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A mixed method examination of support for two college sexual assault mandatory reporting policy approaches

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Abstract

A *compelled disclosure* mandatory reporting policy approach requires all or nearly all university employees to report any sexual assault they learn about to university officials, regardless of the victim/survivor's wishes. Although rare, some universities have implemented policies that require the victim/survivor's consent to the report (i.e., *consented disclosure*). This mixed method study examined support for a *compelled disclosure* versus *consented disclosure* policy approach in a sample of college students (n = 640) and non-student adults (n = 405). Quantitative data examined whether sexual victimization and trust in university response to sexual assault reports were associated with policy preference. Qualitative data examined participants' explanations for their policy preference. Most participants preferred *consented* over *compelled disclosure*, and college students and those with less trust in university response to reports were especially likely to support *consented disclosure*. Reasons for supporting *consented disclosure* predominantly centered on survivors, focusing on the importance of survivor choice and wellbeing.

Those who supported *compelled disclosure* predominantly focused on individuals other than the survivor (e.g., the perpetrator, other students), personal beliefs about crime and punishment, and assumptions about the benefits of *compelled disclosure*. Findings highlight the importance of including a greater diversity of perspectives in mandatory reporting policy development.

KEYWORDS
sexual assault, college, mandatory reporting, compelled disclosure, Title IX

Public significance statement

More people prefer a mandatory reporting policy for university employees that requires a sexual assault survivor to consent to the report over a policy that mandates reporting regardless of a survivor's wishes. People who preferred the policy requiring consent said it was important to protect survivors' choice and well-being, and people who preferred the nonconsensual reporting policy said it was important to punish perpetrators and protect other students.

INTRODUCTION

What should a university employee do if a student discloses an experience of sexual assault? Following increased social and legal attention to campus sexual assault, institutions of higher education (IHEs) have implemented policies to answer this question. Broad mandatory reporting policies, also known as *compelled disclosure* policies, require all or nearly all employees to report any sexual assault they learn about to university officials, regardless of the victim/survivor's wishes (Holland et al., 2018). Having a sense of agency, choice, and control is critical for survivors' healing process (Bryant-Davis, 2011; Dworkin et al., 2019), thus, scholars have argued that *compelled disclosure* policies may be harmful (e.g., Holland et al., 2018; Holland, Hutchison et al., 2021; Weiss & Lasky, 2017). Although rare, some IHEs have implemented employee reporting policies for sexual assault that require the survivor's consent to the report (i.e., *consented disclosure*; Holland et al., 2023).

Evidence suggests that college sexual assault survivors and formal support providers (e.g., victim advocates) prefer a *consented disclosure* approach over *compelled disclosure* (e.g., Holland et al., 2019, 2021). Other stakeholder groups include college students (broadly), IHE employees, and members of the public, who can all influence IHE policymaking. Much of the existing research on perceptions of mandatory reporting policies has focused on employees' perceptions of mandatory reporting requirements for sexual assault (e.g., Brubaker & Mancini, 2017; Holland & Cortina, 2017; Johnson et al., 2023; Koon-Magnin & Mancini, 2023; Mancini & Koon-Magnin,

2023; Newins et al., 2018). More research is needed to understand people's support for different types of mandatory reporting policies—as this information may help IHE policymakers think more critically about policy options. The current mixed method study examined support for a *compelled disclosure* versus *consented disclosure* policy approach among a sample of current college students and non-student adults.

Mandatory reporting policies for sexual assault in higher education

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a US civil rights law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions. Title IX rules and regulations from the Department of Education (ED) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) have guided sexual assault prevention, intervention, and education efforts on college campuses for decades. IHE employees' reporting responsibilities for sexual assault under Title IX were first introduced in 2001 OCR guidance, which defined a "responsible employee" as "any employee who has the authority to take action to redress the harassment, who has the duty to report to appropriate school officials sexual harassment or any other misconduct by students or employees, or an individual who a student could reasonably believe has this authority or responsibility" (OCR, 2001, p. 13). IHE employees who were designated as "responsible employees" by their institution were thus mandated to report possible sexual assault (which is included under "sexual harassment"). A Dear Colleague Letter in 2011, along with subsequent OCR guidance under the Obama-Biden administration, retained the definition of "responsible employees" (OCR, 2011; OCR, 2014).

The 2020 Title IX rule from the Trump-Pence administration removed the definition of "responsible employee" (see Holland et al., 2023 for an explanation of this decision) but stated that IHEs could decide "whether the institution desires all (or nearly all, or some subset) of its employees to be 'mandatory reporters'" (OCR, 2020, pp. 1959–1960). The most recent Title IX rule, issued by the Biden-Harris administration in 2024, included highly prescriptive language for IHE mandatory reporting policies. The rule stated that mandatory reporters include "any employee who is not a confidential employee and who either has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the recipient or has responsibility for administrative leadership, teaching, or advising in the recipient's education program or activity" (OCR, 2024 p. 1530), effectively requiring a *compelled disclosure* policy approach for all IHEs. However, lawsuits by conservative anti-LGBTQ+ groups blocked the 2024 Title IX rule from being implemented in 26 states and hundreds of colleges across the United States (Knott & Alonso, 2024), and a federal judge then vacated the rule nationwide (Knott & Alonso, 2024).

Although the specifics within OCR Title IX guidance has become a political ping pong match—and are likely to continue to change over time—IHEs have been long instructed to designate some employees as mandatory reporters. Although it was not required, most IHEs have implemented broad *compelled disclosure* policies, which require all or nearly all employees to report any instance of sexual assault they learn about regardless of survivors' wishes (Holland et al., 2018, 2023). However, IHEs have implemented other mandatory reporting policy approaches. For example, some IHEs have policies that designate a select group of employees (mostly those in leadership) as mandatory reporters—termed selective mandatory reporting (Holland et al., 2018, 2023). Selective mandatory reporting policies represent a more limited version of a *compelled disclosure* policy, but they are less common than broad *compelled disclosure* policies (Holland et al., 2018, 2023) and are not the focus of the current research. Another approach to mandatory reporting policies that some IHEs have implemented are policies that consider survivors' consent to the

report (i.e., *consented disclosure* policies; Holland et al., 2018, 2023). Given research showing the importance of regaining a sense of control after sexual trauma (e.g., Bryant-Davis, 2011; Dworkin et al., 2019; Frazier, 2003; Orchowski et al., 2013), scholars have advocated for approaches that afford survivors control over the report (e.g., Freyd, 2016; Holland, Cortina et al., 2019). An example of a *consented disclosure* approach would be a policy that designates a select group of employees as mandatory reporters and requires most other employees to report if the survivor consents to the report (Holland et al., 2023).

It has been widely assumed that *compelled disclosure* policies will increase reporting, benefit survivors, and protect institutions from legal liability (Holland et al., 2018). However, researchers have demonstrated that empirical evidence to support these assumptions is lacking and that *compelled disclosure* policies may be harmful to survivors and campus communities (Cipriano et al., 2023; Holland et al., 2018; Richards et al., 2023). There are alternative IHE employee reporting policy approaches, but more research is needed to understand people's perceptions of them.

