

Year 2 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Stanford University

Going Off Script: A men's program

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

Audience-specific anti-sexual harassment education.

Bystander Intervention Programs.

Evaluating Policies and Procedures.

Description of Work:

The SHARE: Education Team (formerly known as the SARA Office) at Stanford University took the lead to create a new men's program called "Going Off Script: A men's sexual and relationship violence prevention program." Going Off Script was developed in order to complement the women's program called "Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, and Act" (EAAA) also known as Flip the Script which was created by the SARE Centre at the University of Windsor. Similar to the EAAA program, Going Off Script is currently comprised of four 3-hour units and was offered either in the early evening during the weekdays or during the weekend. The four main units of Going Off Script are Assess (the ability to assess and challenge harmful social gender norms), Ask/Acknowledge (acknowledge and practice consent), Act (act to stop unhealthy/violent relationships and promote healthy relationships), and Positive Sexuality (practice healthy, holistic approaches to sexuality).

Going Off Script began in Winter quarter 2019-2020. 7 students participated in 1 or more of the 4 program units (Assess, Ask/Acknowledge, Act, and Positive Sexuality) offered. 3 students took the Assess Unit, 3 students took the Ask/Acknowledge Unit, 5 students took the Act Unit, and 4 students took the Positive Sexuality Unit. Out of 7 students, 7 students filled out the post-evaluation, but only 5 filled out the qualitative section.

The SHARE: Education Team evaluated Going Off Script's progress to determine whether or not the program achieves the intended outcomes. The evaluation results would be used to determine edits to the program's content, how the program is implemented, whether the program will be implemented for the future, and whether funding for the program will need to change for the future. The evaluation results can also be used to recruit more campus partners and students to participate.

To analyze Going Off Script, there would be evaluations of both the implementation of the program (such as the number of sections held and the number of students that attend the program) as well as the program's effects on students' knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. Based on the results from the evaluations, the program's implementation strategies

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was to be adjusted every 2 weeks and the program content will be edited quarterly to ensure its effectiveness with students in a timely manner.

The evaluation design is a pre- and post- design, meaning that students filled out surveys before and after they participate in the program. For the 2019-2020 academic year, the pre-evaluation results were taken about 6 hours-1 month before students took the program and the post-evaluation results were taken at maximum 1 week after participating in the program. The setup allows the SHARE: Education Team to test if the program does or does not impact students' knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. The intention for longer-term evaluation of program participants was interrupted by the advent of COVID-19 at the start of the 2020 calendar year. For the future, the students would be evaluated over a longer period of time (from 6 months-4 years) to determine if the program effects are long-lasting during their time enrolled at Stanford.

Despite being impacted by COVID, the main learning aspect that students repeatedly noted was learning to understand and tune into their sexuality and themselves more. One student called this a "self-discovery." The discussions on individual and social values were particularly "insightful" for students since it allowed them to think more critically about the origins of those values and how they "relate to our relationships and sexual identity." The conversations even gave students more "agency to define those [values] for [themselves]" which was "empowering." Another student also realized how "positive sexuality is not just about having as much sex as possible but rather being intentional and reflective." Defining, understanding, and accepting one's sexuality in holistic manners seems to be one of the key skills and self-development that students want to continue developing even after participating in Going Off Script.

The students' second most common key outcome of the program was about consent and communication. Having concrete examples to identify consent or nonconsent (both sexual and relationship abuse), discussions, and even getting chances to explore the nuances of consent were especially appreciated and allowed students to develop more skills to practice affirmative consent or identify nonconsent. Some examples students noted included the handout differentiating between unhealthy and healthy relationships, consent policy and legal definitions, and the impact of substances on consent. As one student noted, "The key reminder for me was the importance of the conversation being more of a direct and open negotiation than something awkward to dance around or something contentious to debate or 'win.'"

Developing upstander skills was the third most commented topic. This included a realization of "the importance of creating an upstander culture that could help provide everyone with a safer environment" and citing the usefulness of the LIFE model to intervene.

The student participants enjoyed the interactions with other students and facilitators. There was a "sense of trust and vulnerability" that allowed "everyone was able to participate and relate" to the various topics covered. The facilitators also created an environment that made students directly confront and in some cases overcome the usual shame/comfortability associated with sexuality and other topics covered in the program. This approach made students feel more encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences and ultimately made the program even more insightful and valuable to students.

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Students also equally liked the education and discussions on sexuality which they have not had the time or space to thoughtfully and critically consider before. Again, this relates back to facilitators' open, honest and "gentle" skills. The conversations felt "intimate" and the activities were "innovative" enough to give students different ways of approaching and understanding sexuality. Having time during breaks also gave students time to digest the information they were receiving and provide "self-reflection" on how values shape them, their loved ones, their sexuality, and their relationships. Students intend to use this "invaluable" learning in their everyday life, and it was noted that they wished more students could have attended as well, including those in fraternities.

Another noted part of the program was realizing the importance of having a holistic sexual education and understanding in order to challenge "oppressive gender norms and behavior" to end various forms of violence. Students also appreciated the breakdown of a hypothetical party scenario which provided concrete examples of the influence of power dynamics and identity as they related to the existence of violence and upstanding.

Students who participated generally had positive feedback of the program noting that they gained a better understanding of their sexuality and themselves in holistic ways. In particular, they enjoyed the interactions with other students and facilitators filled with "trust and vulnerability." They also could apply the concrete examples of practicing consent in realistic ways. Students really liked open, vulnerable group facilitation and discussion. They also liked getting chances to really hone in on their sexuality in positive and holistic ways. Students also suggested improving the program structure to make it less overwhelming such as having background material before meeting, having a spaced out weekly structure, and incorporating more breaks. They also wanted more students to be recruited through incentives or personal invitations.

Students overall thought the facilitators were "excellent," and it was beneficial for the facilitators to have different gender identities to provide more diverse conversations. Students needed more clarity when facilitators participated in small groups/pairs and wanted facilitators to provide more support for small groups/pairs through check-ins and facilitator demonstrations. In sum, the students believed that the program's topics were often lacking in college life but necessary to focus on to allow for greater understanding of the society we live in and promote self-discovery and growth.

Website for further information (if applicable): <https://sara.stanford.edu/education-outreach-programs/going-script-mens-program>

Point of Contact Name: Nadia Kalley

Email Address for Point of Contact: nkalley@stanford.edu