

# Executive summary: Correlates of Peer Sexual Harassment in 2018 College Student Health Survey

NOVEMBER 2020

## PURPOSE

To identify variables associated with higher rates of **sexual harassment (SH) from peers** in the 2018 College Student Health Survey

## PARTICIPANTS

**9,805** Students

**18** 2-year and 4-year schools

## FOCUS

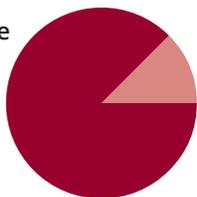
The analyses focused on **SH from peers** because it was much more common than SH from faculty or staff.

**46%** reported SH from **peers**

**8%** reported SH from **faculty/staff**

Analyses were conducted separately for

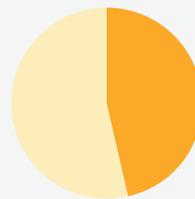
**7,932**  
undergraduate  
students



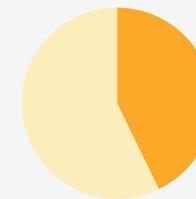
**1,132**  
graduate  
students

## RESULTS

Slightly less than **half of undergraduate and graduate students** reported having experienced **at least one sexually-harassing behavior from a peer** on campus



**47%**  
undergraduate  
students



**43%**  
graduate  
students

**Undergraduate students** who reported the most SH behaviors were



younger than 24



consumed alcohol more than once a month



either cisgender women or transgender, genderqueer, or had a self-identified gender identify (TGQ+)



attended a four-year school



**and** had experienced some or frequent bullying in their lifetime (see Figure 1)

This group reported **4.40 SH behaviors on average** (compared to 1.8 in the undergraduate sample as a whole).

**Graduate students** who reported the most SH behaviors were



younger than 31



had been bullied sometimes or frequently in their lifetimes



**and** were involved in a social Greek organization (see Figure 2)

These students reported **5.60 SH behaviors on average** (compared to 1.6 in the graduate student sample as a whole).

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Figure 1: Risk factors for undergraduate students

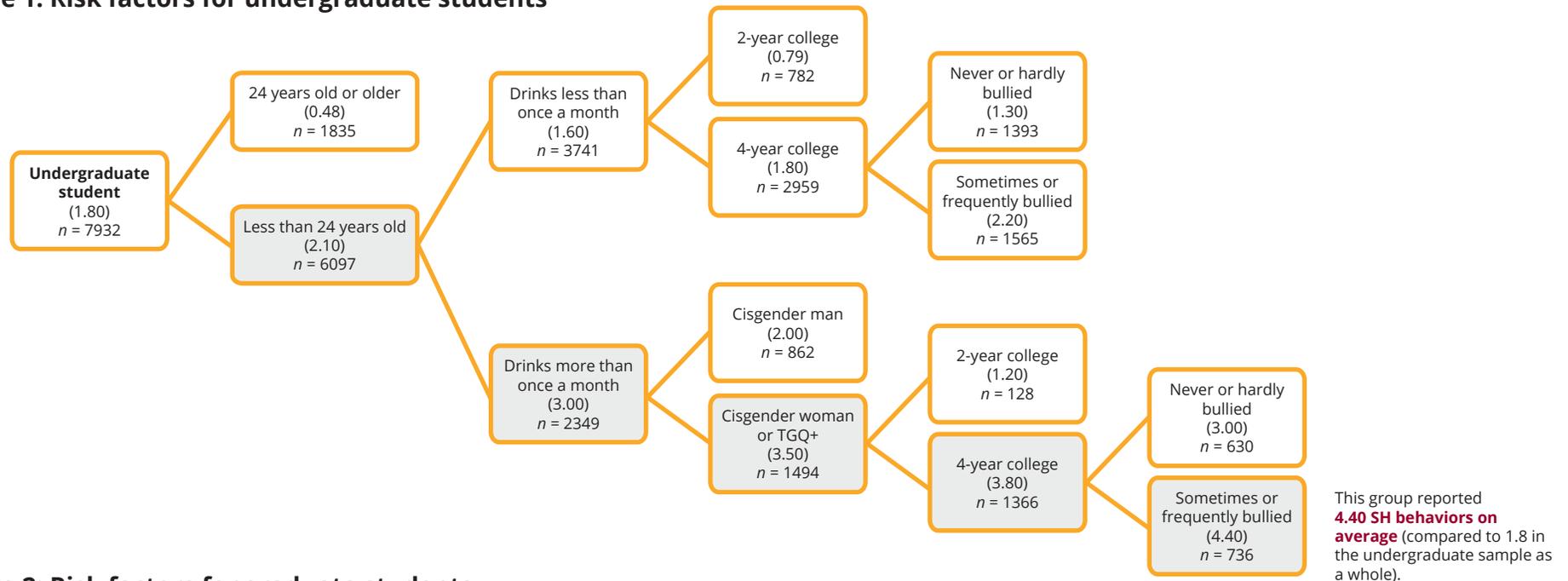
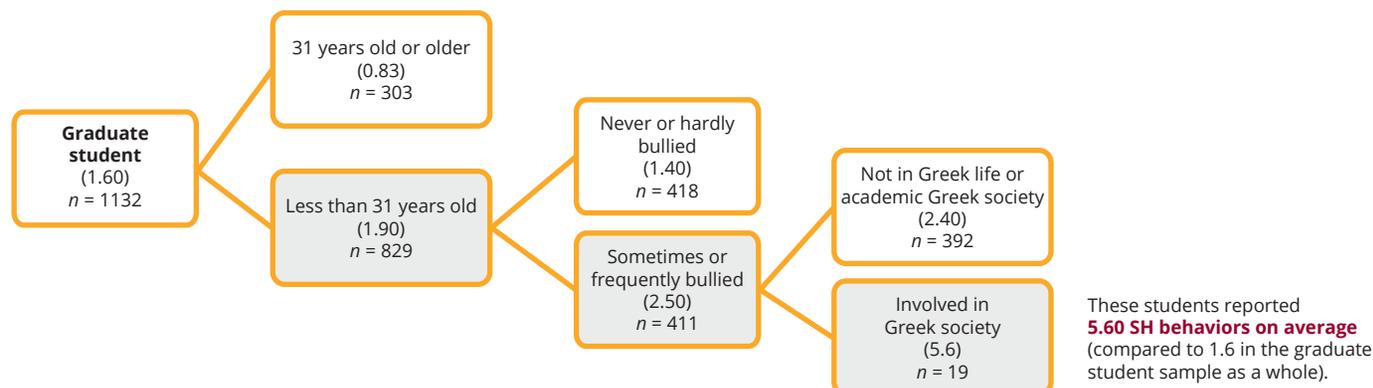


