

The Effect of Challenging Rape Myths

The Effect of Challenging Male's Beliefs on the Acceptance of Rape Myths

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Abstract

Rape is a serious crime occurring on college campuses across the nation. Men's belief in rape myths may be one of the causes of this under-reported crime. Rape myths are unsubstantiated cultural beliefs which may allow the believer to justify rape, particularly acquaintance rape. Martha Burt's (1980) Rape Myth Acceptance Scale measures participants' endorsement of rape myths. The present study examined how exposing rape myths to scrutiny may challenge participants' beliefs in them. The hypothesis was that participants who see an educational video and are involved in a frank discussion about that video with their peers will be less likely to endorse rape myths than those who only see the video without such a discussion. Participants were males at a private Midwestern liberal arts college. Participants were randomly assigned to either the control group or the intervention group. Both groups were shown an educational video discussing interpersonal risk factors contributing to date rape and given a survey. In addition, the intervention group engaged in a thirty minute peer-led discussion which incorporated three of Burt's rape myths. Results were expected to show that participants who discussed several myths would endorse fewer rape myths overall than those who did not discuss. Participants who are exposed to beliefs about rape which differ from those they previously held did not appear better able to incorporate information challenging those beliefs. One implication of this study is that peer-led discussions hoping to challenge men's beliefs in rape myths need to be longer and incorporate a video directly addressing rape myths.

## Introduction

Date rape is a violent, degrading phenomenon which pervades college campuses throughout the United States (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999, Muehlenhard & McCoy, 1991). In recent years, women have been advised by various institutions (family, education, etc.) to clearly communicate their sexual intentions (or lack thereof) in order to prevent being raped (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). This prevention strategy is problematic, however, because it suggests that it is the woman's responsibility to ensure that a man understands her sexual intentions, rather than the man's responsibility to listen to his date to ascertain consent before proceeding with sexual activity. This misguided prevention strategy appears to further society's tendency to blame the victim for an assault because of failure to clearly communicate her desire, or lack of interest in sexual intimacy (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987).

Research has shown that one of the possible factors underlying rape may be the general male population's continued acceptance of rape myths (Burt, 1980). Rape myths are unsubstantiated cultural beliefs that can lead men to justify raping women. Examples of rape myths which psychologists have studied include "women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve" and "in the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation" (Burt, 1980). These rape myths are potentially harmful because they allow men to deny, to tolerate, or to excuse date rapists' behavior (Burt, 1980). By exposing rape myths, one may be able to alter men's beliefs in them. The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was introduced in an attempt to measure how prevalent the acceptance of these rape myths is in our society.

*Rape Myth Research*

Before discussing what can be done to reduce acceptance of rape myths, it is important to first define what a rape myth is and the meaning behind such myths. Martha Burt's Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS) (1980) was used to gain insight into rape myths, which are theorized causes of rape. It was hypothesized that rape myths serve two purposes: to deny or to reduce perceived injury and to blame the victims for their own victimizations. Consequently, much of the pressure and responsibility of communication and avoiding force is placed on the female rather than the male.

Rape is the logical psychological extension of a dominant-submissive, competitive, sex-role stereotyped culture (Burt, 1980). While sex role stereotyping is the precondition for targeting women as potential victims, acceptance of interpersonal violence may be the manner in which a person's attitudes about assault are revealed. Burt (1980) found that participants' acceptance of interpersonal violence was the strongest predictor of men's rape myth acceptance. According to this study, in order to begin to prevent rapes in this society, there must be a theoretical understanding of rape attitudes and assaultive behavior. The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale provides a means of measuring these attitudes.

Participants with high rape myth acceptance (RMA) both expected and accepted study-portrayed sexual assault more than those participants with low rape myth acceptance (Morry & Winkler, 2001). The researchers distinguished between acceptance and expectation judgments. Acceptance of sexual aggression can lead to guilty feelings of the perpetrator, whereas expectation of sexual aggression can lead to victim-blaming. Men who accept sexual aggression will be more likely to blame the perpetrator and have less belief in rape myths, whereas those that expect sexual aggression will blame the victim and have more belief in rape myths.

