Feminist education for university staff responding to disclosures of sexual violence: a critique of the dominant model of staff development

Abstract

Programmes for sexual violence prevention have focussed historically on university, school or college students rather than staff working at these institutions. The *Universities Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence* project (USVreact), co-funded by the European Commission, worked across universities in Europe to address this gap in the provision and knowledge of programmes aimed at staff. Each institutional partner in the project designed a programme to enable staff to respond appropriately to disclosures of sexual violence. This paper focuses on one UK university to explore the use of and reception to education principles and feminist pedagogy with staff from across the institution. These diverse pedagogical approaches were significant to the design of the university's innovative programme. The findings demonstrate the importance of a process of sexual violence pedagogy, as opposed to training, and highlight its positive implications for the whole university community.

Key words

Higher Education, Feminist Pedagogy, Sexual Violence, Staff Development, Training

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Introduction

Many survivors of sexual violence do not tell anyone about their experience (Office for National Statistics 2017). In the context of higher education (HE), a key National Union of Students (NUS) report in 2010 found that 68 per cent of women students had been sexually harassed in and around their institutions, and more recent findings indicate eight per cent of women were raped whilst at university (The Student Room and Revolt Sexual Assault 2018). Four per cent of students reported the abuse they had experienced to their university (NUS 2010) and only two per cent described feeling able to report and subsequently satisfied with their university's reporting process (The Student Room and Revolt Sexual Assault 2018).

The discussion about why levels of reporting are so low has included challenges about organisational culture (Whitely and Page 2015) alongside issues about how disclosures are received and supported. Reporting requires sharing information and, as Phipps identifies, this can be especially daunting because '[w]e expose ourselves when we disclose what has happened to us' (Phipps 2016a, para. 7). She also argues that attention must be given to issues of 'speaking out' and practices of silencing within the university, encouraging reflection on who is being heard and on whose terms (Phipps 2016b). As Ahrens' work with eight rape survivors demonstrates, it is critical to recognise that receiving any kind of negative or unsupportive response after a disclosure may result in self-blaming or uncertainty about the experience, leaving survivors unlikely to disclose again (Ahrens 2006). Disclosure, when planned, compels key questions of how to tell, when to tell and, crucially, who to tell. These decisions are in part affected by how the survivor anticipates the response from the person they entrust with the disclosure (Ahrens 2006; Eyre 2000). When trusted with a disclosure, the responder's reaction makes a key difference to the survivor's wellbeing.

This paper explores how university staff development, often configured around models of training, is unsatisfactory in supporting university staff in their complex potential role as responders to disclosures of sexual violence (Bryans and Smith 2000). We argue here, based on complexities we identified through research undertaken with university staff engaged in an education programme for responding to disclosures of sexual violence, that there is a need for deeper, informed, contextualised staff education programmes in higher education to better equip university staff to deal with these issues.

In what follows, we first provide a background context to these issues in universities. Second, we set out the methodology that informed the data collection, and we argue that the transformative potential of education in a programme developed for staff responders needs to be recognised. Third, drawing on examples from the education programme underpinned by feminist pedagogy (Belenky, et al. 1986; McCusker 2017), developed at an English university as part of a European co-funded project, we set out examples that illustrate advantages and challenges in taking an in-depth and detailed, feminist approach to educating university staff responders. To conclude, we contend this approach has the potential to change institutional cultures and individual attitudes in ways that enhance the university environment for everyone.

Background

University programmes focusing on sexual violence prevention have historically been designed for students rather than the staff working there. Radina (2017, 134) notes that there is a tendency for staff to 'believe that campus rape culture is in the domain of student affairs' and therefore outside of their professional remit. She contends that:

for many faculty members there is a clear line between what is and is not their business. Once class is over, the room is empty, the door is closed, students' lives become the domain of student affairs. This unambiguous arrangement allows for faculty to go about their other obligations that are of service to the university (e.g. teaching, research, service) without thought to the needs or concerns of students.