Opinions on mandatory reporting policies

Given concerns that mandatory reporting policy making in IHEs has not been driven by empirical evidence, there has been increasing research on perceptions of these policies among groups of stakeholders. Much of this research has focused on IHE employees' knowledge and perceptions of their mandatory reporting role (e.g., Brubaker & Mancini, 2017; Holland, 2019; Holland & Cortina, 2017; Johnson et al., 2023; Koon-Magnin & Mancini, 2023; Mancini & Koon-Magnin, 2023; Newins et al., 2018; Newins & White, 2018) and intentions to report instances of sexual harassment and assault (e.g., Holland & Cortina, 2017; Koon-Magnin & Mancini, 2023; Mancini & Koon-Magnin, 2023; Newins et al., 2018; Newins & White, 2018). A smaller body of work in this area has focused on college students. For instance, college students often report some awareness of employee reporting requirements at their university (e.g., Johnson et al., 2023; Newins et al., 2018; Newins & White, 2018). Research has also found that college students endorse both possible risks (e.g., traumatizing survivors, chilling reports) and possible benefits (e.g., increasing campus safety, punishing perpetrators) of employees requirement to report sexual assault disclosures (Johnson et al., 2023; Mancini et al., 2016; Newins et al., 2018; Newins & White, 2018). This body of work has focused on perceptions of employee reporting requirements under a *compelled disclosure* policy approach, so less is known about people's perceptions of different policy approaches.

Only a few studies have examined college students' perceptions of different mandatory reporting policies. Through interviews with 40 college sexual assault survivors, Holland et al. (2021) explored perceptions of different mandatory reporting policy approaches. Survivors expressed concerns about the potential harms of a *compelled disclosure* policy and overwhelmingly favored a *consented disclosure* policy approach. Poole & Gray (2024) presented college students with three sexual assault vignettes that included different mandatory reporting policy approaches. Overall, participants preferred a *consented disclosure* approach (i.e., in which survivors decide if employees make a report) more than a *compelled disclosure* approach (i.e., in which all employees must report regardless of survivors' wishes). Additionally, students who had experienced sexual assault (compared to non-victims) and students with more negative perceptions of university response to sexual assault indicated that they would be less likely to report sexual assault in the broad *compelled disclosure* policy scenario. Sears-Greer & Meston (2024) presented college students with a hypothetical mandatory reporting policy—all employees required to report versus all employees designated as confidential—and assessed the likelihood to report across different sexual assault

scenarios. Overall, they found that students indicated a lower likelihood of reporting some sexual assaults under the *compelled disclosure* policy. In sum, these studies suggest that college students have more positive perceptions of *consented disclosure* approaches compared to *compelled disclosure*, but more research is needed to understand factors that shape students' opinions of different reporting policies (e.g., what characteristics predict preferring *consented* or *compelled* disclosure, what are the reasons for preferring *consented* or *compelled* disclosure).

Additionally, few research studies have examined perceptions of mandatory reporting policies for IHE employees among the general public. Members of the public have played a role in shaping Title IX guidance related to sexual assault in higher education, for instance, by submitting comments on proposed Title IX guidance during 60-day notice and comment periods. One study, conducted by Budd & Frye (2023), examined perceptions of three mandatory reporting policy approaches among a sample of adults. In general, a majority of participants supported a *compelled disclosure* policy approach over a *selective* approach and a *consented disclosure* approach. However, they also found that greater endorsement of concerns about how mandatory reporting affects victims was associated with decreased support for *compelled disclosure*. For example, if respondents indicted greater concern that mandatory reporting could retraumatize survivors, the odds of supporting the *compelled disclosure* policy decreased, while the odds of supporting the *consented disclosure* policy increased. Thus, it is possible that members of the general public may be more likely to express a preference for *compelled disclosure* compared to *consented disclosure*, but policy preferences may be influenced by perceived policy outcomes. More research is needed to understand *which* mandatory reporting policies individuals prefer and *why* they support such policies.

Factors shaping perceptions of mandatory reporting policies

Institutional betrayal theory (Smith & Freyd, 2014) conceptualizes how people can experience harm resulting from wrongdoings perpetrated by an institution on which they depend. Sexual assault survivors, for example, may experience institutional betrayal when IHEs fail to address sexual assault via acts of omission and commission (e.g., failing to treat victims with compassion and respect; Smith & Freyd, 2014). Survivors often experience institutional betrayal and report increased harms as a result (Hannan et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2016; Smith & Freyd, 2013). While institutional betrayal takes different forms, trust is an important element, as trust can be eroded when people believe that IHEs fail to respond appropriately and adequately when sexual assaults are reported (Smith & Freyd, 2014).

Drawing from this theory and prior research, we examined whether personal experience of sexual assault and trust in university response to sexual assault reports were related to people's opinions about mandatory reporting policies. In quantitative research, for instance, college students who have personally experienced sexual assault (relative to non-victims) report a lower likelihood to disclose to faculty/staff if faculty/staff are required to report (i.e., a *compelled disclosure* approach; Newins et al., 2018; Newins & White, 2018; Poole & Gray, 2024). A qualitative interview study by Holland et al. (2021) found that college sexual assault survivors overwhelmingly disagreed with a *compelled disclosure* approach and agreed with *consented disclosure*. Given that feeling a sense of agency and having control over decisions are essential for survivors' healing (Bryant-Davis, 2011; Dworkin et al., 2019), those who have personally experienced sexual assault may be less likely to support a policy that does not afford them choice in whether an employee must report to the Title IX office (i.e., *compelled disclosure*) and more likely to support policy that requires survivor consent to the report (i.e., *consented disclosure*).

Opinions of mandatory reporting may also be associated with trust in the university's response to sexual assault reports. Research finds that institutions' response to sexual assault reports is often unhelpful at best and harmful at worst (e.g., Holland & Cipriano, 2021; Lorenz et al., 2024; Webermann et al., 2024; Webermann & Holland, 2022). IHE employees express concern that mandatory reporting may harm survivors if they have negative experiences during a Title IX office reporting process (e.g., reporting is retraumatizing, there is no positive outcome; Brubaker & Mancini, 2017; Johnson et al., 2023). Research with undergraduate resident assistants (RAs) found that trust in the university's response is associated with more negative perceptions of their mandatory reporting requirements (Holland, 2019). RAs with negative perceptions of mandatory reporting are also more likely to report if they had greater trust in their institution's response to sexual assault reports (Holland & Cortina, 2017). Overall, findings suggest that people who lack trust in how universities respond to sexual assault reports report more negative perceptions of polices that require employees to report sexual assault disclosures (i.e., *compelled disclosure*). Thus, trust in how universities respond to reports of sexual assault may be an important factor to consider in people's support for a *compelled disclosure* or a *consented disclosure* policy approach.