*Peer Intervention Studies*

Knowing that rape myths exist and influence the beliefs of those individuals that hear them, one must introduce a method that combats these myths. One such method would be through an intervention. An intervention is a method used to change or to modify a person's beliefs. Data from previous studies on interventions clearly indicate that the core cluster of attitudes related to sexual assault is difficult to alter. Given the continued prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses, it is imperative that interventions be devised and tested to prevent future sexual assaults. Developmental research on intervention indicates that peers take on increasing importance in influencing beliefs during adolescence. This increased importance could be a result of youths seeking support, validation, and companionship from peers (Leff, 2004).

Moral discussion among peers has a strong influence on development (Berkowitz and Gibbs, 1983). It is thought that conversations among peers can challenge one's beliefs (Leff, 2004). One's exposure to a belief or argument dissimilar to that of one's own can leave one questioning the validity of that statement as well as one's own prior contentions. Beliefs do not have to be discussed verbally by the participants in order to be challenged internally. When a person simply thinks about issues being discussed aloud by peers, his previous beliefs may be altered in order to accommodate the dissimilar belief. This accommodation of a contrary statement into one's previously held beliefs demands this type of internal challenging in order to make sense of why or how one fits dissimilar ideas into previously held beliefs.

Standard interventions have been found effective in altering participants' rape myth acceptance (Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & DeBord, 1995). In their study, a standard intervention (e.g., didactic portion, video, discussion) was compared to a no-treatment

control in order . Results from this investigation indicated that the standard intervention was more effective in helping participants identify what constitutes consent and coercion in sexual situations than the no-treatment control group.

Rosenthal et al. (1995), tested whether individuals possessing traditional sex role attitudes could have their rape-related attitudes influenced by an educational intervention. This study's findings were two-fold. First, participants who received the intervention exhibited significantly less rape-supportive post-test attitudes on the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1980). Second, participants who heard the presentation provided less rape-supportive vignette responses than those who did not. Specifically, participants saw the victim as significantly less responsible.

### *The Present Study*

The present study sought to build upon research about rape myth acceptance and interventions designed to reduce such acceptance. In particular, this study examined how discussing rape myths with peers may have challenged one's beliefs in such myths. By exposing college age males varying beliefs about rape myths in a group discussion among male peers, it was thought that their beliefs may be challenged. Although the current study was not designed to give actual facts to the participants, it was thought that through interaction with other peers, statements were made that differed from those previously held by some of the participants. This interaction may be effective if those participants that already have less belief in rape myths are willing to speak up in order to challenge those participants that do strongly agree with rape myths.

The goal of the present study was to measure how exposing rape myths to scrutiny may challenge participants' beliefs in them. The hypothesis was that participants who see an

educational video and are involved in a frank discussion about that video with their peers will be less likely to endorse rape myths than those who only see the video without such a discussion.

## Method

### *Participants*

Recruitment process. Signs advertising the study (see Appendix A) were posted around male residence halls on the campus of a small mid-western college. Participants signed up on a posted sign-up sheet to indicate their willingness to participate (see Appendix B). Faculty members were asked to announce the study to their classes to maximize the number of volunteers.

Characteristics/Demographics. Participants (N=31) were male students at a private Midwestern liberal arts college. While all participants freely volunteered, those enrolled in introductory psychology class were given extra credit for having participated in the study.

### *Assistants*

A fourth-year male undergraduate led an interactive educational intervention (described below) using a designated script (see Appendix C) and distributed the surveys (see Appendix D) to the experimental group. Another fourth year male distributed the surveys to the control group. These assistants were chosen based on the assumption that male participants would be more comfortable speaking with male investigators. The assistants were specifically chosen for their status as role models on campus. Both were involved in athletics and academics.

### *Materials*

Script. The assistants were given a semi-structured script (see Appendix C) by the researcher in order to ensure the study was executed consistently and to manage any procedural

difficulties. Included in the script were three items from the RMAS (1, 5, and 12) (see Appendix C) as discussion questions between the participants and the research assistant.

Video. A video tape identifying various factors leading to date rape was shown to both groups simultaneously. This video was entitled *Date Rape* (2001) and directed by Educational Video Network. These factors include the effect of gender socialization, alcohol, and miscommunication of intentions.

Survey. Sixteen of the 19 items listed in Martha Burt's Rape Myth Acceptance Scale were used as a survey (see Appendix D) to test participants' beliefs of rape myths (Burt, 1980). Items for discussion were chosen because they were expected to lead to more intense discussion among the participants. Those items with more detail and demand for opinion were used as the dependent measure at the end of the study. Each survey was marked with the participant's identification number to maintain anonymity.

