings will be transcribed. The transcripts will be kept in password-protected files. Only the researchers will have access to the transcripts. The recordings on the computer will be deleted after three years.

Please note that some employers may use tracking software. You may want to complete the online video interview on a personal computer. The online video call program used in this study is called Webex. The researcher will send you a password that you will need to use for the online video interview. When the interview is over, you can log out of Webex. Do not leave the Webex window open if you are using a public computer or a computer that other people may have access to. Clear your browser cache and page history after completing the interview.

<div align="center">Risks</div>

The risk of participating in this study is no greater than the risks encountered in everyday life. It is possible that certain interview questions may cause discomfort. The researcher will

provide you with a list of places where you can get help if you feel discomfort after the interview. You would be responsible for any costs associated with these places. One of these places, the BGSU Counseling Center, provides free services to BGSU students.

The other risk related to taking part in this study is a breach of confidentiality. The researcher will take reasonable steps to protect your personal information. The consent documents will be kept in a locked office. All electronic files relating to this study will be kept on a password-protected computer. Only the researchers will have access to the information collected during the research. The researchers will respect your privacy by only reviewing information on your Twitter account which is publicly visible. The researcher will not directly quote any of your Twitter posts in any articles or presentations of the research. Your posts will be reworded in a way that will protect your identity.

<div align="center">Contact Information</div>

Please contact me or my research advisor if you have any questions about the research or your participation in the research. You may also contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board, at 419-372-7716 or orc@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research.

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Thank you for your time!

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this research.

Yes - Clicking "Yes" indicates your consent to participate.

No

Submit

To protect your privacy, please clear your internet browser and page history when you leave this webpage.

APPENDIX F. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction

Thank you for taking time to talk with me today. I am interested in learning about your experiences participating in the #MeToo movement. I'm going to be asking you a number of questions on several different topics. I will NOT ask you to describe your experiences of harassment or assault in detail, however some questions in the interview may cause discomfort. Please feel free to answer with as little or as much information as you would like. If you find yourself becoming uncomfortable in answering any questions, let me know and we can skip the question, or we can discontinue the interview at any time.

Describe Informed Consent, Answer Questions, Complete Consent Form.

Demographics

Let's start with some basic questions about you.

1. What is your date of birth? _____

2. How would you describe your gender?_____

   - *What are your preferred pronouns?*

3. How would you describe your race or ethnicity?

   _____ Black or African American

   _____ East Asian

   _____ Hispanic or Latino

   _____ Middle Eastern

   _____ Multiracial or Biracial

   _____ Native American or Alaskan Native

   _____ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

_____ South Asian or Indian

_____ White/European origin

_____ Other (Please describe) _____

4. What is your religious affiliation?

     _____ Agnostic

     _____ Atheist

     _____ Buddhist

     _____ Christian

     _____ Hindu

     _____ Jewish

     _____ Muslim

     _____ Other: Specify _____

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

     _____ Less than high school

     _____ Some high school, but no degree

     _____ High school diploma/GED or equivalent

     _____ Some college/vocational school, but no degree

     _____ Two-year college degree

     _____ Four-year college degree

     _____ Some graduate school, but no degree

     _____ Advanced degree (graduate)

6. How would you describe your current employment?

     _____ Full time

_____ Part time

_____ Student

_____ Not employed

7. [If participant is a student] What is your major or degree program? _____

8. [If participant is a student] What year are you currently in school/your program? _____

9. [If participant is employed] What kind of work do you do? _____

10. What is your marital status?

_____ Single, never married

_____ Married

_____ Divorced/Separated

_____ Widowed

11. Who lives with you?

_____ My grandparent(s)

_____ My parent(s)

_____ My sibling(s)

_____ My spouse

_____ My romantic partner (not married)

_____ A friend or roommate

_____ My children under 18

_____ My children over 18

_____ I live alone

_____ Others: Specify _____

12. Are you financially independent from your family of origin?

_____ Yes

_____ No

13. [If financially independent] What is your approximate level of income (include spouse's

income, if applicable)?