Current study

In this exploratory study, we examined support for sexual assault mandatory reporting policies for IHE employees among a sample of current college students and non-student adults. We collected quantitative and qualitative data on participants' support for a *compelled disclosure* or a *consented disclosure* approach. Our first research question was: What aspects of people's experiences may predict their mandatory reporting policy preference? We used quantitative data to examine whether key participant characteristics—previous sexual victimization experience and trust in university response to sexual assault reports—were associated with preferring a *compelled* or *consented* disclosure policy. Although our research was exploratory, based on prior research, we expected that having personally experienced sexual assault and holding less trust in university response would be associated with choosing a *consented disclosure* policy approach. Our second research question was: What are the reasons that people support *compelled* or *consented* disclosure? We used qualitative data to examine participants' explanations for why they supported a *compelled* or *consented* disclosure policy. Together, these analyses offer an in-depth examination of people's support for mandatory reporting policy approaches that do and do not consider survivors' consent.

METHOD

Procedure and participants

These data were collected as part of a larger study examining people's perceptions of university sexual assault policies (Holland, Cipriano, Goodman-Williams et al., 2021). Participants were recruited in two ways: through the psychology subject pool platform at a large midwestern university and Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is a crowdsourcing platform operated by Amazon.com and is used to recruit samples of adults in the United States (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Goodman et al., 2013). Research has found that MTurk samples can be somewhat more diverse than web-based samples collected via other methods and US college student samples (Buhrmester

et al., 2011). Together, our recruitment approach offered a convenient sample of people who were and were not currently attending college. People were invited to participate in an anonymous web-based survey about their opinions of university sexual assault policies. Eligibility requirements for subject pool participants were being enrolled in the university and age 17 or older, and eligibility requirements for MTurk participants were being an adult living in the United States. We paid MTurk participants $1 (within the normal compensation range for MTurk; Goodman et al., 2013) and compensated subject pool participants with one extra credit point that they earned in a class. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board approved all procedures.

In total, 592 subject pool participants and 600 MTurk participants started the survey. Because the study was exploratory and mixed methods, we did not conduct a priori power analysis. The MTurk sample size was informed by the money available to pay participants, and the subject pool sample by the number of students who completed the study over the course of an academic semester. We screened participants for inattention and problematic data, as recommended for web surveys (Goodman et al., 2013). For the subject pool, 53 were removed for failing attention check items (i.e., items that instruct participants to select a particular response). For MTurk participants, 94 were removed for failing attention checks and/or providing nonsensical responses (i.e., in their answers to open-ended questions). The final sample size was 1045 (539 from the subject pool and 506 from MTurk). MTurk participants were asked if they were currently attending college ("yes" n = 101, "no" n = 403, did not answer n = 2), and the 101 participants who said "yes" were classified as current college students along with the 539 subject pool participants.

For the 640 current college students, there were 73.6% (n = 471) cisgender women, 24.8% (n = 159) cisgender men, and 1.6% (n = 10) transgender or gender expansive (TGE) people (e.g., trans woman, trans man, genderfluid). Most were White (73.8%, n = 471), with the other participants identifying as African American/Black (5.6%, n = 36), Asian/Asian American (6.9%, n = 44), Latinx/e (5.8%, n = 37), another race/ethnicity (0.9%, n = 5), and 45 (7.1%) more than one race/ethnicity. For sexual identity, 565 (88.6%) identified as heterosexual, 38 (6.0%) bisexual, 9 (1.4%) pansexual, 2 (0.3%) queer, 7 (1.1%) gay, 7 (1.1%) lesbian, 2 (0.3%) asexual, and 8 (1.3%) unsure or questioning. While all were currently enrolled as undergraduate students, some already held a college degree, including 8 (1.3%) with a postgraduate degree, 39 (6.1%) with a bachelor's degree, and 33 (5.2%) with an associate's degree. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 56 (M = 21.57, SD = 5.23).

The 403 working adults were 38.5% (n = 155) cisgender women, 60% (n = 241) cisgender men, and 1.5% (n = 6) transgender or gender expansive (TGE) people (e.g., trans woman, trans man, nonbinary). One respondent did not provide their gender identity. Most were White (76.2%, n = 307), with the others identifying as African American/Black (9.9%, n = 40), Asian/Asian American (6.0%, n = 24), Latinx/e (4.0%, n = 16), and 11 (2.7%) more than one race/ethnicity. For sexual identity, 361 (89.6%) identified as heterosexual, 25 (6.2%) bisexual, 4 (1.0%) pansexual, 6 (1.5%) gay, 6 (1.5%) lesbian, and1 (0.2%) asexual. Most had some college education, with the highest education earned being 50 (12.4%) with a postgraduate degree, 10 (2.5%) some graduate work, 177 (43.9%) a bachelor's degree, 48 (11.9%) an associate's degree, 73 (18.1%) some college, and 45 (11.2%) high school graduates. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 73 (M = 37.66, SD = 11.18).

Assessment of support for mandatory reporting policies

Participants were asked "Which approach to dealing with sexual assault disclosures on college campuses do you most agree with, even if neither is exactly right?" and presented with two policy

approaches: (1) *If a student tells a college/university employee (e.g., professor, academic advisor) that they were sexually assaulted, the employee should be required to report it to the university office that handles sexual assault complaints. A report should be made even if the victim doesn't want the employee to report*, and (2) *If a student tells a college/university employee (e.g., professor, academic advisor) that they were sexually assaulted, the employee should be required to (1) provide the student with information about resources and reporting options and (2) ask if they want to make a report to the university office that handles sexual assault complaints. A report should not be made if the victim doesn't want the employee to report*. After indicating which of the two policies they agreed with, participants were asked to briefly explain why they agreed with that policy in an open-ended question. Of the 1045 participants, 1007 provided a written answer to this question and were included in the qualitative analysis. Respondents then completed additional survey measures.

Measures

Previous sexual victimization experiences

The Sexual Experiences Survey-Short Form Victimization (SES-SFV; Koss et al., 2007) was used to identify participants who experienced sexual assault in their lifetime. Participants answered seven questions that assessed whether they had ever experienced nonconsensual sexual contact and attempted and completed oral, vaginal, and anal penetration obtained via coercion, incapacitation, threats, or force. For each act, participants indicated if they had experienced the behavior in their lifetime ("*yes*" or "*no*"). There were 289 college students and 166 non-student adults who had experienced some form of sexual assault (43% of the total sample). For the analysis, participants who had not experienced sexual assault were coded as *non-victims* = 0, and participants who had experienced any form of sexual assault were coded as *survivors* = 1.

Trust in the university's response to sexual assault

We assessed participants' trust in how universities respond to reports of sexual assault with a measure used in previous studies of college sexual assault (Holland, 2020; Holland & Cortina, 2017). This measure was developed using measures of trust in institutional responses to sexual assault reports included in climate surveys (the Office on Violence Against Women Climate Survey and the Department of Defense Workplace and Gender Relations Survey, as described in Holland, 2020, and Holland & Cortina, 2017). Participants were asked what they thought would happen ifa sexual assault is reported to a college/university office that handles sexual assault complaints, and rated their agreement with eight statements (e.g., "The victim's privacy would be protected," "The victim would be taken seriously") on a five-point scale from *strongly disagree* = 1 to *strongly agree* = 5. Prior research has established this measure to have good internal consistency (e.g., α = .86 in Holland, 2020; α = .84 in Holland & Cortina, 2017) and validity (e.g., through associations with reporting intentions among support providers and survivors; Holland, 2020; Holland & Cortina, 2017). The measure assessed participants' trust in university response to sexual assault generally (i.e., does not ask about any specific university), making it appropriate for both current college students and non-students. We averaged these items (overall α = .87; current students α = .88 and non-student adults α = .86), and higher scores indicated more trust in university response to sexual assault reports.

