

Addressing Retaliation with Institutional Courage

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Retaliation is difficult to prevent through rules

- Typically is highly relational and thus difficult to legislate and difficult to enforce
- A different approach through *institutional courage*

Retaliation Matters

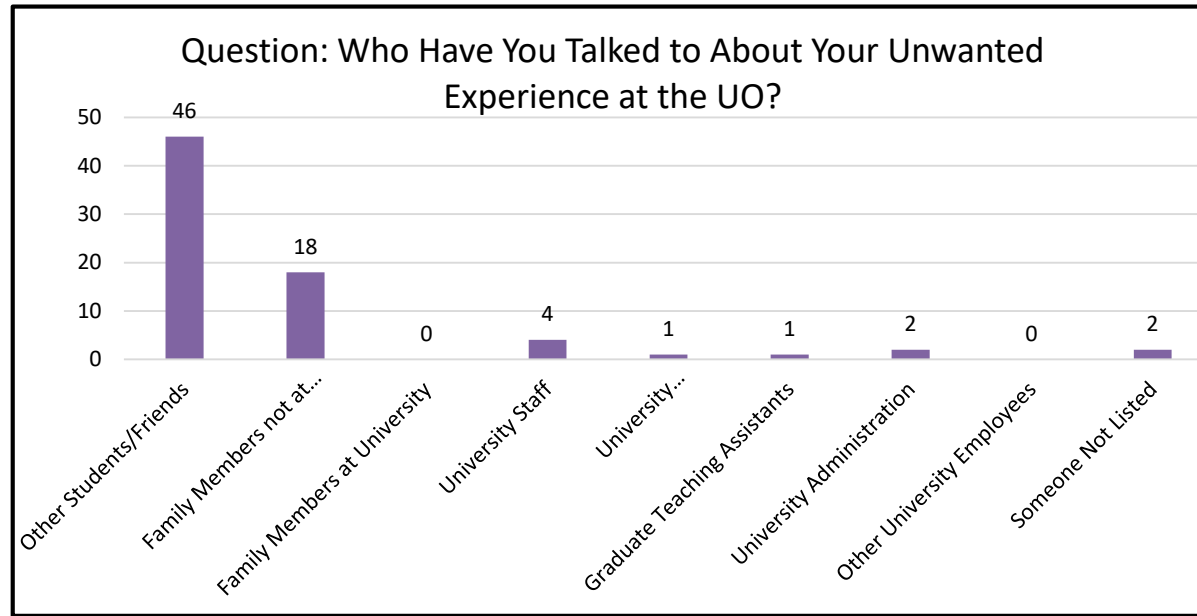
- Harmful to victims of retaliation
- Harmful to community / institutional culture
- *Retaliation chills future reporting*

The Problem of Chilling Reporting

- Without reporting difficult to stop assault and harassment
- And yet reporting is rare.
- E.G. Only 6% of sexually harassed grad students reported the harassment to university sources (Rosenthal, Smidt, & Freyd 2016)

Barnes & Freyd (2017) – 512 undergrads surveyed

- Of the 189 students who had experienced sexual victimization on campus only 50 had told anyone at all. And *who* had they told?

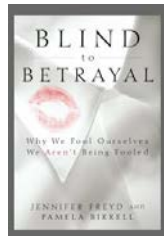


Why don't victims report?

- While reporting can lead to a good outcome, *reporting is risky (e.g. risk of retaliation)*
- A bad response makes things *worse* for the victim
- A bad response can be a *new betrayal trauma*
- A bad response from the institution *is institutional betrayal*

What is Institutional Betrayal?

- Institutions harming those dependent on the institution
- Includes the failure to prevent or respond supportively to wrongdoings within the institution when there is a reasonable expectation of protection.