Some university staff have fought for sexual violence prevention and intervention to become central to their institutions' strategic agenda, however. For example, the 'fearless faculty' collective (Sharp, et al. 2017) announced a 'call to arms' to staff at their institution to combat sexism, harassment and sexual assault amongst students. This followed their transformation from 'furious individual faculty members' (Sharp et al. 2017, 75) to a formalised group working together to produce interdisciplinary faculty activism on their campus in the United States. In the UK, where competitive individualism is prevalent and promoted (Ahmed 2015; Ball 2003) in the contemporary neoliberal context of the university, research has highlighted that care work (Lynch 2010), particularly sexual violence prevention, is gendered (Lu, 2018), undervalued, and viewed as a potential threat to the ethos and reputation of the institution (Ahmed 2015; Phipps 2016b). This is particularly evident in the current political climate, where neoliberal rationalities often seek to validate 'postfeminist' narratives (Phipps 2016b) that are cultivated and promoted in the media, positioning feminism as the enemy (Phipps 2016b, 5).

As Lynch (2010, 57) observes, the 'expectations of performance that [...] set the gold standard for leadership at all levels in the academy are those that only a care-less worker can fully satisfy', whereby competitive individualism leads to career advancement. The issue of absent care in HE is increasingly of concern (Lolich and Lynch 2017). This has gendered

ramifications, as women – especially working-class women of colour – will be more likely to have care responsibilities outside the institution, as well as within (Clarke 2004). It is in this context that the 'fearless faculty' collective raise concerns that when sexual violence is addressed within the work of the university, it is widely considered to fall within the domain of student support and advice services, counselling centres, and in some instances women's studies and feminist academic staff. Until recently, students (usually unpaid) performed the majority of this work in the UK, as student officers, in collaboration with the National Union of Students (Alldred and Phipps 2018, 10). Thus, Sharp et al. (2017) note that staff involvement on a wider scale (e.g. including administrators, academics, security, management) is essential in university efforts to challenge rape culture and sexual violence. Where institutional and cultural change is sought, it is clear that ownership of the issue by individuals, even with welfare roles, is inadequate.

Wider engagement is also necessary because staff in universities are frequently first responders for students, regardless of job role, with high numbers of student survivors of sexual violence reported to disclose their experience to lecturers and personal tutors (Branch, Hayes-Smith and Richards 2011), as well as staff from support services and administration. In 2016, the Universities UK Taskforce report examining violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students (UUK, 2016, 1) called on UK universities to change their culture. The report, which includes USVreact as a case study, recommended the improvement of reporting procedures and development work for all university staff in relation to prevention and response. These points were highlighted as fundamental to cultural change and raising awareness, stating that:

increasing confidence and breaking down barriers to reporting is also

linked to wider behaviours and cultures in and around the university -

where campus cultures tacitly condone unacceptable behaviour, this

in itself creates a significant barrier to reporting (UUK 2016, 37-38).

Following the publication of the UUK Taskforce report, and the subsequent £2.4 million Catalyst Fund from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to attend these priorities, universities have been implementing changes. In a recent Guardian report following a Freedom of Information request, almost two-thirds of UK universities were found to provide sexual harassment or gender violence staff development constituted as 'training' for staff (Batty, Bengtsson and Weale 2017). However, 'disclosure training', or 'first response training', is a relatively new initiative, and very few models currently exist in European countries (Alldred and Phipps 2018).

This literature highlights the significance of the first responder role and raises questions, as highlighted in the UUK report (2016), about the attention given to this in universities and the role of staff in supporting students.

Existing provision

In terms of existing provision to support staff as responders to sexual violence in the UK, there were only a small number of 'training' courses, including online modules (e.g. 'Student Disclosure of Unwanted Sexual Incidents' by Coventry University and Rape Crisis) available to purchase. The 'Universities Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence: Training for Sustainable Student Services' (USVreact) project was a European Commission co-funded

initiative that ran during 2016-2018 and sought to address this gap in provision for university staff. The project, running across seven European countries, aimed to develop, pilot and evaluate 'first responder training' to help university staff respond more effectively to disclosures of sexual violence. Interventions were tailored to each context (culturally and institutionally) and piloted at 23 universities in total. As a result of limited existing models available in Europe, the wider project from which the data for this paper is drawn, highlights best practice examples from the United States, where the work is more widespread and fully developed (Alldred and Phipps 2018). The resulting models from USVreact were made freely available online (www.usvreact.eu). It is one of these models and the associated evaluation that are discussed here to provide insights into the transformative potential of education for staff.

Education and training

The intention for the USVreact programmes to be developed and delivered across the European partner institutions was identified within the project title and documentation as 'training' and funded on this basis. This terminology was adopted by the project leads in part due to the direction of the European Commission's Daphne funding call ('Training for Professionals'), but also to ensure ease of understanding and translation across the multiple languages used within the participating European countries. The choice of term was also informed by the context of the sessions and the intended audience: staff in HE. In this article, training is understood to focus on skills, competencies and a short-term end-product (Bryans and Smith 2000), whilst education is about developing knowledge, understanding, and exercising judgement, thus a longer-term endeavour (Marples 2010).