_____ $20,000 or less

_____ $20,000-$39,999

_____ $40,000-$59,999

_____ $60,000-$79,999

_____ $80,000-$99,999

_____ $100,000-$119,999

_____ $120,000-$139,999

_____ $140,000-169,999

_____ $170,000 or more

14. [If not financially independent] What is the approximate level of income of your family?

_____ $20,000 or less

_____ $20,000-$39,999

_____ $40,000-$59,999

_____ $60,000-$79,999

_____ $80,000-$99,999

_____ $100,000-$119,999

_____ $120,000-$139,999

_____ $140,000-169,999

_____ $170,000 or more

15. How would you describe the place where you grew up?

_____ Metropolitan area (population of 50,000 or more)

_____ Micropolitan area (between 10,000 and 50,000 people)

_____ Rural (less than 10,000 people)

16. What is your parents' marital status?

_____ Married

_____ Separated/Divorced: Specify your age when they separated _____

_____ Never married

_____ Other: Specify _____

17. How many siblings do you have (not including yourself)? _____

18. Who lived in your home when you were growing up?

_____ Mother	_____ Grandmother(s)
_____ Father	_____ Grandfather(s)
_____ Older sister(s)	_____ Aunt(s)
_____ Older brother(s)	_____ Uncle(s)
_____ Younger sister(s)	_____ Other relative: Specify _____
_____ Younger brother(s)	_____ Other: Specify _____

19. *Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in the United States. At the **top** of the ladder are the people who are the best off – those who have the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs. At the **bottom** of the ladder are the people who are the worst off – who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no job. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top. The lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom.*

Where would you place you/your family on this ladder? *Please place a large "X" on the rung where you think you/your family stand, relative to other people in the U.S.*

Social Media Experiences

Now that I have learned some basic information about you, I am going to ask about your experiences on Twitter.

When we talked on the phone, you said your Twitter handle is [Participant's Twitter name].

20. Is that correct?

____ Yes

____ No: Specify handle _____

21. What other social media platforms do you use? _____

22. How much time do you spend on social media in a typical day? _____

23. On which platform do you feel most comfortable expressing your opinions about political or social issues? Why?_____

24. How often do you view political/social justice content on social media?

_____ Almost every time I use social media

_____ Most of the time I use social media

_____ About half of the time I use social media

_____ Less than half of the time I use social media

_____ Rarely or almost never

Personal Experiences of Harassment

Now, I am going to ask some more personal questions about your experiences of sexual

harassment and assault. Remember, I will not ask you to describe any incidents in specific detail.

You only have to share as much as you feel comfortable, and you can stop me at any time. Okay?

25. How old were you when you first experienced sexual harassment directly?

26. How old were you when you experienced the worst or most persistent sexual harassment?

27. What kind of harassment have you experienced? *(These can be simply answered as*

    Yes/No, but you can share more information if you would like to.)

    _____ Witnessed physical or sexual assault directed toward a female relative, such as

    your mother or a sister

    _____ Street harassment or catcalling

    _____ Workplace discrimination (e.g., passed over for a position or promotion due to

    gender)

    _____ Verbal sexual harassment, such as: 1) someone calling you a sexist slur, 2)

    making comments that are disrespectful or made you feel unsafe, 3) talking about

    your body parts inappropriately or offensively, 4) making sexually explicit comments,

    5) asking sexually inappropriate questions, 6) repeatedly asking for your name or

    phone number when you've told them "no" or ignored them, 7) bullying or coercion

of a sexual nature in exchange for something such as a good grade, a promotion, etc. or instead of something such as paying rent or a citation)

_____ Cyber sexual harassment, such as 1) someone repeatedly texting or calling you in a harassing way, 2) electronically sending you or showing you sexual content without your permission over email, social media, or on their phone or computer, 3) taking and/or sharing pictures or videos of you without your permission.

