The Campus Safety and Violence Coalition is looking forward to another great opportunity for networking and professional development among its constituents. As part of this, we are excited to share some sessions that they are involved with at this year’s upcoming ACHA annual meeting in Austin, Texas.

“Stalking 2.0: Digging Deeper into the Impact of Cyberstalking and Stalking on College Campuses” will be held as a pre-conference session on Tuesday, May 30, 2017, from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. With overwhelming positive feedback about last year’s general session about stalking provided by Mark Kurkowski, AS (St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department), we are pleased to welcome Mark back and invite you to take part in this year’s pre-conference session that takes a deeper and updated look at stalking.

The session seeks to inform participants of the prevalence of stalking among college students, with a special focus on the use of technology in stalking. This session will particularly focus on the potential dangers of dating apps, popular social media amongst our students, and specific risk reduction strategies. Participants will be able to better understand how to educate and protect students, as well as direct prevention and risk reduction education. Participants will also understand the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) definition of stalking and their Clery reporting obligations.

For those unable to make the pre-conference session or who want to hear more, we are delighted to again welcome Mark on Thursday, June 1, 2017, from 10:00—11:30 am. He will present “Stalking 2.0: Digging Deeper into the World of Cyberstalking.” This session will also focus on the use of technology in stalking and has similar objectives to the pre-conference session.

Members of the Creating Guidance for Addressing Sexual Assault Task Force will present “ACHA Toolkit for Addressing Sexual and Relationship Violence on Campuses” on Thursday, June 1, 2017, from 3:45–5:15 pm. Presenters include: Mary Wyandt-Hiebert, PhD, MCHES, CWHC (University of Arkansas); Kim Webb, MA (Washington University in St. Louis); Deborah Stewart, MD (California State University, Chico); Jen Jacobsen, MPH, MA (Grinnell College); and Stephanie Hanenberg, MSN, FNP-C (University of Colorado Colorado Springs).

In this session, the task force members will present a review of ACHA’s newly developed toolkit for addressing sexual and relationship violence. With an emphasis on public health and trauma-informed approaches, the toolkit focuses on addressing and responding to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Participants will gain insight of the toolkit's development and applications across campuses. Future role out of the toolkit will be absorbed into the Campus Safety and Violence Coalition.

The Campus Safety and Violence Coalition welcomes all its members and all who are interested in becoming a part of the coalition to the annual meeting of the coalition to be held on Wednesday, May 31, 2017, from 6:00-7:00 pm as part of the ACHA annual meeting. We look forward to continuing to define the future direction of the coalition and sharing ideas for future engagement with coalition activities.
Social Media and the Normalization of Stalking

Brittney Vigna, MPH, CHES, CPH, University of Alabama

Social media is a medium that has become an everyday activity of many people across the world. Business, universities, and individuals use social media accounts to communicate their own brand, whether it be professional or personal. As public health and health education practitioners, social media has become a wonderful tool to communicate messages to a broad variety of populations. But is the language being used on social media contributing to the normalization of violence?

In the spectrum of violence, social media is not necessarily what comes to the forefront of minds. In an article discussing social media and symbolic violence, Recuero (2015) assesses the issue of social media as falling under the terminology of “symbolic violence”, under which language falls as well. In another publication produced by Bourdieu (1999), one of the dangerous factors of symbolic violence is how it can normalize rhetoric and legitimize violence relations.

Now, what does this have to do with social media? Consider the terminology “Facebook stalking.” An estimated 16% of women and 5% of men are stalked annually (Black et al, 2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey cited the increase in technologies such as wireless internet and cellphones as contributing to the ease of stalking behaviors (2011). According to this survey, 78% of women and 76% of men received unwanted text messages or phone calls. Additionally, the Bureau of Justice Statistics cited that 1 in 4 stalking victims reported incidents of cyberstalking.

The context of “Facebook stalking” is a common term used to communicate an active viewing of another person's social media profiles. But can this language normalize, or even perpetuate, the violence of stalking? I believe, yes. In the same way rape culture is normalized and excused through media, stalking and other violent crimes can also be normalized through the language we use. This symbolic violence can be unconscious, but our desensitization to the terminology minimizes the larger issue at hand.

How can we as practitioners combat this language? First, making the conversation surrounding stalking a priority when discussing violence on campuses. The highest rates of stalking victimization occurs between the ages of 18 and 24 (Baum et al., 2014). Bystander intervention also has the potential to play a huge role in combatting language surrounding stalking and the normalization of stalking. Recognizing the issue and addressing it head on in conversation brings attention to the normalization of the terminology and how using “Facebook stalking” can minimize the severity of stalking and cyberstalking.

References


Let’s Think Outside the Box When Hiring Title IX Coordinators
Melissa A. Kelley, EdD, Union College

Many of us by now are quite familiar with the Title IX Education Amendments of 1972 and the Dear Colleague letters that have been issued by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. Since 2011, most institutions have made a point to reconfigure or establish Title IX coordination within their administration. While there may be no dispute on how Title IX protects students and employees from sex discrimination at our institutions, there is much discussion about who is fit to lead such initiatives. A Title IX coordinator is an integral part of an institution’s approach to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression, is eligible to participate in all aspects of the educational programs and activities offered. Additionally, Title IX coordinators are charged with ensuring that policies and protocols are in place to ensure congruence and compliance with the law, that everyone within the school community knows how to file a complaint and seek help when needed, and arguably most importantly, the Title IX coordinator ensures that training and education is available to all.

As a prior health educator, I have spent the better part of 15 years providing sexuality workshops and prevention education programming. This prevention education programming not only included sexual assault and relationship violence programming but also educational initiatives aimed at reducing hazardous drinking and other drug use. Now as a Title IX coordinator, I find that my knowledge of sexual decision making and behavior paired with harm reduction strategies and student development theories has given me an advantage over the traditional Title IX coordinator.

Typically, an institution seeks a Title IX coordinator with legal experience, be that a law degree or policy development experience. While having a healthy understanding of the law and the ability to read and understand policy is important, I find that having a strong base to have frank and real conversations about sex and sexuality is the skill that is most lacking for a Title IX coordinator.

I recently attended the National Sex Education Conference, and to my knowledge, I was the only Title IX coordinator in attendance. When I spoke with attendees and explained my role and why I was there, many participants were stunned to realize that others in my position were not in attendance. As I considered the reasons why I chose to attend and how valuable the sessions were for me in my role, I realized that it’s time to think outside the traditional box and look for Title IX coordinators who have skills sets beyond compliance. Health educators and those who work directly with the populations we serve make excellent candidates for Title IX compliance. I urge those looking for additional responsibilities or a chance to do something different to consider this work. It’s challenging, rewarding, and gives you the opportunity to use your skills in ways you may not have considered before.