Each item on the survey was accompanied by a seven-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Each point along the continuum was assigned a number from one to seven to be coded in SPSS for each participant. For example, "strongly disagree" was assigned a "1" for each participant that marked that as an answer. Accordingly, "strongly agree" was assigned a "7."

### *Procedure*

Two different data collection sessions were needed to maximize the number of participants. Male volunteers were randomly assigned using a random numbers table to either an experimental group or a control group at the time they arrived for the study. Participants met in a room to read and sign individual consent forms (see Appendix E). The assistants introduced themselves and the reason for their presence. The video was shown.

Experimental group. Upon completion of the video, the experimental group was then taken to a different room separate from the control group. The assistant, using a script (Appendix C), primarily asked for comments and asked questions related to beliefs held about rape to get the discussion started. He then incorporated items (1, 5, and 12) from the RMAS to further discussion. Afterwards, the balance of the RMAS (see Appendix D) was then handed to each participant, who was asked to complete it. Upon exiting, the participants picked up a debriefing sheet (Appendix G). As noted in the script, this condition was designed to take 30-45 minutes. The actual time for Session 1 was 27 minutes; the actual time for Session 2 was 30 minutes.

Control group. Upon completion of the video and exit of the experimental group from the room, the control group was then given the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (see Appendix D) by the assistant and asked to complete it. Upon exiting, the participants picked up a debriefing sheet (see Appendix G). The actual time for Session 1 was 14 minutes; the actual time for Session 2 was 16 minutes.

## Results

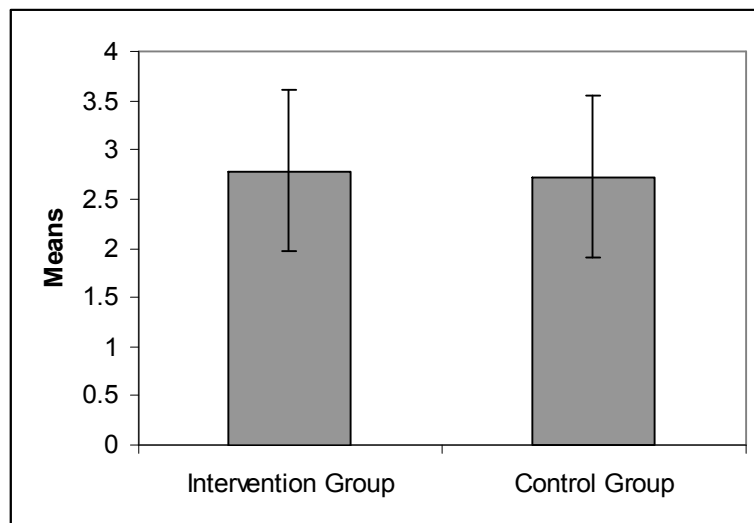
Surveys were coded and scored by the primary investigator on a seven point scale. After each participant's coded data was entered into SPSS, a mean was derived. These means were used to compare the experimental and control groups.

Scores were summed for all items of the RMAS. The reliability for the entire 16-item scale was relatively low:  $\alpha=0.50$ . Therefore, the scale was revised to include only nine items. The following items were omitted: 1, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 (see Appendix D). These items were deleted because they correlated poorly with the other items. The resulting reliability analysis on this revised version was deemed adequate ( $\alpha=0.74$ ). Sawyer (2002) similarly used a

revised version in which six items were dropped resulting in an RMAAS consisting of thirteen items.

After running an independent samples t-test comparing the two groups, no significant difference was found:  $T(29)=.21, p>.05$ . Each individual item was then scored for significance. Contrary to our hypotheses, one item did reach significance, but in the opposite direction. The control group had lower RMA than the intervention group for item 10 (“Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked”). The means for the intervention and control groups were also examined (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The mean scores ( $\pm$  SD) on the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale for the intervention and control groups.



### Discussion

The similarity in the means of the two groups may be a result of a number of factors. First, it is possible that the educational video the participants viewed before the surveys or the discussion and the surveys could have acted as a form of intervention on its own. It is possible that the information presented in the educational video countered some of the participant's

formerly held beliefs about rape enough to minimize their acceptance as recorded on the surveys. Second, the participants may honestly “slightly disagree” or “disagree” with the rape myths given any former education or conversations they may have had before the study. It is quite possible, and hopeful, that men really do not accept the rape myths as strongly as one may be apt to think.