For staff in HE, training and personal skills development is encouraged, and sometimes obligatory, whilst education (at least where explicitly stated) is largely absent. Throughout the UUK 'Changing the Culture' report (2016), staff guidance on supporting student survivors was also identified as 'training' and this has largely been the preferred term for media reporting on this topic (e.g. Batty et al. 2017). The intention was that the work developed separately by each of the research partners in their institution would be piloted, evaluated and become embedded in the staff development offering. Two English universities enrolled as Associate Partners to the institution upon which this paper focuses, in addition to one university in South-eastern Europe and another in Northern Europe. They all delivered a series of education sessions to members of staff at their institutions using the programme discussed here, however these sessions will not be the focus of this paper.

The next section will explore the approach taken in one UK institution, where the focus was on education underpinned by feminist pedagogy rather than training.

Research design

The research from which the data for this paper is drawn utilised a rich qualitative evaluative process. The research design drew on Parlett and Hamilton's (1972) work on illuminative evaluation: the intensive study of a programme in context. We recognise our research here as a political activity with a commitment to social change. Our motivations and political objectives were explored explicitly in the process of analysis, as well as in our conversations and reflections (Gillies and Alldred 2012, 43). The outcomes of the illuminative evaluation, which drew on a range of methods as outlined later, provided the data for the analysis, as well as crucial insights for the ongoing development of the programme for each new group of staff.

The project team developed an innovative education programme comprised of two four-hour workshops split over two days. The commitment of the local project team was to develop a pilot education programme underpinned by pedagogic and feminist principles (Belenky, et al. 1986; Burke, Crozier, and Misiaszek 2017) rather than to adopt a more traditional and normalised training model for staff development as outlined earlier. Thus, the format of the sessions was innovative in relation to the other staff development training sessions at the university where the research took place. The sessions required a greater time commitment over two days for both staff and facilitators. Initial sessions were facilitated by three psychotherapists, all of whom were women with extensive experience of working in sexual violence support services. Later sessions were facilitated by a male and female member of university staff based in student support services and one female member of staff from the counselling service, all of whom received tailored support and guidance, including supervision from previous facilitators. The facilitators' backgrounds gave them in-depth experience in both receiving disclosures of sexual violence, particularly with a psychotherapeutic understanding of trauma response, and working with staff in developmental ways.

The two sessions had different foci as the programme was intended to transmit practical advice on care pathways for staff to provide to students, but also to contribute to changing the social and institutional cultures around sexual violence. The intention was to engage staff in feminist praxis and critical analysis (Radina 2017) using feminist pedagogy (Belenky, et al. 1986; McCusker 2017), with the first session of the programme dedicated to providing staff with a more complex understanding of sexual violence and the sexist cultures prevalent in universities (and beyond). The programme content explored how this may not always be 'visible' due to societal norms, cultural representations of 'victims', and the potential barriers to disclosure, as

well as the importance of thinking about harm with an intersectional lens (Crenshaw 1991; Davis 1978; Hill Collins 1990). In the second session the focus was on the first responder's role, introducing the skills required and approaches to listening to and working with individuals in ways that are active, sensitive, empathetic and supportive, and how to signpost appropriate care/support pathways. The activities included, in the first session (on understanding), working with extracts from the media and national press, looking at sexual violence statistics and data to situate the role of the first responder in the complex societal contexts that sexual violence operates within, and in the second (on response), role play and scenario-based discussions. Drawing on Radina (2017), we identified that by sharing and examining their standpoints, participants and facilitators would mutually guide each other towards a deeper understanding and reflexive/critical analysis of the issues and their responses. The approaches and activities were chosen to provide an educational opportunity. The more detailed content and activities in the programme (including slides and facilitator guidance) were developed continuously across the programme delivery in response to the evaluation over eleven cohorts of participants (available at www.usvreact.eu, see also Chappell and Jones 2018).

The programme was developed for a maximum of twelve staff members per session. A total of 85 members of staff participated over eleven programmes run between May 2017 and February 2018, and group sizes varied between four and eleven participants. Drawing on the work of Sharp et al. (2017, 79), we advocate for the importance of interdisciplinary, cross-sectional representation from staff to effectively confront these issues, and therefore advertised the sessions to all staff. This meant it was an 'opt in' opportunity for university staff in any role. Although there is debate about whether awareness-raising and first response principles courses should be mandatory for staff in particular roles, a truly educational approach requires

voluntary, motivated and open-minded engagement, and hence was preferred here. The table below summarises the areas that participants came from.

