

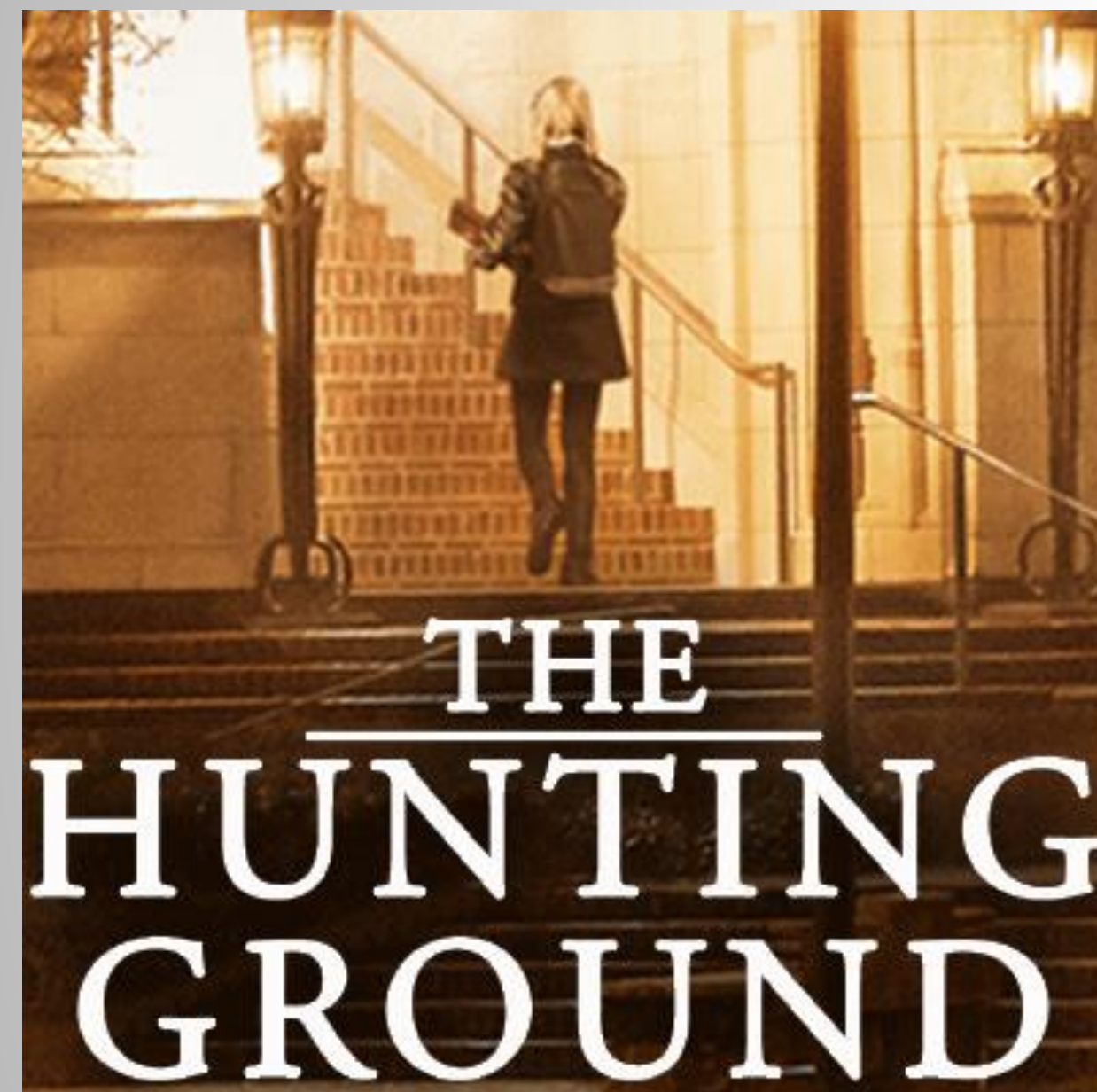


# Undergraduate Perceptions of Interpersonal Violence

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## Abstract

This study presents findings from a survey designed to measure undergraduate perceptions of interpersonal violence (IPV). Students attending a 4-year liberal arts institution viewed a series of videos that depicted behaviors within the context of relationships. Students indicated whether the clips demonstrated IPV. The research analyzes results associated with gender, race, ethnicity, and whether the student or someone they know has experienced IPV. Results suggest that many undergraduates do not identify behaviors such as verbal abuse and patterns of control as IPV. Findings confirm that more education is necessary to reduce violence on college campuses.



## Literature Review

- Many can easily recognize violence that is physical or sexual in nature but often dismiss that of an interpersonal nature. Across college campuses, both sexual and emotional violence are equally common and almost half of the students surveyed have experienced relationship violence at some point in their lives (Elmqvist, 2014).
- Forke et. al (2008) notes that overall, “women reported more victimization than men” therefore it is to be expected that women will be more sensitive towards the victimization in general.
- “Katz, Carino, and Hilton (2002) found in a sample of heterosexual dating undergraduates, psychological aggression was associated with sexual coercion and physical aggression. Maladaptive relational style was positively associated with sexual coercion.
- A subject that is of much importance to our research is the topic of educating individuals of interpersonal violence.

## Hypothesis

We hypothesize that undergraduates view IPV as primarily physical in nature. Whereas other types of IPV, for example verbal abuse or control, are overlooked or construed as being less serious.

## Method

**Video** compiled that includes 13 scenes from television, movies, and commercials that include various types of interpersonal violence:

- Verbal
- Coercive
- Controlling
- Sexual
- Physical

Undergraduate student **sample**:

- Random selection of upper division, undergraduate, lecture-based courses
  - Collected data during 12 classes
  - Surveys indicate distribution of 18 majors
  - (n = 247)
- Students were not forced to participate

Anonymous paper **survey**

- Basic demographic information (age, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, year in school, major field of study)
