INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a prevalent issue at institutions of higher education (IHEs). A great number of policies and research initiatives have been devoted to understanding and addressing it (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2018). Even with this extensive work, it can still be difficult to know what to include in policies for IHEs (Streng & Kamimura, 2015). A review of federal policies and existing policy analyses was conducted (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) in order to identify relevant themes addressing the following questions: What considerations are made in analyses of IHE sexual misconduct policies and approaches? What are some requirements written in federal sexual misconduct policies to which IHEs must adhere?

This project was completed as part of the planning- for-evaluation phase for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare’s Green Dot Bystander Training – a training which seeks to equip bystanders with skills necessary to intervene in incidents of sexual misconduct (Award # A19-0150-001 Green Dot and SVP Evaluation, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare).

METHODS

➢ Eighteen documents were purposefully selected for inclusion in a content analysis. These included two policy documents and sixteen evidence-based research articles relating to sexual misconduct policies at IHEs.

➢ In order to ensure inter-rater reliability, two researchers collaborated in a process of extracting and revising relevant themes from the documents (Armstrong et al., 1997).

➢ The themes were analyzed using HyperResearch, a qualitative research analysis software that allows the researcher to code various themes from different files, make conceptual connections, and develop graphics and reports.

FIVE OVERARCHING CATEGORIES:

Post-Incident Response for Victims: an IHE must offer certain services in response to a sexual misconduct case in order to remedy effects, including offering counseling services and helping them understand what constitutes consent.

Rights for Both Parties Post-Incident: an IHE must ensure rights to both parties in a sexual misconduct case, including the accused. They must be aware of their resources, where and to whom to report a case, as well as have their information and identity kept confidential.

Timely Investigation and Resolution: an IHE’s investigation must be timely, outline procedures for complaints, and both parties should be informed of the details.

Pro-active Approaches to Sexual Misconduct: an IHE must have a sexual misconduct policy and disseminate it effectively to the students. The policy must include statistics, locations of sexual misconduct that involve the IHE, definitions, a cyber abuse policy, and rape myth information. It is also important to hold effective prevention programs.

Stakeholders Involved in Addressing Sexual Misconduct: an IHE must train their employees, have a Title IX Coordinator, and involve law enforcement when appropriate.

CONCLUSIONS

➢ There are many existing policies and research about sexual misconduct at IHEs. They often do not address the same factors or themes.

➢ These findings can help reduce the complexity associated with determining what to include and evaluate in sexual misconduct policies at the IHE level.

➢ Understanding and utilizing the identified themes can help provide clarity and accurate instruction when relaying what is important to consider about sexual misconduct policies at IHEs.

➢ These findings can also help guide future policy studies and content analyses at IHEs in the state of Idaho and elsewhere.

REFERENCES