[Insert Table 1 here]

As the table below shows, many more women than men attended the programme. Whilst all sessions were open to anyone of any gender, in two of the eleven groups all participants were women.

[Insert Table 2 here]

The intention of the research was to take account of complexity in developing and implementing the education programme outlined above. Using an illuminative evaluation process (Parlett and Hamilton 1972), we analysed the perceptions of staff before, during and after attendance, alongside analysing and developing policy recommendations about what was effective about the pilot and subsequent sessions, and how things could be improved. Participants were asked to complete surveys with qualitative and quantitative components at the start and end of both the sessions they attended. This was in order to refine our understanding of the learning needs gathered in an earlier general needs assessment and identify the outcomes of the programme. The online survey method was agreed by USVreact partners in order to gather data to be analysed cross-nationally (see Alldred et al. forthcoming) and had been used successfully in a previous study by some of the partners (https://sites.brunel.ac.uk/gap). Data from the 85 staff members provided insight into their previous experiences with disclosures and their level of perceived understanding prior to attending the sessions, as well as an evaluation of their engagement, whether their expectations

were met, and indication of the ways the sessions may influence their practice and confidence in the future. Eight programmes were observed (approximately 64 hours in total) and comprehensive ethnographic field notes were taken to record participants' responses to the activities covered in the sessions, as well as the facilitators' approaches and the session environment.

Focus group interviews were conducted immediately after the sessions to gain more detailed, discursive feedback, and all facilitators were interviewed following their first sessions to review their experiences of the programme. Finally, follow-up one-to-one interviews with three participants were conducted four months after they attended the programme to explore whether/how they felt the programme had influenced their practice. These methods were chosen to generate rich data regarding staff responses to the new programme, and the impact on them and their practice, whilst taking account of their context both in terms of the institution and their own prior experience (Parlett and Hamilton 1972). Critical reflexivity was also integral to the research process and this paper has arisen from conversations and reflections between the researchers and facilitators/participants around data analysis.

The overall project aims and research design were underpinned by feminist principles such as reflecting on and – where possible – rebalancing power (McCusker 2017). The research was approved by the university's research ethics committee. All participants agreed to take part in the research and signed to give consent after reading an information document about the project with an opportunity for questions. Participants' names and other identifying information were removed and comments were anonymised. Given the sensitive nature of the focus there were also a number of ethical considerations beyond those required for institutional approval which Liamputtong (2007) describes as ethics-in-practice (see Chappell and Jones 2018). For

example, during the process of data collection when particular issues arose such as differences of opinion, and personal/professional perspectives could be at stake, it was necessary to be responsive in the care of all participants.

Findings

Following rigorous data analysis, we identified four key themes that illustrated both the challenges and the opportunities we encountered when delivering the education programme. The feedback was generally positive and the sessions were well received, but we also encountered some concerning issues that we will explore here. We reflect on what the data revealed about the ways in which the facilitators engaged the participants in the content of the sessions and how participants responded.

Knowledge and experience

An integral part of the programme was to draw on the significant knowledge and experiences of the participants in the activities, and to recognise the potential for facilitators' and participants' understanding to evolve.

For example, during a discussion about rape culture in the media, one of the facilitators spoke about the prevalence of the belief that it is possible to be unaffected by ideological messaging. In the session, the facilitator mimicked a defensive attitude: 'not me – I don't get influenced by that stuff' and problematised this view. Both facilitators then talked in detail about their awareness that they, too, are liable to socialisation and prejudicial attitudes in ways they need to monitor and address. Facilitators frequently acknowledged their own continuing development in the sessions in order to interrupt a didactic trainer/trainee dynamic.