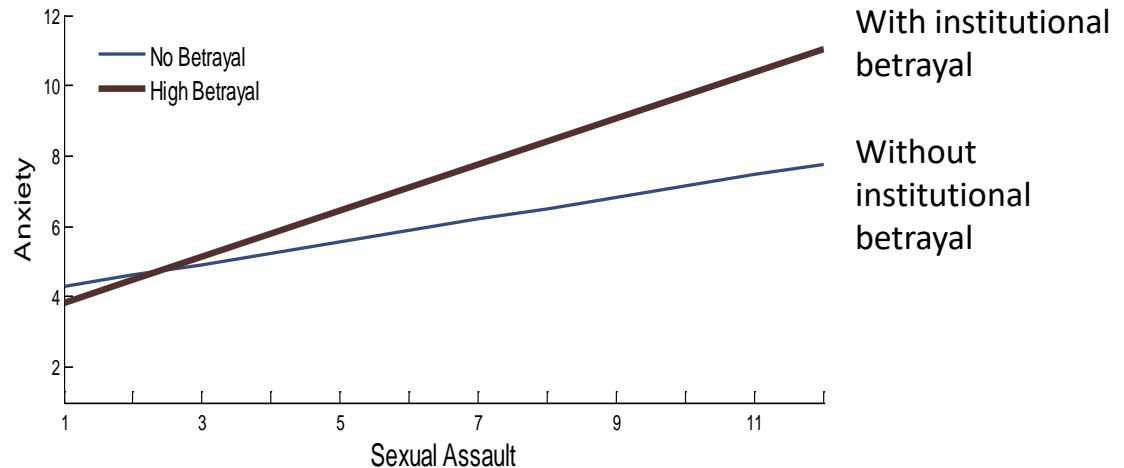


Institutional Betrayal Questionnaire (IBQ, Smith & Freyd)

1. Not taking proactive steps to prevent this type of experience?
2. Creating an environment in which this type of experience/s seemed common or like no big deal?
3. Creating an environment in which this experience seemed more likely to occur?
4. Making it difficult to report the experience/s?
5. Responding inadequately to the experience/s, if reported?
6. Covering up the experience/s?
7. Punishing you in some way for this experience (e.g., loss of privileges or status)?

Institutional Betrayal Matters

- Associated with mental & physical health problems (Smith & Freyd, 2013, 2017)
- Associated with higher odds of attempting suicide (Monteith et al 2016)



Can we repair and prevent institutional
betrayal?

Institutional Courage

- Practices and policies that:
 - prevent and repair institutional betrayal
 - establish institutional accountability and transparency

10-Steps to Promote Institutional Courage (Freyd, 2018)

1. Comply with laws *and* go beyond mere compliance; beware risk management mindset
2. Educate institutional community (especially leadership)
3. Respond well to victim disclosures (& create a trauma-informed reporting policy)
4. Bear witness, be accountable, apologize
5. Cherish the truth tellers
6. Conduct scientifically-sound anonymous surveys
7. Regularly engage in self-study
8. Be transparent about data and policy
9. Use the organization to address the societal problem
10. Commit on-going resources to 1-9

Educate institutional community

- The problem of ignorance
- Educate all and especially leadership
 - E.G. About victim psychology, institutional betrayal, the reasons for not reporting, identifying DARVO

Educate: DARVO is a pernicious form of retaliation (Freyd, 1997)

- The perpetrator (or others) may
 - **D**eny the behavior
 - “None of this ever took place”
 - **A**ttack the individual doing the confronting
 - “You are a disgusting human being”
 - **R**everse the roles of **V**ictim and **O**ffender
 - “I am a victim”

<http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/defineDARVO.html>

DARVO Research Findings

- Harsey, Zurbriggen, & Freyd, 2017
 - DARVO by perpetration is associated with victim *self-blame*
- Harsey & Freyd, under review
 - For 3rd parties, DARVO results in *more doubt about the victim's credibility*
 - Education about DARVO reduces its power to discredit the victim's credibility
- *Education as Institutional Courage: DARVO must be recognized and identified in order to defang it*



<https://southpark.cc.com/clips/gfwbrf/its-called-darvo>

Respond well to victim disclosures

- Respond well to victim disclosures (& create a trauma-informed reporting policy)
- Well-Intentioned but Unschooled Listeners Can Learn
 - People can learn to become better listeners through education (e.g. Foynes & Freyd, 2011)
 - Tips and discussion guides at <http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/disclosure/goodlistener.html>

Bear witness, be accountable, apologize

- When a victim comes forward, acknowledge the harm
- Apologize sincerely

Cherish the truth tellers

- Cherish the truth tellers/ cherish the whistleblowers
- Provide acknowledgment and thanks to those who report, blow the whistle, speak difficult truths

We Can Address Retaliation Through Institutional Courage

- Educate leaders
- Respond well to disclosures
- Acknowledge & apologize
- Cherish truth tellers

Addressing Sexual Violence through Institutional Courage



**PROJECT ON
INSTITUTIONAL
COURAGE**

This collaborative special project has two interrelated goals. One is to nurture a research and action agenda for addressing sexual violence through institutional courage. The other is to give birth to an enduring organization with the working name *The Center for Institutional Courage* (CIC).

<https://www.jjfreyd.com/project-on-institutional-courage>