_____ Physical assault or violence

_____ Unwanted consensual sex (e.g., pressured to have sex with a partner, even when you did not want to)

_____ Physically aggressive sexual harassment, such as: 1) Someone flashing or exposing their genitals to you without your permission, 2) Someone physically following you without your permission, 3) Someone purposely touching you or brushing up against you in an unwelcome, sexual way.

_____ Sexual assault (i.e., someone forcing you to do a sexual act without your permission, including while you were under the influence of drugs or alcohol)

_____ Something else

28. About how many times have you experienced sexual harassment?

_____ Never

_____ One time

_____ A few times

_____ Many times

_____ More times than I could count

29. [If participant experienced harassment more than once] Thinking across the various ways you may have experienced sexual harassment, would you describe these incidents as:

_____ A series of isolated events (e.g., incidents occurred in different settings or by different perpetrators)

_____ A pattern of persistent harassment (e.g., multiple incidents involving the same perpetrator(s))

- How long did that last?

30. How did you try to cope with these negative experiences?

Speaking Up

Thank you for sharing that information with me. We will now discuss what it was like for you if you ever spoke up or shared these experiences.

31. Who, if anyone, did you talk to about the harassment?

- [If you did not speak to anyone] what led to that decision?

- [If participant did share with others] What was it like for you to share your experiences in person with someone else?

  - Did talking to others about what happened play a role in processing your thoughts, feelings, and reactions about your experiences? How so?

  - About how long after the harassment was it?

  - How did you decide to share with that particular person?

  - How did people respond and react to your disclosures?

  - What kinds of emotions, either good or bad, came up for you?

    o What was hardest about talking to others?

    o What was the most helpful about talking?

      o Did you feel believed, supported, and/or empowered?

32. Did you ever speak with a mental health professional about your experiences? How did

  that go for you?

- About how long after the harassment was it?

- Did you feel believed, supported, and/or empowered?

33. Did you report the incident to authority figures or law enforcement?

- [If not] What led to your decision not to report it at the time?

  o Did you report the incident later? If yes, when?

  o Why did you change your mind about reporting it?

- [If yes] Describe the outcome. What action, if any, was taken?

  o Did you feel believed, supported, and/or empowered?

Using Social Media to Speak Up

The next set of questions are about using social media to speak about your experiences. These questions concern posts you made whether or not they were part of #MeToo.

34. What motivated you to share your experiences online?

- What was it like posting about your personal experiences of harassment online?

- What social media platform(s) have you used to post about your experiences?

- Did posting about what happened play a role in processing your thoughts,

  feelings, and reactions about your experiences? How so?

- What kinds of emotions, either good or bad, came up for you?

- What about posting was helpful?

- What about posting was unhelpful?

- Were your posts publicly visible to anyone on that platform or only to a group of friends or followers?

- How did others respond to your disclosures online?

- Did you feel believed, supported, and/or empowered?

- Have you experienced trolling or cyber harassment in response?

35. How did you speak up first, online or offline? Why did you choose that way?

36. How was posting about your experiences online similar and different from discussing it with others in person?

- Did one seem more helpful than the other? How so?

37. Did you post on social media about your personal experiences of sexual harassment before the #MeToo movement went viral in October 2017? Why or why not?

- When did you make those posts?

- How did your experience posting about sexual harassment differ before and after #MeToo went viral? What was similar?

The #MeToo Movement

Now I would like to ask some questions about your perspectives on the #MeToo Movement. I am also interested in hearing how you think the #MeToo movement has impacted society.

38. What was your initial reaction when you first heard about the #MeToo hashtag going viral?

39. What impact, if any, did the #MeToo Movement and posting a #MeToo tweet have on you personally?

40. What do you think it means that #MeToo is a "movement"?

41. Do you consider yourself part of the #MeToo Movement?

- If yes: What does it mean to you to be part of the #MeToo movement?

- If no: What does it mean to you to post on #MeToo but to not be part of the movement?