At the beginning of the first session, participants were provided with a list of terms which could be included within the category of 'sexual violence' and asked whether they felt able to place them in an order or hierarchy based on their own understanding of severity. The list, which was intended to provoke discussion rather than offer any definitive answers, included 'pornography' as a category. For one cohort, the inclusion of this category initially went unchallenged. However, later when the group conversation turned towards a critical assessment of terms that could, or should, be included within a definition of sexual violence, participants explored the presence of '*forced* prostitution' in the list (our own emphasis). In this discussion Stu, a participant, asked why non-consent had been specified in this category of sex work (i.e. 'forced'), but not in pornography. He suggested that 'exploitative pornography', rather than all pornography, would be a more reasonable category to include. The facilitators responded amenably to this suggestion and commented that the list was 'up for debate' before moving the conversation on. Whilst the facilitators still held primary authority over the length and depth of these conversations, interactions such as these helped to reduce the power differential between the facilitators (with their specialist knowledge), and participants (with their own views, knowledge and experiences). This created the conditions for exchange and, therefore, education. The activities moved beyond training in presenting challenges that needed to be worked with and through, where there was no 'correct' answer, and debate was encouraged.

In another activity with a different cohort, the concept of 'stealthing' arose[1]. Due to its recent usage (see Brodsky 2017), the discussion around this term invited comment from various members of the group who referred to current news coverage, their differing awareness of the

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[1] This term refers to the non-consensual covert removal of a condom during intercourse.

violation, and how or why it might take place. This allowed facilitators to listen to and learn from participants, discussing their own understanding of the term. This more 'equal' dynamic was always precarious in the sessions and was repeatedly tested by participants who re-assigned the facilitators as the 'knowers'. In this instance, a member of the group, Mark, raised his hand and directed a question specifically to the lead facilitator, asking: 'so what is the psychology behind that?' Inviting participants 'to contribute to collective knowledge-building' (Johnson and Weber 2011, 153) speaks to the educational endeavour rather than training, providing one way of demonstrating to participants that their perspectives were valuable. However, the scientific knowledge of the facilitator (and associated hegemonic legitimacy of Western scientific discourse) on understandings of the physiology of trauma and – in this case – the endeavour to be given an answer rather than to explore multiple answers, reintroduced the power/knowledge gap between participants and facilitators.

This example illustrates the limits of conventional educational practices within feminist pedagogy or of feminist educational aspirations within a neoliberal climate (Lynch 2010), where expectations are of right-or-wrong answers, learning outcomes, and flowchart instruction. As these were approaches we sought to avoid, we were also cautious of questions such as the one asked by Mark, which could reduce the perpetration or experience of harm to easily identifiable diagnoses. The sensitive and important topics in the programme needed careful attention over a more extended period of time than a short training session would have permitted (Bretz 2014). Eight hours was only a start, but the separation of the two sessions by a day or more allowed for reflection or self-care, and new understandings or perspectives to be 'digested'.

Validation of knowledge

The next theme we identified from the data is that of validation of knowledge, and the importance of the knowledge and experiences brought into the session by participants, alongside the knowledge and experiences of the facilitator. In the surveys, participants frequently commented that they benefited from 'hearing others' viewpoints' and 'learning from them'. This recognition that participants and facilitators were entering the room with a range of different kinds of relevant and valuable knowledge and expertise, rooted in feminist pedagogy, was key to the programme design. The experiences may have been of a professional and/or personal nature and could increase understanding, as well as present barriers and difficulties with the programme content. As Bretz (2014, 17) acknowledges, 'we are teaching those who have been assaulted, but we are also teaching those who do the assaulting'. Facilitators frequently referred to disclosures they had encountered in their line of work (without using detailed or identifiable information) and talked about how they had felt when listening and providing a response. Referring to their experiences in the role of therapist or in Student Support was an effective way of providing specific examples. This invited participants to recognise their own personal encounters as important for generating insight and in preparing them to respond to disclosures.

The sessions were intended to sharpen the abilities and awareness of participants, in addition to teaching new techniques and exploring political ideologies. In the feedback, many participants commented that the sessions had built their confidence, and for some participants the sessions offered reassurance and validation that their existing knowledge and approaches to disclosures had been appropriate. For example, one participant wrote in her survey after attending the programme, 'I think I was already almost there in terms of the training, I just needed a bit more confidence'. In one of the sessions, Julia, a participant, commented that she had been so concerned about saying the 'wrong' thing when receiving a disclosure that she felt

convinced that someone else would be better to speak to, and therefore felt eager to pass the student on as quickly as possible. However, she recognised that the speed of the handover would not necessarily be in the best interests of the student, who may need to be listened to and supported in that moment. In the same way, Oliver commented that, after attending, he would 'not be afraid of helping'. Thus, the education translated into validation of participants' knowledge, which built confidence and was fundamental to providing a welcoming and sensitive response to students in the future (Bryant-Davies 2011).