Covariates

We included gender as a covariate in the quantitative analyses because research consistently finds differences between cisgender women's and cisgender men's perceptions of sexual assault policies (e.g., Mancini et al., 2010; Streng & Kamimura, 2017), and cisgender women and TGE people are more likely to experience sexual assault compared to cisgender men (e.g., Canan et al., 2024; Coulter et al., 2017). Gender was dummy coded, with marginalized genders (*cisgender women and TGE*) coded as 1 and *cisgender men* coded as 0.

We also included participants' status as a current college student. People currently attending college have a different stake in college sexual assault policies compared to people who are not attending college, as those policies directly affect them and their peers. MTurk participants were asked if they were currently attending college ("yes" $n = 101$, "no" $n = 403$, did not answer $n = 2$), and the 101 participants who said "yes" were classified as current college students along with the 539 subject pool participants. For the analysis, college student status was coded *non-students* = 0 and *college students* = 1.

Analysis approach

For the quantitative analysis, we first ran descriptive statistics (Chi-square and *t*-test) to examine agreement with the two policy approaches and differences in policy agreement across the study variables. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, we ran descriptive analyses with the total sample and then separated them by college students and non-student adults. We then used logistic regression to test support for *compelled disclosure* versus *consented disclosure* (0 = *supports compelled disclosure*, 1 = *supports consented disclosure*) in a multivariate analysis.

For the qualitative data, we analyzed participants' open-ended responses explaining why they agreed with the *compelled disclosure* or *consented disclosure* policy approach using qualitative content analysis (QCA; Krippendorff, 2018; Schreier, 2012). The first and second authors conducted the analysis process. First, we familiarized ourselves with these data by reading and re-reading the responses and taking notes about the patterns and other key pieces of information we identified. Next, we created a coding frame by creating and defining the overarching categories of information and the codes or subcategories under each main category. A QCA coding frame can include deductive or concept-driven categories (i.e., based on prior theory and research) and/or inductive or data-driven categories (i.e., based on the text itself; Schreier, 2012). While we brought our understanding of prior empirical research to the analysis, our coding frame consisted of categories that were based on these data (i.e., inductive). After creating the coding frame, we applied the codes to a subset of the open-ended responses and made any necessary revisions to the codes and their definitions to ensure that the coding frame well-described the dataset (Schreier, 2012). The codes were not mutually exclusive, so a response could receive more than one code. Finally, the first and second authors applied the codes to the dataset. Those two authors discussed all questions and discrepancies regarding the code application until they came to a consensus. We used investigator triangulation and dialogic engagement (i.e., the first and second authors both worked on the development and application of the coding frame, which helped to ensure that the codes and categories were clear, distinct, and fit these data from multiple perspectives) and peer review and debriefing (i.e., the third author, who was not involved in data collection or analysis, reviewed the findings, which helped to ensure that the findings are interpretable beyond the research team) to establish the quality and validity of our analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

TABLE 1 Actual and expected values for binary study variables by policy choice.

	Survivor status		Gender		College student status	
	Non-victim	Survivor	Men	Women/TGE	Non-student	Student
Chose compelled disclosure						
Count	246	164	197	212	204	205
Expected count	230.53	179.50	157.64	251.40	158.18	250.80
Chose consented disclosure						
Count	341	293	204	429	199	434
Expected count	356.47	277.50	244.36	389.60	244.82	388.20

Abbreviation: TGE, transgender and gender expansive.

We used a convergent parallel mixed method design, in which the quantitative and qualitative strands are implemented simultaneously and prioritized equally (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Our quantitative and qualitative data analysis yielded different but complementary information about people's support for sexual assault mandatory reporting policies. Consistent with a convergent parallel design, our integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings was conducted after the analysis of these data and included in the Discussion section.

RESULTS

Quantitative findings

First, we examined descriptives and bivariate relationships between the study variables. Descriptively, 634 (61%) participants agreed with the *consented disclosure* policy approach, and 410 (39%) agreed with the *compelled disclosure* policy approach (one participant did not answer the question). Across the sample, sexual assault survivors were more likely to support the *consented disclosure* policy compared to non-victims, χ^2 (1, N = 1044) = 3.91, p = .048, phi = .06 (see Table 1 for actual and expected values). Participants who supported the *compelled disclosure* policy held greater trust in university response to sexual assault reports (M = 3.58, SD = .68) relative to those who supported *consented disclosure* (M = 3.47, SD = .76), t(942.38) = 2.50, p = .013, *Glass's delta* = .15. Looking at the relationship between experience of sexual assault and trust in university response to sexual assault reports, survivors had less trust (M = 3.35, SD = .77) compared to non-victims (M = 3.64, SD = .67), t(1043) = 6.50, p < .001, *Glass's delta* = .38. Policy choice was significantly associated with both covariates. Women and TGE participants were more likely to support a *consented disclosure* policy approach relative to cisgender men, χ^2 (1, N = 1043) = 26.31, p < .001, phi = .16 (Table 1 contains actual and expected values). Current college students were more likely to support the *consented disclosure* policy relative to non-students, χ^2 (1, N = 1042) = 35.62, p < .001, phi = .19 (see Table 1 for actual and expected values). Among the college students, 434 (67.9%) agreed with *consented disclosure*, and 205 (32.1%) agreed with *compelled disclosure*. For the non-student adults, 199 (49.4%) agreed with *consented disclosure* and 204 (50.6%) agreed with compelled disclosure.

To explore whether the relationships between policy choice and the independent variables may differ across the two samples, we ran bivariate analyses split by student status. Current college student sexual assault survivors were more likely to support the *consented disclosure* policy compared

TABLE 2 Logistic regression predicting compelled or consented disclosure policy choice.

