

Comparing students of color & white students: awareness of and experiences with UC survivor resources

Using data from the Survivors + Allies' 2021 survey of the UC community

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TW: The following content contains quotes about experiences of SVSH



Background & Purpose

People of color disproportionately experience sexual violence and sexual harassment (SVSH) at higher rates compared to White people. According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, in 2010, the lifetime prevalence rate of sexual violence was 33.5% among Multiracial women, 26.9% among Native women, 22% among Black women, and 14.6% among Hispanic women, compared to 18.8% of White women.¹ While the majority of cases of rape (80%) are reported by White cisgender women, many cases of SVSH tend to go unreported, and people of color are more likely to be assaulted than White women.² On college campuses, however, there is an even higher risk of SVSH. Sexual violence is more prevalent and pervasive on college campuses compared to other crimes, and about 13% of all students experience rape or sexual assault.³ Given that the risk of SVSH is higher on college campuses and among people of color, more must be done to understand this population's unique needs and experiences with resources.

Students have different experiences with the resources offered to them on their campuses. Their experiences are based on multiple factors, such as knowledge of whether said resources are confidential or non-confidential, and whether the staff available to them share similar identities. In fact, the confidentiality of a resource is already a specific concern that contributes to the decisions that students make when seeking support.⁴ A majority of SVSH survivors avoid contacting police and formal resources for support, especially college students.^{5,6} Students of color avoid resources that lack confidentiality due to the similar concerns, but also because of the pattern of institutional betrayal that they experience already.⁷

When institutional betrayal is experienced based on one's identity, whether intentional or unintentional, it leads to a level of distrust. The level of distrust and harm that a university causes a student to experience overtime will affect their experience and how they engage with university-sponsored resources. This is especially true if university-sponsored resources do not have essential confidential trauma-informed staff such as therapists, medical providers, and support persons, that align with the identities of the students seeking support. This can cause students to be wary of utilizing the resource out of fear of explaining certain parts of their racial, ethnic, sexual, or gender identity, which can potentially cause more harm to the student. Therefore, it is essential that college campuses ensure that support services have staff that share identities with and are representative of the diverse body of individuals they serve. As such, this research brief focuses on reporting key findings on the awareness of and experiences with survivor resources, by comparing those of students of color and White students, from [our study](#) with the UC community on support services for UC victim-survivors.

Methods

In 2021, UCLA student organization Survivors + Allies (S+A) conducted a research study surveying students across all 10 UC campuses to evaluate students' awareness, utilization, and evaluation of on- and off-campus resources for survivors of SVSH, including the Title IX office, Campus Assault Resources & Education (CARE), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and UC Police Departments (UCPD). You can read the resulting report and associated academic publications [here](#).

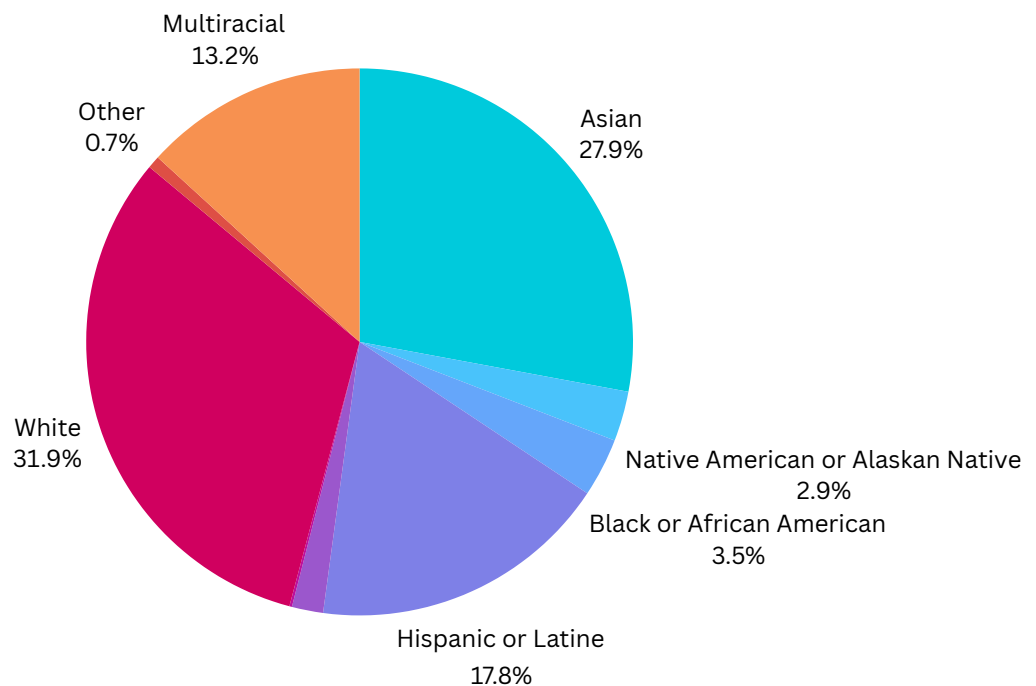
The resulting sample consisted of:

- 1,223 total students (52% undergraduate and 48% graduate)
- 62% cisgender women, 21% cisgender men, 2% transgender people, 18% nonbinary and people of other gender identities
- 42% of students identified as LGBTQA+
- 59% as students of color
- 17% as international students
- 41% identified as survivors of SVSH

Overall Demographics

As of 2023, students of color make up over half of the UC student population.(1)

In our study, 69.09% of our sample identified as people of color. Among the student participants, 59% identified as students of color.(2)



Race/Ethnicity	Percent in Sample
Asian only	27.92%
Native American or Alaskan Native only	2.95%
Black or African American only	3.47%
Hispanic or Latine only	17.80%
Middle Eastern or North African only	1.85%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander only	0.15%
White only	31.91%
Other	0.74%
Multiracial	13.22%

(1) The [2023 University of California enrollment data](#) reports data on African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, Domestic Unknown, and International student ethnicities/races. The population of students of color is based on UC enrollment data.

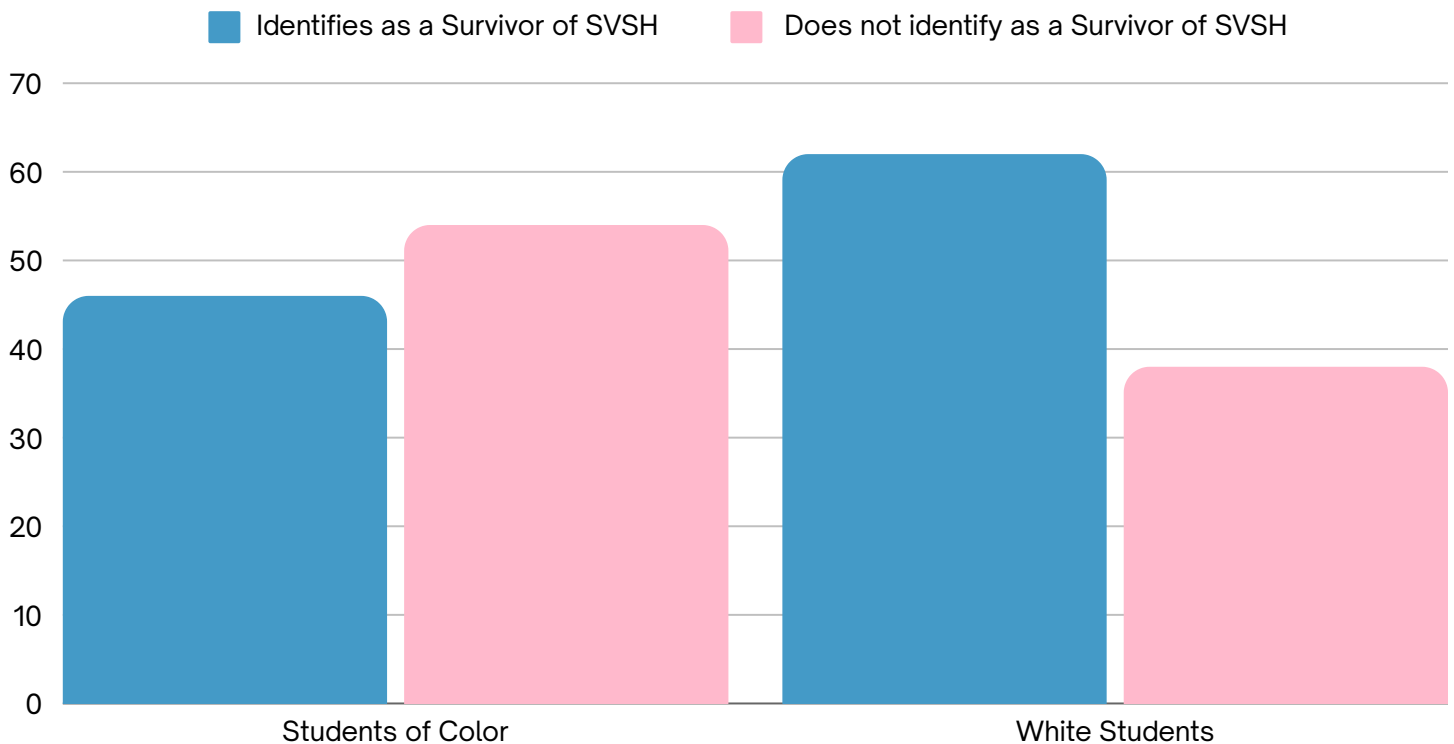
(2) The “White” category only included students who identified as White only. This analysis did not include Multiracial students who identified as White and another racial/ethnic category.