Receiving and resisting education

The educational principles demonstrated through the approaches taken in the sessions were received, and at times resisted, by participants in various ways. This was particularly evident in some participants' apparent aversion to the central tenets of feminist pedagogical approaches, including discursive, reflexive learning and personal development (Burke, Crozier, and Misiaszek 2017). In particular, the pedagogical approaches outlined earlier involved group sharing and support (Belenky, et al. 1986), and the fostering of an empathetic and open atmosphere, where challenging questions were welcomed, and personal change, critical analysis and ideological revisions would be possible, thus moving the programme beyond simply training staff. Facilitators of the programme, despite their professional expertise in the topics covered, were asked to approach conversations with participants in an inclusive way, so that learning was collaborative and exploratory rather than perceived as didactic or overbearing. Indeed, the programme sought to contribute to changing views and attitudes around sexual violence in the institution. Asking individuals to consider the context of sexual violence in a society of which they are part is challenging, particularly when addressing issues that often go unnoticed. Bretz adds that responses in a 'feminist classroom' will often be

'defensive when you challenge their identities and most deeply held beliefs about the world' because 'such beliefs give meaning to their worlds' (2014, 19).

As an example, one participant, Max, did not return for the second session of the programme after showing resistance and challenges to both the activity requests and the beliefs of the facilitators during the first session. The facilitators shared their concern about Max's absence to the researcher present in the session. One facilitator, Kath, commented that, based on his attitude in the first session, Max may have been more receptive to an approach that was 'different to education', and said that if she were to design a session tailored to his needs, she would 'use a lot more science' and avoid discussion of feelings, emotions and experiences: 'less chat in general'. The response from Max may offer an example of Bretz's (2014, 19) analysis of Gender Studies programmes, where:

> many students will simply "turn off" when their views on gender
> performance and rape culture are challenged by a professor who is
> creating a 'feminist classroom'. Their sense of identity as individuals
> is deeply tied to a system of gender performance.

Some identities may be challenged by classes of this kind, resulting in a defensive position being taken. Another example occurred when, in one session, participants were asked about the kinds of feelings that were evoked by sexual violence, and a participant named John commented that he was 'not comfortable with 'feeling' words' and could therefore not engage with the activity. The facilitators responded by suggesting that he might prefer to speak about what he 'thinks' about sexual violence instead, and John welcomed this. The gendered dichotomy between 'thinking' (logic) and 'feeling' (emotion) may bear some relationship to

the larger resistance to feminist pedagogical approaches from some participants. As we argued earlier, 'indifference to the affective domain' (Lynch, 2010, 61) is expected, if not required, within the neoliberal culture of higher education, especially amongst men (Lu 2018).

The researchers observing the sessions noticed that, despite John's refusal, he appeared engaged with the session and often spoke indignantly in response to sexual violence. At one point later in the session, he described an example of an abusive interaction as 'sad and shocking', then expanded on this, demonstrating a clear ability to publicly use 'feeling words' and express his emotions. This may indicate that John communicates his feelings more effectively than he realises, or that he was willing and able to adapt to the mood of the discussion and the guidance and encouragement of the facilitators during the day. John's refusal may also have played a different kind of performative role, whereby he identified himself to the rest of the group at the beginning of the session as someone dogmatic and logical (and therefore, perhaps, adhering to white masculine conventions) (Crabtree and Shiel 2018), despite later demonstrating an ability to interact with the programme content in other ways.

Consistent with the observations of scholars in Women and Gender Studies classes, these forms of resistance were most often, but not exclusively, demonstrated by male participants (Flood 2011, 143). Discussions of emotions, and reflective conversations based on experience, are often coded as 'feminine', just as a focus on sexual violence itself has often been understood to be a 'women's issue' (Flood 2011). It may follow then that, in our voluntary education programme, men were in a minority in all sessions (see Table 2) and, on some occasions, were not present at all (see Flood 2011). Miner (1994, 453) suggests that this minority status can be both productive and challenging, inviting men to experience a marginalisation with which they may not be otherwise familiar (especially if white, heterosexual, middle-class, non-disabled or

otherwise privileged). Thus, despite acts of refusal, just being in a feminist classroom may produce a form of self-reflection and an important lesson in de-centring their perspectives. This, inevitably, will also 'ruffle feathers': a 'hopeful' sign that Johnson and Weber (2011, 146) take as an indication that a pedagogy underpinned by feminist principles is 'addressing matters honestly'. We note, however, that sexist views were also presented by women in the sessions, supporting claims from Bretz (2014, 17-20) regarding the potential for people of any gender to promote rape culture in the classroom.