Predictor	*B*	SE	Wald χ^2	*df*	*p*	Exp(B)	95% CI
Non-victim vs. Survivor	-0.21	0.21	1.01	1	.316	0.81	[0.54, 1.22]
Trust in university	-0.24	0.09	6.26	1	.012	0.79	[0.66, 0.95]
Men vs. Women/TGE C	0.38	0.14	7.02	1	.008	1.47	[1.11, 1.95]
Non-student vs. Student C	0.48	0.18	6.91	1	.009	1.61	[1.13, 2.29]
Survivor × Student C	0.50	0.27	3.50	1	.061	1.65	[0.98, 2.80]

Note: Policy choice coded as *compelled disclosure* = 0 and *consented disclosure* = 1. Sexual assault survivors, women/tr
der expansive people, and college students were the referent groups (coded 1). Survivor × Sample = i
status and student status.
Abbreviations: C, covariate; CI, confidence interval.

to college student non-victims, χ^2 (1,*N* = 639) = 6.28, *p* = .012, phi = .10. Among the students who chose *compelled disclosure*, non-victim count = 127 (expected count = 112.30) and survivor count = 78 (expected count = 92.70). Of the students who chose *consented disclosure*, the non-victim count = 223 (expected count = 237.70) and survivor = 211 (expected count = 196.70). However, policy choice did not differ by survivor status among the non-students χ^2 (1, *N* = 403) = .39, *p* = .844. For the non-students who chose *compelled disclosure*, non-victim count = 119 (expected count = 120.00) and survivor count = 85 (expected count = 84.00). Of the non-students who chose *consented disclosure*, non-victim count = 118 (expected count = 117.00) and the survivor = 81 (expected count = 82.00). For trust, current college students who supported the *compelled disclosure* policy held greater trust in university response to sexual assault reports (*M* = 3.68, SD = .69) relative to current college students who supported *consented disclosure* (*M* = 3.53, SD = .77), *t*(637) = 2.28, *p* = .023, *Glass's delta* = .19. Similarly, non-student adults who supported the *compelled disclosure* policy held greater trust in university response (*M* = 3.49, SD = .66) compared to non-student adults who supported *consented disclosure* (*M* = 3.33, SD = .73), *t*(401) = 2.24, *p* = .026, *Glass's delta* = .21.

Next, we ran a logistic regression with all variables included to test whether policy choice varied by personal experience of sexual assault and trust in the university's response to sexual assault. We entered survivor status and trust as independent variables, and gender and student status as covariates. Given the bivariate finding that survivor status was only significantly related to policy choice for the current college students, we also calculated and included the interaction between survivor status (*survivor* = 1, *non-victim* = 0) and sample (*student* = 1, *non-student* = 0). The full model was significant, χ^2 (5, *N* = 1041) = 56.53, *p* < .001, and was able to differentiate between those who agreed with the *compelled disclosure* policy and the *consented disclosure* policy. The amount of variance explained ranged from 5.3% (*Cox & Snell R-square*) to 7.2% (*Nagelkerke R-square*). Model results are included in Table 2. Trust in the university's response to sexual assault reports was significant. Exp(B) = .79, indicating that the odds of support for the *consented disclosure* policy decreased by.79 as trust in the university response increased. Both gender and student status were significant. Cisgender women and TGE participants were 1.47 times more likely to support the *consented disclosure policy* relative to cisgender men. Current college students were 1.61 times more likely to support the *consented disclosure policy* relative to non-student adults. Sexual assault survivor status was not a significant predictor of policy choice in the multivariate model. The interaction between survivor status and sample was also not significant.

Qualitative findings

We identified five broad categories that captured participants' rationale for their policy preference: (1) crime and punishment, (2) the greater good, (3) victim's choice, (4) victim's best interest, and (5) university accountability and liability. The categories were not mutually exclusive, so it was possible for a participant's response to reflect more than one category. We have included quotes from participants to illustrate and substantiate our findings. We only edited quotes if they enhanced readability (e.g., correcting grammar), so most quotes are presented as they were written by participants and may include spelling or grammatical errors. For each quote, we included some participant information (i.e., student status, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, survivor status) and the policy approach they selected (i.e., *compelled* or *consented*).

As evidenced by the excerpts included below, the five categories were expressed by participants of all backgrounds. For instance, during our analysis, we did not identify patterns to suggest that categories were only or mainly expressed by college students or non-students, women or men, or survivors or non-victims. However, we did identify a pattern in the categories by policy choice. For each category, we have included how many participants who expressed the category supported the *compelled disclosure* policy and the *consented disclosure* policy, and discussed how the nature of the category differed by policy choice. The categories are discussed in detail below and summarized by participants' policy preference in Table 3.

Crime and punishment

The first category we identified was crime and punishment. In this category, participants' focus was on the crime that occurred and that perpetrators should be investigated and punished through formal institutional responses. There were 157 participants who expressed crime and punishment in their rationale for agreeing with the *compelled disclosure* or *consented disclosure* policy. Nearly all of these participants supported the *compelled disclosure* policy (n = 146, 93%). Very few participants who focused on crime and punishment in their response supported *consented disclosure* (n = 11, 7%). Within this category, some participants simply stated that a crime had occurred and that crimes should be reported to proper officials, such as ''Because a crime was committed and needs to be reported (ID 463, college student, cis man, Black, heterosexual, non-victim), "It is a crime and should be reported." (ID 731, college student, cis woman, Latinx/e, heterosexual, non-victim), and "The assault is a crime and should be treated as such. It should be reported and put in the proper authorities hands" (ID 10, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Other participants gave additional information related to crime and punishment in their justification for their policy preference, which are outlined below.

Reporting a crime surpasses the victim's needs

There were also participants who explicitly stated their belief that reporting a crime was more important than what the victim may want. For example, one participant stated, "I think that you have to report the sexual assault complaint regardless of the victim's wishes because, again, a crime was committed" (ID 15, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Another participant explained that the severity of the crime necessitated reporting regardless of what the victim wants, stating "I think it is very important to report the sexual assaults regardless if the student said so. It is not a minimal crime." (ID 232, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Similarly, another participant believed that crimes need to be investigated regardless

TABLE 3 Summary and occurrence of categories characterizing participant rationale for their policy preference.

Category	Definition	Example	Overall (*N*= 959)	Compelled disclosure (N = 380)	Consented disclosure (N = 579)
Crime and punishment	Participant policy rationale focused on sexual assault as a crime, prioritizing policy processes and investigation, as well as consequences and accountability for perpetrators.	"I believe that people who commit these crimes deserve to have justice done to them"	16% (157)	38% (146)	2% (11)
The greater good	Participant policy rationale focused on benefits for the community, prioritizing preventing future assaults, student safety, and improving sexual assault documentation.	"They have to protect not only that one student but all of the students"	19% (184)	47% (177)	1% (7)
Victim choice	Participant policy rationale focused on victim choice, prioritizing the importance of victim choice, the harm of repeated violations of victim autonomy, and centering survivors.	"I chose the option that provides a sense of control to the victim... nothing is forced on the victim. Instead, they are free to choose how they want to proceed"	52% (495)	4% (17)	83% (478)
The victim's best interest	Participant policy rationale focused on best serving the victim, prioritizing the informing survivors of their options, protecting survivor wellbeing, acknowledgment that reporting can be harmful, and accessing support.	"If the victim doesn't want to report THEY SHOULD NEVER. It could retraumatize them in many ways"	32% (309)	28% (108)	35% (201)
University accountability and liability	Participant policy rationale focused on the institution, prioritizing institutional accountability and protecting from legal liability,	"[...] if [a report] is not filed it may get swept under the rug"	3% (25)	7% (25)	0% (0)

Note: %, (n). Compelled disclosure = chose *compelled disclosure* policy. Consented disclosure = chose *consented disclosure* policy.

of the victim's preference, writing "A report should be made if a crime occurred, even if the victim would prefer it not be reported. The individual who committed the crime should be investigated" (ID 30, non-student, cis woman, White, lesbian, survivor). The *compelled disclosure* policy aligned with these participants' belief that sexual assault must be reported because of the criminal nature of the act.