Figure 2: Risk factors for graduate students



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## IMPLICATIONS

- **Prevention efforts are particularly needed at 4-year schools**, where rates of peer sexual harassment are higher
- **Younger age is a key risk factor** for experiencing peer sexual harassment
  - Prevention efforts could focus on **educating first-year students** about the nature of peer sexual harassment and what they can do if they experience it
  - **Counseling services should be advertised** in places at-risk younger students are more likely to frequent (e.g., first-year dorms)
- For undergraduates, peer sexual harassment may be **more likely to occur in situations involving drinking**
  - Information about peer sexual harassment could be **included in alcohol education programming**
- **Transgender, genderqueer, and students with self-identified gender identities** report particularly high rates of peer sexual harassment
  - Prevention programming should **address issues related to factors other than sexism such as cissexism**
- **Inservice training for mental health providers** could include information on the prevalence of peer sexual harassment and risk factors for peer harassment
- An important **future research direction** is understanding *why* these factors are related to SH risk and to understand risk factors for perpetrating peer sexual harassment



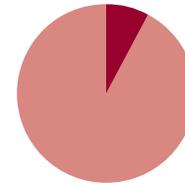
# Executive summary: Sexual Harassment from Faculty or Staff in 2018 College Student Health Survey Questionnaire

NOVEMBER 2020

## PURPOSE

To identify factors related to **experiencing sexual harassment from faculty or staff** in the 2018 College Student Health Survey.

## PARTICIPANTS



**9,805** Students

**8% reported having experienced sexual harassment from faculty or staff** at the college or university they attended

## RESULTS



Students who were more likely to report being **sexually harassed** by faculty or staff were:

- **Women** and those who identify as **transgender** or **gender non-conforming**
- In **committed**, but **non-marital relationships**
- Members of **fraternities** and **sororities**
- Living **on or near campus**
- Advanced undergraduate or graduate students
- **Full-time** rather than part-time students



**Physical and mental health factors** are associated with likelihood of experiencing harassment from faculty or staff:\*

There is a **linear relationship** between **health, wellness, and stress** and experiencing harassment.

**Higher likelihood** of experiencing sexual harassment from faculty or staff was found in those who:

- reported **more days feeling poorly**
- had higher reported **stressful life events**
- reported **mental health diagnoses**, especially anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder
- experienced other **forms of discrimination**

\*It is unclear whether the above represent risk factors or outcomes from their harassment experiences. It is likely that they reflect both.



### Additional Findings

Those reporting **less likelihood** of experiencing sexual harassment from faculty and staff:

- reported **coping skills** they believe are adequate to cope with their current stress level
- reported **higher coping skills**

**Unrelated** to likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment from faculty or staff include:

- **Race** and **ethnicity**
- **Binge drinking** and **marijuana use**

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## IMPLICATIONS

- **Availability** appears an important factor in the likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment
- **Women** and **gender non-conforming individuals** are more likely to experience sexual harassment than cisgender men.
- Unlike with sexual harassment from peers, **older students, especially graduate students**, are more likely to experience sexual harassment from faculty or staff.
- **A focus on the unique relationship** between graduate students and their faculty may be important for effective prevention programs.

### For more information:

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