The item found to be significant in the reverse direction may be explained by the fact that actual facts were not given to the participants in order to sway their opinions. Instead, brief conversation, which may not have entailed this item, was the only factor differentiating the two groups. Given the fact that an assistant was responsible for leading the discussion, it will never be known exactly what was discussed in the brief period of time the participants were allotted to attempt to combat the rape myths. One can only hope that this one item out of the sixteen that was significant in the reverse direction was merely a matter of chance and does not really conclude anything about the discussion among the experimental group.

The results of this study allow for explanations of how this study could be improved if run again. First, although a very specific script was given to the assistant in charge of the intervention group, there was room for improvement. In this study, the script was used more as a means of structure. While structure was necessary, the script did not provide the necessary arguments that were included in the RMAS. Three items from the RMAS were used as a means of discussion, but the emphasis was not placed on using those to combat acceptance of other rape myths. This emphasis would be necessary if the study were to be run again.

Secondly, the population from which participants were pulled was not particularly diverse. If the study were to be run again, a means of surveying men from outside the private liberal arts college would be found in order to gain insight on other populations. The college in

which this study was performed was separate from greater population allowing for a false sense of security. These feelings of security could allow for different beliefs or acceptance than those college campuses more integrated with the greater population.

Thirdly, the length of discussion was not as long as initially planned. Participants did not have much to say on the subjects presented by the intervention group assistant therefore resulting in a shortened intervention. The goal time for the intervention group was set at 45 minutes. The actual time used by the groups, due to this lack of participation, ranged from 27 to 30 minutes. This time included signing consent forms, watching the video, discussing, and filling out surveys. All of that being accomplished, the actual discussion probably only lasted 15 minutes. This amount of time is not sufficient for attempting to alter participants' acceptance of rape myths.

Fourth, the educational video used in this study was one that addressed factors leading to date rape such as miscommunication of signals, consumption of alcohol, and gender socialization. The role of rape myths and men's acceptance of these myths was never introduced throughout the eight minute clip that was shown to all of the participants. It is possible that if a video directly combating those rape myths presented in Martha Burt's (1980) RMAS there would be less overall rape myth acceptance and an even stronger disagreement in the experimental group due to ideas presented in this video.

Further research could strengthen the aforementioned weaknesses in order to more accurately measure the effect of a discussion on the acceptance of rape myths. The researcher in charge of the discussion group could have a more structured script that emphasized a direct attack on rape myths. He would be trained to be able to infer a participant's acceptance in rape myths by answers to his questions or reactions to answers other participants gave. From these

inferences, he would then be able to address the meaning behind such answers or reactions in order to directly combat that acceptance in the rape myths. The new research would also be done using a more diverse sample. These participants could come from various colleges including state universities, private religious colleges, and private secular colleges. With the variety of racial, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds, it is possible that the results may differ greatly than the ones found from this homogeneous sample. The educational video that attempts to directly address and combat rape myth acceptance by presenting the rape myths in a clear-cut manner might aid in participants' thinking about what is wrong with the myths and where their own views stand regarding these myths.

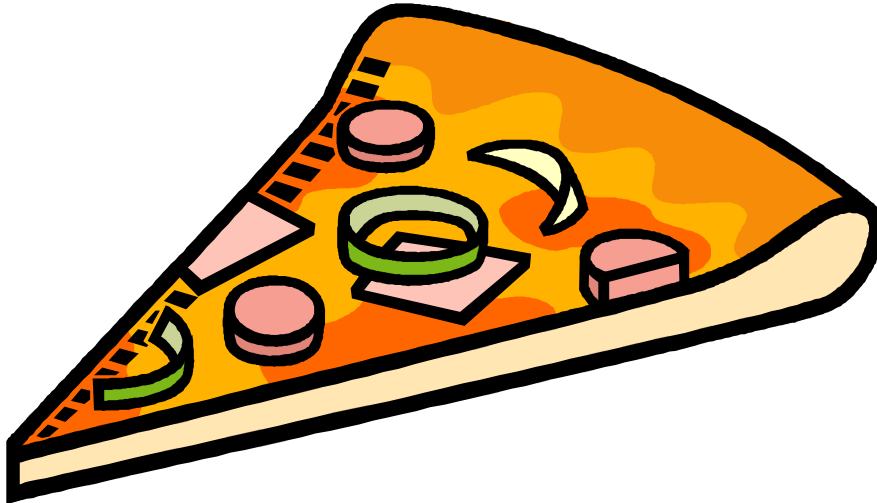
In conclusion, the goal of my study was to find if a discussion among peers about rape myths would lead to fewer acceptances of those myths. A study was run allowing for the discussion to be the only variable that distinguished the two groups. Although the results were not significant, much can be learned from the study. Rape is a serious problem among college campuses. Studies such as this one should be improved and run in order to continually attempt to determine and to combat the potential causes of this problem. Rape myths are unsubstantiated cultural beliefs that allow men to believe that rape is an acceptable behavior when it is not. Why would someone not attempt to combat these myths in order to provide for a more just and safe world?