Perpetrator punishment

Within this category, participants also often discussed how they supported the *compelled disclosure* policy because it would result in the perpetrator being punished, held accountable, or brought to justice for their crime. For example, some participants explained that they thought their policy choice would result in perpetrators being punished, "It ensures that the perpetrator is punished" (ID 272, non-student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim) and "Mandated reporting improves the chances of a perpetrator being caught and punished." (ID 202, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Similarly, participants expressed the importance of the person experiencing consequences for committing sexual assault, such as "I think that the person who is assaulting others should face consequences to their actions" (ID 648, college student, cis woman, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim) and "There needs to be consequences" (ID 624, college student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim. Other participants believed the policy they chose would hold perpetrators accountable, for example, "People need to be held accountable for their actions." (ID 117, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor) and "I believe the sexual assault should be reported because the suspect should be held accountable for the crime they committed" (ID 212, non-student, cis man, Black, heterosexual, non-victim). These participants believed that mandated reporting would result in just consequences or punishments for the perpetrator.

Punishing a perpetrator surpasses the victim's needs

Some participants also stated that the perpetrator being punished for their crime was more important than the victim's wants and needs. For example, one participant stated that "Reports should be made even if the victim doesn't want to make a report because often they are scared of the ramifications if they end up reporting the assault. So, the only way of making sure these perpetrators are brought to justice is by reporting" (ID 227, college student, cis man, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim). Another participant explained that "A lot of women feel too scared to take action, but the person who is sexually assisting someone should always be held responsible" (ID 584, college student, cis woman, multiracial, heterosexual, non-victim). For these participants, the possible violation of a victim's wants was warranted if the perpetrator would be held accountable for their crimes.

Consented disclosure and crime and punishment

There were only a few participants who selected the *consented disclosure* policy who discussed crime and punishment. Some believed this policy approach would help the victim follow through with reporting the crime and punishing the perpetrator. For example, one participant explained, "This allows the victim to have freedom to go through proper procedures so that the perpetrator is apprehended and justly punished" (ID 114, non-student, cis man, White, gay, non-victim). Another participant stated, "they should be encouraged to file a report to prevent further incidents and get the perpetrator to suffer the consequences" (ID 926, college student, cis woman, Asian, bisexual, non-victim). For these participants, part of the reason they selected the *consented disclosure* policy was the belief that it would help victims report and bring perpetrators to justice.

The greater good

The second category we identified was the greater good, in which participants discussed larger societal benefits in their explanation for the policy they supported. In total, 184 participants expressed this category in their answer. This response was most common among participants who agreed with *compelled disclosure* (n = 177, 96%). Only seven (4%) participants who gave an answer categorized as the greater good preferred the *consented disclosure* policy. Within this category, there were a few different ways that participants believed a *compelled disclosure* policy would benefit society, which are specified below.

Prevent future assaults

Some believed *compelled disclosure* would prevent future sexual assaults. For example, one participant stated that they agreed with *compelled disclosure* "so the perp can...be stopped from continuing that behavior" (ID 405, non-student, cis man, Latine/x, heterosexual, non-victim). Another explained that making a mandated report "can and will prevent other happenings" (ID 238, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Participants also explained that their support for *compelled disclosure* was not about the victim, but about stopping the perpetrator from sexually assaulting another person. For example, participants wrote that "it is beyond one student's comfort level in reporting the event, but rather a duty to ensure that this kind of thing cannot be done again by the same person" (ID 869, college student, cis man, Asian, heterosexual, survivor) and "Even if the student objects to reporting it, it's for the public safety...The person who sexually assaulted her could go on and do it again if he's not caught" (ID 69, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim).

In their responses, some participants acknowledged why a victim may not want to report but believed that a mandated report would deter the perpetrator from committing additional assaults. For instance, one participant explained that "It's not always for the victim, because they're scared to come forward sometimes, and you can't blame them. It's to protect the next person that the aggressor attacks..... it is the duty of others to stop it" (ID 222, non-student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor). Another wrote that "the victim could just be traumatized but that is still not a good enough reason to NOT report it. The assaulter could repeat what they have done and do it to another innocent person" (ID 319, college student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). One participant even expressed that "It is selfish of the victim to withhold information if a violent criminal is on the loose" (ID 185, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, survivor). These participants believed that a *compelled disclosure* policy would successfully stop future assaults from happening.

Make the campus safer

Participants expressed that a *compelled disclosure* approach would help to create a safer campus for everyone. For example, participants stated, "The campus needs to be safe and if it is not reported it is dangerous for everyone" (ID 416, non-student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor) and "The institution has an ethical responsibility to report any potential crime committed on campus to ensure faculty and students' safety" (ID 464, non-student, cis man, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim). For these participants, mandatory reporting was about creating a safer campus community for everyone. Other respondents in this category explicitly stated that their support for mandatory reporting stemmed from a desire to protect other people on campus rather than the victim. For example, participants wrote, "they have to protect not only that one student but all of the students" (ID 27, non-student, cis woman, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim) and "keeping

it private to adhere to someone's desires could be putting so many other innocent people at risk of being hurt as well" (ID 251, college student, cis man, Black, heterosexual, non-victim). Another participant explained that he believed, "In a better world, the wishes of the student should trump everything else, but the danger to the community at large outweighs the privacy needs of the individual in this case" (ID 85, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, survivor). Thus, these participants believed that the safety of many should be considered before the needs of one individual victim.

Documentation and transparency

Respondents also saw social benefits of improving tracking of incidence rates through mandatory reporting. Some of these participants believed that a *compelled disclosure* policy would improve the accuracy of campus crime statistics, such as, "Automatic reporting can keep statistics and approaches accurate" (ID 32, non-student, cis man, White, gay, survivor) and "This is the best way to prevent the spread of assault and capture a more accurate statistics of assault incidents" (ID 158, non-student, cis man, Black, heterosexual, non-victim). Other participants explained that mandatory reporting would help to create records of sexual assault, which could be useful for tracking repeat offenders or conducting investigations. For example, participants stated that "I think a sexual assault should be recorded in the school's system, so they can have it recorded if multiple people report sexual assault for the same person" (ID 688, college student, cis woman, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim) and "There should be documented evidence in case it needs to be used" (ID 188, non-student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor).

Some participants expressed that being able to track the incidence of sexual assaults through a mandatory reporting policy would help to bring more awareness to the problem, for instance, "It will provide greater transparency into this issue" (ID 394, non-student, cis man, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim) and "It's better if the assaults get reported. It would help bring attention to the issue and problem" (ID 274, college student cis man, multiracial, heterosexual, non-victim). If there were more accurate incidence rates and awareness of the problem, participants believed that universities could be more successful in prevention efforts. For example, participants wrote, "it is important for the university to know what is going on within their campus and attempt to prevent it" (ID 649, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor) and "Accurate data on how much sexual assault is actually happening could help prevent it. Mandatory reporting could help this" (ID 551, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim). These participants believed that greater awareness of the problem of sexual assault would help prevention, which led to their support for *compelled disclosure*.