42. Some say that participating in digital advocacy efforts like the #MeToo Movement can result in burn-out and take an emotional toll. Have you experienced this?

- How do you balance self-care with engagement in advocacy?

43. What impact, if any, do you think #MeToo has had on our society?

- Describe the impact you have observed.

- What real world changes do you think have occurred as a result of the movement?

44. Do you think that the #MeToo movement has changed the nature of the conversation about harassment and violence against women? How?

- So, for example, do you think using the hashtag #MeToo has shaped people's reactions to your posts? If so, in what ways?

45. Do you feel that the #MeToo Movement is empowering for survivors or women more broadly? Why or why not?

46. There have been previous efforts made by advocacy groups and other trending hashtags to raise awareness of the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault. What do you think it is about the #MeToo hashtag or this cultural moment that has helped #MeToo to have the level of impact it has had and/or to stay in the public consciousness for so long?

There are some people in our society who feel that the #MeToo Movement has caused more harm than good. For example, there are those people who feel that MeToo has negatively impacted men who have been accused of harassment or assault against women or men who fear

they may be accused inaccurately. There seems to be a conflict between the notion of "believe the survivor" and "believe the accused is innocent until proven guilty."

47. What do you think about this perspective?

48. How would you respond to individuals who feel that #MeToo has harmed men?

Views on Sexism and Feminism

The next few questions are about your views on sexism and feminism in the United States.

49. How has the current political climate and recent events in the world impacted your experience as a woman?

50. Do you identify as a feminist? Why or why not?

51. Has social media played a role in the development of your feminist identity? How?

52. How does your feminist identity online compare and contrast from your offline identity?

Wrapping Up

We've talked about a number of different things today. Is there anything we haven't talked about that you think would be important for me to know to better understand your experiences?

If we have any questions about the topics you discussed during your interview today, we may contact you by phone to ask clarifying questions, but only with your permission. You may indicate your preference on this form. There are no benefits or penalties for your decision whether or not to participate in this part of the study.

Have participant complete Follow-Up Contact Agreement Form.

Do you have any questions for me?

We are still recruiting people to participate in this study. If you know someone who you think may be interested in participating, I invite you to let them know about this project and to

reach out to me if they would like to learn more and possibly participate themselves. Can you

think of someone who might be interested in this? I will email you a copy of the flyer for the

study that contains some basic information that you can share with them.

It has been a pleasure to get to know you. Thank you for participating in this study. If you

would like to talk with someone in a professional capacity about personal issues, here is a list of

community resources. If you think of any questions that you want to ask me, my email address is

on the informed consent sheet that I gave you. Thanks again for your help.

Give participant list of community resources and $20 Amazon gift card.

APPENDIX G. LIST OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community Resources

If you are experiencing a psychological crisis, feeling suicidal, or feeling homicidal, please call

the Wood County Crisis Line at 419-502-HOPE (4673) or dial 911 immediately.

BGSU Counseling Center

104 College Park Office Building

Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green, OH 43403

Phone: 419-372-2081

https://www.bgsu.edu/counseling-center.html

Provides free counseling services to BGSU students

Psychological Services Center

300 Psychology Building

Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green, OH 43403

419-372-2540

PSC@bgsu.edu

https://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/psychology/services/psychological-services-center.html

Provides free counseling services to BGSU students.

Non-BGSU students can receive counseling services billed through their insurance or paid on a

sliding scale fee.

BGSU Title IX Office

110 McFall Center

Bowling Green State University,

Bowling Green, Ohio 43403

419-372-8476

https://www.bgsu.edu/bgsucares/title-ix/get-help.html

No Wrong Door

Information and Referral Line - United Way

Call or text your zip code to 211

https://www.co.wood.oh.us/Commissioners/NoWrongDoor/

Make connections with local resources such as legal aid, mental health agencies, emergency

housing, etc.

Crisis Numbers

Wood County Crisis Line

419-502-HOPE (4673)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Crisis Text Line

Text NAMI to 741-741

https://namiwoodcounty.org