## References

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Appendix A

## CRAVING FREE PIZZA?!?!



## FIRST YEAR MALES ONLY!!

PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY ENTITLED  
“UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INTERACTION.”

Study designed to learn about your ability to interpret, to critique, and to analyze information received through video and discussion.

RESERVE A SPOT BY SIGNING UP OUTSIDE SC-  
147 OR JUST COME TO  
SCIENCE CENTER LOBBY  
TUESDAY, FEB. 15 AT 7:30 PM!!!

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONTACT:  
TOMMY DENNIS at x6171 or [dennist@hanover.edu](mailto:dennist@hanover.edu)  
or  
BLAKE PREUSZ at x7592 or [preusz@hanover.edu](mailto:preusz@hanover.edu)

Appendix B

**RESEARCH STUDY SIGN-UP SHEET**

PRIMARY RESEARCHER: Thomas Dennis, x6171 and Blake Preusz, x7592

STUDY TITLE: "Understanding Social Action"

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURE: The purpose of this experiment is to measure your ability of to receive, to critique, and to analyze information received through video.

NOTES:

- First year MALE students *only*. You do not have to be a Psychology student.**
- You may participate in this study only *once*.
- The study will take 30-45 minutes.

LOCATION:

All sessions in **ROOM** \_\_\_\_\_, SCIENCE CENTER/GOODRICH

**Next Opportunity:**

Day/date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

| Name     | Phone |          |       |
|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1 _____  | _____ | 21 _____ | _____ |
| 2 _____  | _____ | 22 _____ | _____ |
| 3 _____  | _____ | 23 _____ | _____ |
| 4 _____  | _____ | 24 _____ | _____ |
| 5 _____  | _____ | 25 _____ | _____ |
| 6 _____  | _____ | 26 _____ | _____ |
| 7 _____  | _____ | 27 _____ | _____ |
| 8 _____  | _____ | 28 _____ | _____ |
| 9 _____  | _____ | 29 _____ | _____ |
| 10 _____ | _____ | 30 _____ | _____ |
| 11 _____ | _____ | 31 _____ | _____ |
| 12 _____ | _____ | 32 _____ | _____ |
| 13 _____ | _____ | 33 _____ | _____ |
| 14 _____ | _____ | 34 _____ | _____ |
| 15 _____ | _____ | 35 _____ | _____ |
| 16 _____ | _____ | 36 _____ | _____ |
| 17 _____ | _____ | 37 _____ | _____ |
| 18 _____ | _____ | 38 _____ | _____ |
| 19 _____ | _____ | 39 _____ | _____ |
| 20 _____ | _____ | 40 _____ | _____ |

NOTE: PLEASE SHOW UP ON TIME FOR THE STUDY YOU HAVE SIGNED UP FOR, A RESEARCHER WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU. PLEASE WRITE DOWN YOUR SCHEDULED SESSION.

Researcher: Thomas Dennis  
Location: \_\_\_\_ Science Center/Goodrich  
Day: \_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_

Researcher: Thomas Dennis  
Location: \_\_\_\_ Science Center/Goodrich  
Day: \_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_

Researcher: Thomas Dennis  
Location: \_\_\_\_ Science Center/Goodrich  
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Researcher: Thomas Dennis  
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Researcher: Thomas Dennis  
Location: \_\_\_\_ Science Center/Goodrich  
Day: \_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

## Script for Research Assistant

Note to Research Assistant: Please follow this script as closely as you can. It is vital that all procedures (video, Rape Myth Survey, and paperwork) are followed as written below. Feel free to use the examples word for word, but you do not have to. What you must say is in *ITALICS*!