Survivor autonomy over the greater good

Only a few participants who agreed with the *consented disclosure* policy brought up the greater good in their response. These participants expressed that they saw the potential public safety benefits of reporting, but in the end, they believed it was more important that the victim have a choice over the report. For example, one participant explained, "while I do think reporting can help the same person from assaulting someone else again, I do not think you should make victims go outside of their comfort zone after they have been through trauma" (ID 712, college student, cis woman, Black, bisexual, non-victim). When explaining her choice, another participant wrote, "I'm leaning toward not making the report unless the student agrees to it because it should be the decision of the student, however I hope that the students will be properly counselled so that they can make the right decision for themselves while at the same time getting the message out that such things are happening to help protect other potential victims" (ID 65, non-student, cis

woman, Asian, heterosexual, survivor). Thus, these participants saw how reporting could be helpful in preventing future assaults and protecting others but wanted the victim to be able to make the decision to report.

Victim choice

The third category was victim choice, which included participant responses focused on the victim having a choice in whether a report was made to the Title IX office and/or during a Title IX reporting process (e.g., investigation, hearing). A total of 494 participants discussed victim choice in their explanation for their policy preference. This category was nearly always expressed by participants who agreed with the *consented disclosure* policy (n = 477, 97%). There were only 17 (3%) responses that included victim choice among the participants who agreed with *compelled disclosure*. Many respondents who selected the *consented disclosure* policy simply wrote that they preferred this policy because it afforded the victim a choice, for instance, "The victim should have a choice" (ID 1002, college student, cis woman, multiracial, heterosexual, survivor) and "I believe it is the victim's choice if they want to report or not" (ID 759, college student, cis woman, Black, heterosexual, survivor). Similarly, other participants believed that the victim's choice must be respected, such as, "The victim opinion should be followed and respected" (ID 263, non-student, cis man, Black, heterosexual, non-victim) and "The professor/employee should respect the wishes of the victim" (ID 773, college student, cis man, Middle Eastern, heterosexual, non-victim).

The right to choose

Participants discussed victim choice over the decision to report as a fundamental right and something that cannot be forced. For example, participants wrote that, "The victim should have the right to decide what happens going forward." (ID 44, non-student, cis man, Latinx/e, heterosexual, non-victim) and "Nobody has a right to report for them if they aren't ready to come forward" (ID 248, college student, cis man, White, heterosexual, survivor). For these participants, their support for *consented disclosure* was connected to their belief that victims should have the right to make reporting decisions. Similarly, other participants explained that a policy should not force survivors' decisions, such as "The victim should not be forced to do anything they do not want to do" (ID 985, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim) and "I chose the option that provides a sense of control to the victim...nothing is forced on the victim. Instead, they are free to choose how they want to proceed" (ID 68, non-student, cis man, multiracial, heterosexual, survivor).

There were also participants who discussed that college students are adults, and, as a result, should have control over the report. For instance, participants stated, "For children, it's one thing but young adults should have a choice" (ID 847, college student, gender-fluid, multiracial, asexual, survivor), and "I think that because they are legally adults, they are within their own rights to decide if and how they wish to report" (ID 78, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Similarly, another participant expressed that she supported the *consented disclosure* policy because, "Ultimately, when a student is in college 'unless they are a minor' they are now considered an adult. They have the choice to report sexual assault. It is not the business of anyone else to do that for them. All anyone else can do is give them moral support and guidance" (ID 36, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor). These participants believed that adults should not be stripped of their right to make important life choices simply because they are enrolled in college.

Repeated violation of choice

Other participants connected the importance of victim choice to the fact that the victim did not have a choice during the sexual assault. For example, participants explained their support for *consented disclosure* because, "The victim has a right to decide what happens next, since they were not allowed to decide what happens during their sexual assault" (ID 654, college student, cis woman, White, bisexual, survivor), "This option gives more power in decision making to the victim which is something they were previously robbed of" (ID 1012, college student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim), and "This option gives the victim choices. The person has already been victimized once. To report what happened to them without their consent would just victimize them again" (ID 123, non-student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor).

There were also participants who noted that a victim should consent to any reporting decisions, as their consent was already violated during the sexual assault. For instance, participants wrote, "stripping away the victim's consent for a second time by reporting it without their permission just does not seem like the best option" (ID 519, college student, cis woman, Latinx/e, bisexual, non-victim) and "If someone confides in someone about a traumatic event like that, there should be a process that is consensual" (ID 283, non-student, cis woman, multiracial, bisexual, survivor). For these participants, choice was paramount when decisions were being made that would affect sexual assault survivors.

Center survivors

Participants also expressed that the victim is the only person who should make reporting choices because they are the person who was sexually assaulted. For example, participants who supported *consented disclosure* stated that, "It's up to the victim if they want the event to be reported. It happened to THEM and THEY are the victim" (ID 3, non-student, cis man, White, bisexual, non-victim), "The victim's story is theirs and theirs alone, and only they should have the power to decide with whom to share it" (ID 596, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor), and "The victim is the person affected. We should listen to the words of the victim" (ID 194, non-student, cis man, Native American, heterosexual, survivor). Similarly, another participant explained, "I believe it should be the victim's choice if they want to report it. After all, it was a violation of THEIR boundaries—no one else's. They should decide if and when they are ready to report it." (ID 890, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor). For these participants, reporting decisions should only be controlled by the person who personally experienced the sexual assault.

In addition, there were participants who believed that victim choice was especially important when the decision was about making a report. For instance, one participant wrote that what victims must go through during the process of reporting sexual assault is very personal so they must be able to control that decision: "VICTIMS NEED TO HAVE RIGHTS AND NOT BE FORCED TO BE INVOLVED IN SOMETHING EXTREMELY PERSONAL IF THEY ARE NOT READY OR DON'T WANT TO BE INVOLVED. VICTIMS NEED TO HAVE A VOICE SO LET THEM DECIDE THEIR CHOICE!" (ID 971, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor). Similarly, another participant explained that "If the victim is not ready to share their story and go public and speak to authorities they should not be forced to. It could lead to a reliving of their trauma and more psychological distress" (ID 811, college student, cis man, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim). For these participants, the invasive experiences that survivors must go through during a Title IX reporting process meant that this was a choice only the survivor should make. Other participants noted that the victim is the only person who should make the choice to report (or not) because the experience and outcome of a report will affect them: "I think the student should have the right to

decide if they want to report because it is their life that will change even more as a result" (ID 175, non-student, cis woman, Black, heterosexual, survivor) and "Until victims of assault and rape are treated fairly and have their safety ensured it should always be up to them to decide if it's safe for them to report" (ID 339, non-student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor). These participants were cognizant of the real consequences of reporting for victims, which drove their belief that victims should be able to make the choice to report.