Findings

Prevalence of SVSH in Sample

Many students of color reported being survivors of SVSH, but there was a higher prevalence rate of survivors among White students.(3)

62% of White students in the survey identified as survivors, compared with 46% of students of color. However, another 5.5% of White students said they were “unsure”, compared with 8.3% of students of color.(4)



(3) This was not a prevalence study and the rates provided above only reflect the participants within our survey sample.

(4) The “White” category only included students who identified as White only. This analysis did not include Multiracial students who identified as White and another racial/ethnic category.

Awareness of Survivor Resources among Students of Color

Students of color are more likely to know which on-campus resources are confidential compared to White students.

Asian and Latine students are 50% less likely to know what the Title IX office does compared to White students.

“I was not aware of [these survivor support resources] until grad school. I also attended a UC during college but was unaware of its resources.” [on reasons they did not try to seek help from Title IX] - **cis-woman, straight, Asian, graduate student**

“I did not know what the CARE office did and was honestly kind of in denial that I was in an abusive relationship at the time. I did not know what a healthy relationship looked like at that point in my life and did not seek services until I was depressed and started having suicidal thoughts. I scared myself and knew I needed help so I went to therapy. Even then I did not really disclose to my therapist how I was abused physically, mentally, verbally, and emotionally. I did a bit but I was also ashamed and afraid to share that with someone.” - **cis-woman, straight, Multiracial, graduate student**

Utilization of survivor support/resources after an incident (off-campus counseling, online resources, off-campus friend, off-campus romantic partner)

Students of color were less likely to have accessed survivor resources following an incident, as compared to White students. They also requested more therapists who looked like them.

Students of color and White students accessed UC resources (i.e., CARE and CAPS) at similar rates. However, White students reported accessing off-campus resources (off-campus counseling, off-campus friends, and off-campus romantic partners) at far higher rates than students of color.

For example, **30% of White survivors sought off-campus counseling services compared to only 19% of survivors of color.**

57% of students of color never accessed any support from off-campus organizations, compared to just 47% of White survivors.

Resource	Students of Color	White Students
Off-campus counseling	19%	30%
Online resources	10%	14%
Off-campus friend	56%	66%
Off-campus romantic partner	27%	39%

Participation in survivor programs and resources among students of color

Students of color that identify as survivors are less likely to have participated in CARE healing programs or workshops compared to White students.

Among all students, students of color were more likely to have ever attended a CARE workshop than White students.

Have you ever attended a CARE workshop? [All Students]		
Response	Students of Color % (n)	White Students % (n)
Yes	15.3% (93)	10.1% (30)
No	69.1% (419)	76.4% (227)
Unsure	15.5% (94)	13.5% (40)

Among survivors, however, White students were more likely to have ever gone to CARE than students of color.