1. Before you start the study, they each have to sign a Consent Form. This is imperative, so pass each one out personally, and collect personally (meaning: do not do the “take one pass one on” ritual.) ***“Before we start the study, I need each of you to read and sign a Consent Form that will inform you of the purpose of the study and your rights as a participant.”***—You can say this as you are passing them out to save time!
2. Introduce yourself and give at least one reason as to why you are giving this educational intervention. ***“Hi, my name is Tommy Dennis, and I am here to discuss with you something that is very important to me: preventing rape. It is not going to be the conventional rape talk because by now each of you should know what rape is. Instead, this is going to be an interactive discussion to educate you on some subtle situations you or your friends could find yourselves in that could possibly be misinterpreted as rape. We are concerned that sometimes miscommunication is to blame when date rapes happen and we’re hoping to prevent such situations from happening here at Hanover.”***
3. Immediately following, show the video. To introduce the video, you can say: ***“Before we talk, I am going to show you a video that will illustrate different factors contributing to rape. While watching, I want you to take note of any part you do not agree with or that you find particularly helpful.”***
4. After the video is complete, ASK for COMMENTS. Knowing guys, they will probably not be willing to comment in front of their buddies, so this is really where your presence is vital. ASK QUESTIONS!! From these questions, your goal is to get the participants to discuss feelings on subjects related to rape myths. These two questions are phrased pretty well in trying to get them to express opinions about situation brought up in the movie that are controversial. Though your role is facilitator of discussion, you are encouraged to do anything you want to encourage talking EXCEPT give your own opinion. Remember to give a few minutes for each question before asking the next one.
  - A. ***If a girl has condoms, does this means she’s 100% sure she wants sex?***
  - B. ***You can be accused of rape even if you have had sex before. What are your thoughts/feelings on this?***

- B. How can alcohol affect men's perceptions in this type of situation? How might alcohol impact a woman's inhibitions?**
- C. How often do you think there is a rape here on campus?" – How many per year?, How frequently? DO NOT ARGUE or AGREE, just allow them to express their opinions. Reinforce their contribution in a way that allows others to comment. You might have to say something like, "I'm not sure of the numbers myself, I'm just curious what your sense of it is" or if they are giving wildly different answers, to keep the conversation going, you might ask them, "What are you basing these estimates on? What have you heard?"**

4. When they have said all they want to about the miscommunications and frequency topics, shift gears to the next three statements by saying something like **"I'd like to tell you some things I've heard guys your age say, and I'm curious what you think about them. "**

1. **"A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex." What are your opinions on this statement?**
2. **I've heard some people say: "Any female can get raped." Do you think that's true? Why or why not?**
3. **Some men say that "women lie about having been raped." What do you think? What percentage of women who report a rape are lying because they are angry and want to get back at the man they have accused?**  
If they need a quantity, you may use this prompt: *(almost all, about 3/4, about half, about 1/4, almost none)*

5. When discussion has died down, and you cannot get anymore participation or their eyes are glazing over, getting fidgety, etc., it's time for the paperwork. **"Okay, I can see that you all have some interesting ideas about this subject; OR yes, you are all thinking a lot about these complicated issues or any kind of wrap-up statement. Now, we're almost done, but first, there is a survey to be filled out. It should not take long at all, but it is imperative that you are completely honest on the surveys and that you do not share your responses with your peers. Remember, they are completely anonymous, Please DO NOT write your name or anything else on the pages and please be as honest as you can be. Just turn them into me as you leave and pick up this other sheet here. Well, thank you for your participation in this very important discussion and thanks for helping with our research study.**

As they hand sheets in: **"Thanks again."**

After the last participant is gone, please collect all surveys and materials (video, script, consent forms, debriefing forms, etc).

Appendix D

Social Interaction Survey

Directions: Remember, this survey is anonymous, so please answer each of the 16 items honestly by circling the number that corresponds with the answer that best fits your opinion. This is not timed, so please answer at your own pace and return to the researcher when finished. Thank you.

**1. Any female can get raped.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**2. One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**3. Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**4. In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**5. If a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**6. Women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**7. A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**8. Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**9. If a woman gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she should be considered "fair game" to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not.**

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

**10. What percentage of reported rapes would you guess were merely invented by women who discovered they were pregnant and wanted to protect their own reputation?**

|      |                |         |         |         |               |     |
|------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|-----|
| 1    | 2              | 3       | 4       | 5       | 6             | 7   |
| None | Almost<br>None | About ¼ | About ½ | About ¾ | Almost<br>All | All |

**11. A person comes to you and claims they were raped. How likely would you be to believe their statement if the person were:  
your best friend?**

|       |        |           |            |        |
|-------|--------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 1     | 2      | 3         | 4          | 5      |
| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Frequently | Always |