Participants' expectations

Participants responded in different ways to the feminist pedagogical approaches. Many spoke about valuing the opportunity to share experiences and perspectives, commenting on the '[f]reedom for discussion' and the 'openness' of the conversations, with a range of survey responses commenting on the 'non-judgemental environment' and others feeling it was a 'safe space to air feelings, and anxieties'. As Beres states, multi-session education programmes provide time for participants to 'think about and incorporate new information into their own understandings' (2014, 387).

However, this open approach was also uncomfortable for some participants, who sought greater instruction and clearer guidance on 'correct' practice. For example, one participant (anonymous via the survey feedback) noted that a weakness of the programme was that '[t]here was more information sharing than there was information giving' and another was disappointed that 'it felt like we did most of the work ourselves'. One participant commented that:

'[i]f this training is to be rolled out to busy academics the content needs to be

more evidence based, research informed or informed by the Trainer's expertise

not hearsay of the participants/common sense'.

Supporting participants to see the value in the experiences of others in an area like this is

something that needs further consideration and relates to the earlier points made about

knowledge and validation in the educative experience. Several participants raised concern

about the value of the first session in particular, which was a broader discussion of sexual

violence and social responses, preceding the second session on practical skills:

'I dont [sic] feel from the session today that I know anything more or would be

able to respond any more confidently to a disclosure than I would have prior to

the session'.

One participant suggested that we could 'make the first session half a day long, or maybe start

to cover some of the practical parts in the first session'. Another noted that the first session

'could potentially be condensed (or elements provided as pre-reading)'. Participants'

expectations may have led to this dissonance if they were anticipating attending something that

looked and/or felt like training in line with other staff development programmes. These

comments may also be expected given that research has long indicated that labour involving

'care', and associated emotional work and considerations (including all that is deemed

'feminine') have been trivialised in intellectual development and pedagogy (Harding 1991;

Kittay 1999; Lynch 2010; Noddings 2003).

The prioritisation of 'practical' skills and precise, actionable guidance – along with the desire to receive this content earlier in order to move away from broader discussions around sexual violence – was a key theme in the data. In a conversation following one of the second sessions between the researcher and Geoff, a participant, Geoff commented that there had been too much time spent on the 'lead up', before arriving at the 'meat' of the programme. This reveals a tension between addressing and challenging some of the broader issues relating to sexual violence, which is crucial in the mission for change in universities (UUK 2016), and the desire of staff to get to what they see as 'the point'. Education takes time as individuals need to process ideas in relation to their own experiences. The challenge in this tension is that the neoliberal university has exacerbated the requirement for staff to be optimally efficient and productive, where 'only the measurable matters' (Lynch 2010, 55; Alldred and Miller, 2007). Pressures upon staff to *produce*, but also to *expect* quick solutions are evident in the survey feedback asking for more immediate answers, and – paradoxically – also evident in the (at times) inadequate support given to students, especially by those in roles who are under pressure to minimise their contact time (Heijstra, Steinþórsdóttir and Einarsdóttir 2017). Jack, a member of academic staff, commented in one of the sessions that – to his frustration – he had been advised not to provide *any* pastoral support to students, only guidance with work matters. Lynch (2010, 60) observes the implicit assumption that 'the good academic can and will free-ride on other people's care work, both within and without the academy'.

The underpinning knowledge around sexual violence, which we sought to develop through a feminist, educational endeavour, proved difficult for some because it was both unfamiliar and unexpected, given the normalised (cognitive) practices in models of training that underpin staff development. The analysis presented here reveals the complexity involved in implementing an education programme of this type. The development of knowledge and the expectations of staff

were key themes and it is important to consider these in relation to future programmes of this kind, as well as future research. We would argue that training can be appropriate for preparing staff for some areas of work. Other areas, such as responding to disclosures, need education to enable staff to respond in appropriate ways to the complexities that an individual will present in sharing their experience of sexual violence. We would concur with Bryans and Smith about the distinction between training and education in that 'training tends to presuppose that there is an answer – a problem that can be solved – rather than a difficulty that may have to be worked with' (2000, 228-9). As the analysis has shown, providing staff with ideas to be 'worked with', during a process of education rather than training, creates possibilities for transformation based on in-depth understanding, and processes for exercising judgement.

