

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

UCARE Research Products

UCARE: Undergraduate Creative Activities &  
Research Experiences

---

Spring 4-14-2020

## Individual Attitudes and Perceived Efficacy Toward Bystander Intervention Among Childhood Trauma Survivors

Haley Hansmeier

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, haleyhansmeier@gmail.com

Taylor Brumbaugh

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, brumbaughtaylor@gmail.com

Bailey Lytle

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, blytle65@gmail.com

Kyle Bizal

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, kbizal92@gmail.com

Adisson Ams

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, addyams21@gmail.com

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ucareresearch>



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

Hansmeier, Haley; Brumbaugh, Taylor; Lytle, Bailey; Bizal, Kyle; Ams, Adisson; Stephens, Daniel; Kumar, Shaina; Gervais, Sarah; and DiLillo, David, "Individual Attitudes and Perceived Efficacy Toward Bystander Intervention Among Childhood Trauma Survivors" (2020). *UCARE Research Products*. 182.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ucareresearch/182>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the UCARE: Undergraduate Creative Activities & Research Experiences at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in UCARE Research Products by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

---

## Authors

Haley Hansmeier, Taylor Brumbaugh, Bailey Lytle, Kyle Bizal, Adisson Ams, Daniel Stephens, Shaina Kumar, Sarah Gervais, and David DiLillo





# Individual Attitudes and Perceived Efficacy Toward Bystander Intervention Among Childhood Trauma Survivors

Haley Hansmeier, Taylor Brumbaugh, Bailey Lytle, Kyle Bizal, Adisson Ams, Daniel Stephens, Shaina Kumar, Sarah Gervais, & David DiLillo

## INTRODUCTION

- Childhood abuse and neglect are related to a number of negative outcomes in adulthood, including increased risk for mental health disorders and additional traumatic experiences, poor self-efficacy, and difficulties with interpersonal relationships (Brietzke et al., 2012; Dube et al., 2003; Sachs-Ericsson, Medley, Kendall-Tackett, & Taylor, 2011).
- Women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse in particular are at greater risk for lower levels of self-efficacy in adulthood (Diehl & Prout, 2002).
- Because sexual abuse survivors experience low self-efficacy, they might feel less confident with regard to engaging in bystander intervention, even though they want to prevent another victim of sexual assault (Bryant, 2001; Yule & Grych, 2017).
- Based on this work, we hypothesize that sexual abuse victims will have positive attitudes toward intervening in a risky sexual situation, but they will not feel efficacious enough to do so.

## METHODS

### Participants:

- Participants were 1,018 undergraduate students (67.8% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 20.11$ ,  $SD = 2.56$ ). Approximately 35% were freshmen ( $n = 357$ ), 23% sophomores ( $n = 238$ ), 21% juniors ( $n = 215$ ), 15% seniors ( $n = 156$ ), and 5.1% in their fifth year or above ( $n = 52$ ).
- Participants identified as White ( $n = 805$ ; 79.1%), Black or African American ( $n = 97$ ; 9.5%), Asian ( $n = 98$ ; 9.6%), American Indian or Alaska Native ( $n = 15$ ; 1.5%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ( $n = 4$ ; 0.4%), and/or Other ( $n = 40$ ; 4.0%). Ninety-five participants (9.3%) identified as being of Latinx/Hispanic origin.

### Procedures:

- Undergraduate students were invited to participate in a study related to “Perceptions of Everyday Life.”
- Participants were recruited through an online advertisement in the Psychology Department subject pool or directly e-mailed by the research team from a randomized list of undergraduate students on campus.
- Following informed consent, participants completed a series of questionnaires via Qualtrics while seated at a private computer.

## MEASURES

- **Childhood Trauma Questionnaire–Sexual Abuse Subscale.** The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein & Fink, 1998) includes 25 items that assess participants’ history of abuse and neglect in childhood. The CTQ inquires about five types of maltreatment: emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect. Respondents rated each statement on a scale of 1 (*never true*) to 5 (*very often true*). For the purpose of the current study, we examined the 5-item sexual abuse subscale. Items were summed to obtain a total score, with higher scores indicating a higher degree of sexual abuse experienced, ( $\alpha = .89$ ).
- **Bystander Attitude Scale.** A revised version of the Bystander Attitude Scale (BAS-R; McMahon, Postmus, & Koenick, 2011) was used to measure participants’ intentions to intervene to prevent sexual violence. This 16-item scale asked participants to indicate how likely they would be to perform various bystander behaviors (e.g., “Check in with my friend who looks drunk when s/he goes to a room with someone else at a party.”) on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*unlikely*) to 5 (*very likely*). Items were summed to obtain a total score, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward bystander intervention, ( $\alpha = .84$ ).
- **Bystander Efficacy Scale.** The Bystander Efficacy Scale (BES; Baynard, Plante, Ward, Chon, Moorhead, & Walsh, 2005) is a 14-item questionnaire that assessed how confident a participant was that they would engage in bystander behaviors (e.g., “Express my discomfort if someone makes a joke about a woman’s body.”). Participants rated their degree of confidence on a scale from 0 (*can’t do*) to 100 (*very certain*). Items were averaged to create a score of perceived effectiveness, with higher scores indicating greater confidence in oneself to engage in bystander intervention behaviors, ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

## RESULTS

- In a test of regression, results indicated that childhood sexual trauma was positively correlated with bystander attitudes. Individuals with greater instances of childhood sexual trauma reported more positive attitudes toward intervention to prevent sexual violence,  $r = 0.10$ ,  $t(1008) = 3.170$ ,  $p = 0.002$ .
- In a separate test of regression, results indicated that childhood sexual trauma positively predicted bystander efficacy. Individuals who indicated greater instances of childhood sexual trauma also indicated greater perceived self-efficacy in intervening in a bystander scenario,  $r = 0.09$ ,  $t(1010) = 2.872$ ,  $p = 0.004$ .

## DISCUSSION

### Main Findings:

- Individuals who have experienced greater instances of childhood sexual trauma reported more positive attitudes toward intervention to prevent sexual violence. This finding supports the proposed hypothesis and lends further evidence to the notion that these individuals wish to prevent additional victims of sexual assault.
- Individuals who endorsed greater instances of childhood sexual trauma also reported greater perceived self-efficacy with regard to intervening in various bystander scenarios. This finding is in contrast to the proposed hypothesis; however, these data provide us with new information with regard to self-efficacy in childhood sexual trauma survivors. There might be ways in which these individuals increased their sense of self-efficacy, and this should be examined in future research.

### Limitations:

- An attempt was made to obtain an ethnically diverse sample; however, the sample was gathered from a large Midwestern University where the participant pool predominately identified as White (79.1%), which limits generalizability.
- Data from the current study were obtained through self-report questionnaires, potentially limiting the application of results to sexually risky scenarios in real life. With that said, we are in the process of assessing *in vivo* bystander intervention behaviors and our future research will report on this outcome.

### Future Directions:

- Accounting for prior bystander training in the exploration of childhood sexual trauma and its relation to bystander intervention behaviors would be a useful addition to the current literature.
- Examining how other forms of childhood maltreatment (i.e., emotional and physical abuse, emotional and physical neglect) relate to individual attitudes and efficacy would provide us with important information regarding how childhood abuse survivors feel toward bystander intervention.