**12. an Indian woman?**

|            |             |                |                 |             |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Frequently | 5<br>Always |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|

**13. a neighborhood woman?**

|            |             |                |                 |             |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Frequently | 5<br>Always |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|

**14. a young boy?**

|            |             |                |                 |             |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Frequently | 5<br>Always |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|

**15. a black woman?**

|            |             |                |                 |             |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Frequently | 5<br>Always |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|

**16. a white woman?**

|            |             |                |                 |             |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Frequently | 5<br>Always |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|

Appendix E

Consent Form for Understanding Social Interaction

My name is Thomas Dennis, and I am running an experiment for Psychology Research Seminar.

You have been asked to participate in a psychological experiment, which is called "Understanding Social Interaction." The purpose of this experiment is to learn about your ability to interpret, to critique, and to analyze information received through video and discussion. You will be asked to view a video, to engage in the discussion that follows and to fill out paperwork afterward. This task should take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. I foresee no risks resulting from your participation in this experiment. If applicable, you may receive class credit in a psychology course for your participation in this experiment.

The results of this experiment may be presented at professional meetings or published in the scientific literature. However, your name will never be used. Only group data will be used to report results. All personal data will be kept confidential.

If you wish to withdraw from the experiment, you may do so at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me, or contact the supervisor of this research, Dr. Michelle Mamberg, Department of Psychology, Hanover College, phone 866-7239. Thank you.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that my participation in this  
(First name) (Last name) (Please print)

experiment is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the experiment at any time without penalty.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Experimenter)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Appendix F

Consent Form for Understanding Social Interaction

My name is Blake Preusz, and I am running an experiment for Psychology Research Seminar.

You have been asked to participate in a psychological experiment, which is called "Understanding Social Interaction." The purpose of this experiment is to learn about measure your ability to interpret, to critique, and to analyze information received through video. You will be asked to view a video and to fill out paperwork afterward. This task should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. I foresee no risks resulting from your participation in this experiment. If applicable, you may receive class credit in a psychology course for your participation in this experiment.

The results of this experiment may be presented at professional meetings or published in the scientific literature. However, your name will never be used. Only group data will be used to report results. All personal data will be kept confidential.

If you wish to withdraw from the experiment, you may do so at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me, or contact the supervisor of this research, Dr. Michelle Mamberg, Department of Psychology, Hanover College, phone 866-7239. Thank you.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that my participation in this  
(First name) (Last name) (Please print)

experiment is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the experiment at any time without penalty.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Experimenter)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix G

### Debriefing

Thank you for participating in this study. Although the study was titled, “Understanding Social Interaction,” this study was specifically designed to analyze one specific type of social interaction. We are actually investigating the effect of challenging one’s beliefs about rape on the acceptance of rape myths. Our hypothesis is that those participants who are involved in the discussion in which their own beliefs about rape are discussed and, hopefully, challenged, will be less likely to believe the rape myths presented in the survey at the end of the session. Participants were randomly assigned to two separate conditions. In the first group, also known as the control group, participants were simply shown the video and asked to fill out a survey. In the second group, also known as the experimental group, participants were shown the video, given an opportunity to ask questions, asked opinions on three of the items in the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and then asked to fill out a survey. Please do not discuss this study with anyone in case this study is conducted again (we may need more participants).

If you have any further questions about this study, feel free to contact:

Shannon Hooven x7728 [hoovens@hanover.edu](mailto:hoovens@hanover.edu)

Dr. Michelle Mamberg x7239 [mamberg@hanover.edu](mailto:mamberg@hanover.edu)

Also, due to the content of the study, uncomfortable issues may have been raised. If you would like to talk to someone about these issues, contact Counseling Services for consultation. Provided below is contact information for those services:

Dr. Gary Petiprin, Lynn Hall 204 x7399 [petiprin@hanover.edu](mailto:petiprin@hanover.edu)

Dr. Katie Dine Young, Lynn Hall 203 x6842 [kdineyoung@hanover.edu](mailto:kdineyoung@hanover.edu)

Dr. David Yeager, Science Hall 311, x6738 [yeagerd@hanover.edu](mailto:yeagerd@hanover.edu)

Dr. Michelle Bartel, Science Hall 309, x6745 [bartel@hanover.edu](mailto:bartel@hanover.edu)

You may take this sheet with you. Once again, thank you for participating in my study.