There is a cost to offering an education in terms of the time required and the need for knowledgeable, skilful and experienced facilitators. However, the cost is warranted by the investment in creating a knowledgeable, well-prepared and responsive staff that will have a positive impact upon the experience of students and the university community more broadly. Educational interventions such as this seek transformations that will offer frameworks for staff to engage in a wide range of supportive encounters with students or in relationships more generally.

Conclusion

Education and training are in some cases understood interchangeably, but we argue that a clear distinction is both necessary and consequential in work such as this where differing philosophies and intentions resulted in different responses from participants based on their expectations. Drawing on the ideas of Peters (1966), we understand education as a process

where 'something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner' (Peters 1966, 25). Whilst training focuses on skills, competencies and an end-product, education is about understanding, judgement and processes, and as Marples (2010, 41) suggests:

> someone who is merely trained need have no comprehension of the purposes for which she is being trained and when successfully trained may well be incapable of exercising any judgement (moral or otherwise) about the value of that for which her training has prepared her; she is merely competent at such and such.

As one of the aims of our project was to equip staff with the knowledge and understanding to make carefully considered and appropriate judgements for each individual when responding to disclosures, an educational approach drawing on feminist pedagogy was key. As already outlined, the programme was not only intended to transmit practical advice on care pathways, but also designed to contribute to changing the social and institutional cultures around sexual violence by engaging staff in feminist praxis and critical analysis (Radina 2017). As our findings show, this was received differently by different participants. The use of 'education' may have made our ideological/political intentions about sexual violence and supporting survivors more explicit, and this may have led to some participants feeling uncomfortable and created tensions (McCusker 2017). Did some participants specifically dislike the feeling of being educated, and thus 'politicised'?

However, we remain committed to our approach given the range of positive feedback from participants, which often affirmed a more enduring interest in the cause. As one participant

wrote in their survey, 'I am very keen to learn more about the issue and maybe try and get more involved in assisting the university with promoting it to students.' There were others who approached us afterwards, volunteering their services as facilitators for future sessions. Sustaining these positive intentions and behaviours over time is vital. Education programmes that involve attendance across multiple sessions, rather than short one-off events or public poster campaigns, are likely to result in sustained commitment (Stake and Hoffmann 2001) and are more effective in facilitating cultural change (Beres 2014). In the UK at least, the call for this change in HE has come (UUK 2016).

This paper has illustrated how demonstrations of knowledge and legitimacy were enacted and understood by participants and facilitators, and the ways in which these can be understood within the differing frameworks and philosophies of education and training. As this type of work is further developed, there is a challenge for universities to consider how neoliberal tendencies to privilege 'care-less' (Lynch 2010) approaches where training to upskill or to be seen providing a quick response can be unhelpful or further exacerbate an issue. These approaches play a significant role in staff and student capacity to respond to sexual violence, whereby issues of race, class and privilege are woven through values and norms regarding gender, sexuality and sexual practice.

We contend that in order to respond effectively to disclosures, university staff need to have received guidance and support. This is crucial to a 'care-ful', considered and appropriate response underpinned by knowledge and understanding about the way in which sexual violence currently exists in society, thus HE, and the range of ways in which it is experienced. Talking about sexual violence, recognising its prevalence, and preparing staff to receive disclosures are important first steps towards this change (Sharp et al. 2017). This shift in the environment

would contribute to survivors of sexual violence feeling able to share their concerns knowing that they will be heard and supported (UUK 2016).

Universities have a community responsibility to provide people with the tools and culture that encourages sensitive and effective responses when survivors come forward to speak about harms they have experienced. The more university communities normalise these conversations, the easier and more prevalent disclosure will become (Dawisha and Dawisha 2015; UUK 2016). Feminist education programmes such as the one discussed here are key to the creation of university environments that will make this possible.

Acknowledgments

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Tables

Job role	Participants
Academic - Research only	0
Academic - Teaching and research	8 (9.5%)
Academic - Education	1 (1.2%)
Professional - Administrative	27 (32%)
Professional - Student Welfare	15 (17.6%)
Professional - Security	1 (1.2%)
Professional - Management	5 (6%)
Technician	6 (7%)
Students' Union	20 (24%)
Other	2 (2.5%)
Total	**85**

Table 1: Job roles of programme participants

Gender	Participants
Men	20 (23%)
Women	63 (74%)
Non-binary	1 (1.5%)
Other	0
(Skipped question)	1 (1.5%)
Total	**85**

Table 2: Gender of programme participants