- History of victimization – self or others?
- Exposure to dating or sexual violence education? If so, where?
- Rating whether each scene indicated interpersonal violence:
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neutral/Undecided
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree

**Debrief:**

- Handout describing how each scene depicted signs of IPV
- Discussion of understanding signs of IPV within the context of the situation
- Allowed time for questions from students
- Contact information was provided of faculty mentor and campus/local agencies that support victims of IPV



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## Results

Table 1: *Factors that Influence One's Perception of IPV (N = 247)*

Variable	Control	Coercive	Isolation	Physical	Verbal
Sex	0.000*	NSS**	0.003*	NSS**	0.002*
Ethnicity	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*
Know a Victim	0.009*	NSS**	0.012*	0.46*	0.006*

\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .05$

\*\* Not statistically significant at the  $p < .05$

Sex was significant for:

- Control, Isolation, Verbal
- These results support the literature that these types of IPV are often overlooked or dismissed

Know a Victim was significant for:

- Control, Isolation, Physical, and Verbal
- Similar to sex, while these behaviors are frequently overlooked as IPV, students are more apt to recognize signs of violence because they know a victim

Table 2: *Influence of Education for Students that are a Victim or Know a Victim of IPV (N = 247)*

Variable	Attended Session	
Victim	34*	0.003**
Know a Victim	130*	0.047**

\*Students responding "yes"

\*\* Statistically significant at the  $p < .05$

The results indicate that being or knowing a victim of IPV was significant for whether an individual had attended a session on interpersonal violence.

## Discussion

The correlation between being – or knowing – a victim and IPV education is not entirely clear. It is unknown whether a session was attended in response to a student experiencing violence, or if the education disclosed that IPV was present in a relationship. Regardless, the findings indicate that education is an important component for ensuring that undergraduates are aware of the signs of IPV. The implications of these findings are important for reducing Title XI issues on college campuses throughout Kansas.

## Contact Information

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