Have you ever gone to CARE? [Survivors only]		
Response	Students of Color % (n)	White Students % (n)
No, I've never considered it	20.9% (9)	4.3% (1)
Yes, but I didn't go	16.3% (7)	17.4% (4)
Yes, I went to CARE	62.8% (27)	78.3% (18)

Finally, among survivors, White students were more likely than students of color to be currently connected to satisfactory mental healthcare.

Are you currently connected to satisfactory mental healthcare? [Survivors only]		
Response	Students of Color % (n)	White Students % (n)
Yes	42.8% (190)	47.1% (82)
No	34.2% (152)	27% (47)
Unsure	18.2% (81)	14.4% (25)
Other	4.7% (21)	11.5% (20)

Experiences with survivor resources among students of color

100% of Black and Latine students did not feel respected by Title IX staff, compared to only 46% of White students. (5)

Asian students are 36% less likely to trust CAPS compared to White students.

(5) There were only 2 Black students, 7 Latine students, and 14 White students in this sub-sample. Using a 5-point likert scale, all of the Black and Latine students disagreed that they felt respected by Title IX staff. Among the White students, 6 students did not feel respected, 2 were neutral, and 6 felt respected.

Policy Recommendations

Increase the Hiring of Diverse Staff at Confidential and Non-Confidential Resources

- Hiring more diverse staff that are representative of the students they serve will lead to the creation of more tailored resources to better support student needs.

Provide More Resources and Funding to Identity-Based Resource Centers

- Identity-Based Resource Centers at the UCs Include: LGBTQ+ Centers, Black Resource Centers, Asian & Pacific Cultural Centers, Latinx Resource Centers.(6)
- This will allow resource centers to better support students and inform them of resources and information specific to their identities.

Include Education on Institutional Betrayal and Racial/Ethnic Barriers in Trauma-Informed Training for all Staff on College Campuses

- Institutional betrayal can make experiences of violence even more traumatic for a student. When institutions that are responsible for keeping students safe from harm help perpetuate violence by failing to protect, support, or provide students with adequate resources, they can effectively augment the trauma a student is experiencing.
- Addressing and preventing institutional betrayal can help create more transparency as well as increase equity, in order to better support students and prevent further harm from occurring.

Having a Confidential Advocate Available at Cultural Centers or Making Cultural Centers Confidential Resources

- In addition to providing trauma-informed training to cultural center staff, they should be able to support their students who have experienced SVSH without being required to report.

Comprehensive Communications Campaigns Across the UCs

- Alert students to diverse UC- and community-based resources, explain confidentiality, and clarify that international and undocumented students are covered by Title IX.
- Standardize UC Title IX websites with the following:
 - Include an FAQ section on the Title IX website.
 - Ensure that all policy documents and key information on the website are translated into the preferred languages of the students, staff, and faculty they serve.

(6) This is not an exhaustive list of all UC resource centers and each UC is different. Therefore, not every UC has each or all of these resource centers.

Conclusion

The intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other identities shape the experiences of each individual. These social categorizations also shape and intersect with experiences of SVSH, as they can increase the risk of experiencing violence as well as access to resources and support. In terms of support services, people of color face unique challenges when seeking access to and utilizing resources on UC campuses. Systemic racism, discrimination, cultural dynamics, and feelings of institutional betrayal may impact one's experience with or access to adequate services for support. And our research underscores that students of color do, in fact, have different experiences with accessing and utilizing resources on UC campuses.

While students of color were more likely to know which resources were confidential compared to White students, many students of color did not know what the Title IX office does and were less likely to access survivor resources after an incident in our study. Still, there is limited research on sexual violence, and most research focuses on cisgender women. Similarly, there is limited research on men and individuals with diverse racial/ethnic identities. Thus, many resources for survivors may not center the needs of individuals of color and may not be as helpful to diverse populations. Disparate access to culturally relevant and tailored support services for students of color only further compound the challenges they face as survivors, especially during a critical time in their academic and professional development. In order to shape a more inclusive and equitable future free of SVSH on college campuses, steps toward intersectional advocacy must be maintained by centering the needs and experiences of survivors of color.

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