Choice after the report

There were only a few participants who preferred the *compelled disclosure* policy approach who discussed victim consent in their explanation. Some of these participants acknowledged the importance or usefulness of the victim having control but ultimately decided that mandated reporting was the best option. For example, one participant wrote, "I think we should keep the victim's preference in mind, but ultimately reporting all incidents would benefit society more" (ID 175, non-student, cis woman, Black, lesbian, non-victim). Others expressed that victims could or should control what happened after the report was made, including if formal actions are taken in response to the report (e.g., "If the victim doesn't want to press charges then that's up to them, but a report should be made to authorities" [ID 307, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim]), if the victim participates in an investigation (e.g., "A report should be made regardless, except the victim should [...] not forced to be involved in any proceedings" [ID 297, non-student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor]), or if the police are involved (e.g., "I believe that the university employee should be required to report the issue, but that going forward after that to the police should be up to the victim" [ID 713, college student, cis woman, White, asexual, non-victim]). These participants acknowledged that victims may need to have control *after* a report is made (e.g., victims should get to choose if they participate in a formal Title IX reporting process), but ultimately did not believe that victims needed to control whether employees made a report to the university.

The victim's best interest

The fourth category was the victim's best interest. In this category, participants' reasons for selecting the *compelled* or *consented disclosure* policy focused on how they thought it would best serve the victim. A total of 309 participants focused on the victim's best interest in their explanation. This category was more common among participants who agreed with the *consented disclosure* policy (n = 201, 65%). However, about one-third of participants who discussed the victim's best interest agreed with *compelled disclosure* (n = 108, 35%). This category often co-occurred with the victim choice category.

Information is key

Some participants who selected the *consented disclosure* policy expressed that victims should be given information about all options available to them so that they can make the decision that is going to be in their best interest. For instance, participants wrote, "They should have the options available to them so that they can make this choice on their terms, because they have to take into account their privacy as well as their safety" (ID 473, non-student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor). Another acknowledged that the victim would know what is best for themselves, even if that went against the participant's own desires: "It would be most important to make sure the victim is informed of their options and feeling safe about whichever they choose to pursue.

As much as I would want justice for their situation, it should ultimately be up to them to decide whether they want to go down that path" (ID 439, non-student, cis woman, White, bisexual, survivor). Participants also believed the *consented disclosure* policy would offer survivors the support they may need to understand their choices and make decisions, for example, "I think this is the best options because the information might help them feel connected, not alone in this, and help them to decide what the nest steps might look like" (ID 825, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim).

Survivor well-being

Participants also expressed that they selected the *consented disclosure* policy because it would best protect the victim's mental and physical wellbeing. Participants believed that *consented disclosure* rightly put the victim and their wellbeing first, for instance, "The respect and dignity of the victim is of most importance. The focus should be on her healing and what she needs in order to do so" (ID 747, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor) and "If the victim doesn't want the assault reported to the university then it shouldn't be reported. It's most important that the victim feels safe" (ID 228, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, survivor). For these participants, the victim having control over what happens after a disclosure would be most beneficial for their healing and wellbeing.

There were also participants who wrote that they chose the *consented disclosure* policy because making a (mandated) report against the survivor's will would be harmful. For example, a participant stated, ''It should be up to the victim because reporting without their consent could be harmful to them. (ID 572, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Similarly, participants wrote how reporting without the victim's consent would exacerbate their distress, such as, "I think consent to report is essential. The survivor may be under a lot of other distress in life and their lack of consent could significantly increase their psychological distress" (ID 973, college student, cis woman, multiracial, heterosexual, survivor) and "often times when people fall victim to sexual assault it is difficult for them to feel as though they are in control of the situation and by having no control over what happens next it could increase their anxiety and fears" (ID 642, college student, cis woman, multiracial, heterosexual, survivor).

Some participants noted that reporting when the victim did not want to report would cause additional trauma. For instance, participants wrote, "If the victim doesn't want to report THEY SHOULD NEVER. It could retraumatize them in many ways" (ID 115, non-student, cis woman, White, bisexual, survivor) and "the trauma of revisiting the event could be debilitating. It should be up to the victim if they would like to do so" (ID 482, college student, cis woman, multiracial, heterosexual, non-victim). Similarly, another participant noted that reporting could be especially traumatizing for a survivor who was looking for support rather than a report; "It can be more traumatizing to the victim to have that reported on them when they simply might have just wanted to talk about it" (ID 590, college student, cis woman, multiracial, heterosexual, survivor). For these participants, the *consented disclosure* policy was in the victim's best interest because it would best protect their psychological well-being.

Reporting is harmful

Participants also explained that they supported *consented disclosure* because the process of reporting a sexual assault can be harmful and/or ineffectual. As a result, these participants believed that it was in the victim's best interest to be able to decide if or when they enter a Title IX office reporting process. For example, participants wrote: "Often times the way that an investigation is handled

can hurt someone more if they do not feel ready. It is a very personal decision" (ID 601, college student, cis woman, White, lesbian, non-victim) and "[reporting] it can be a hard journey to walk through and so it should be left up to the victim if they want to do that" (ID 774, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim).

Some participants noted how grueling a formal reporting process can be and how it rarely results in consequences for the perpetrator: "Reporting the assault can be a very exhausting experience that can make the victim relive the situation over again. A lot of the times the assault isn't taken as serious as it should be or the perpetrator does not get the full extent of punishment" (ID 741, college student, cis woman, Latinx/e, heterosexual, survivor) and "continuing unwanted actions toward to victim could be more damaging. I feel as if there is not always justice, and most of the time there is a long painful process for the victim with very little positive outcomes" (ID 956, college student, cis woman, multiracial, heterosexual, survivor).

Others discussed how victims face backlash and other consequences for reporting sexual assault, so they should get to decide if they report. For example, "The victim should choose because it is typically the victim who will receive negative outcomes (embarrassment, publicity, etc.) for reporting" (ID 938, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor) and "I believe it is up to the victim themselves to go ahead with pursuing actions against the accused. The victim might not want their name to be dragged through the mud or be embarrassed" (ID 66, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Similarly, another participant explained, "The victim should be allowed to make the decision of reporting or not because it is their life and they may be negatively viewed or negative consequences can happen. The victim could be potentially put in more danger so it's in their best interest to ask the victim if they want to or not" (ID 791, college student, cis woman, Latinx/e, heterosexual, survivor).

Participants recognized that deciding not to report may be in the best interest for the survivor so they should be allowed to make that decision for themselves, for instance, "As a survivor of sexual assault, I understand that sometimes reporting makes things harder. While I generally encourage victims to report the incident, I understand that isn't always a safe or viable option" (ID 820, college student, nonbinary, White, queer, survivor). These participants believed that only the victim would be able to fully understand how reporting would affect their life, so they should be able to control reporting decisions, such as "the victim would probably know best the situation so if they feel more bad would come from reporting then they should be allowed to decline them the ability to report it" (ID 800, college student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Overall, participants' concerns about Title IX office reporting processes and how it may not be in survivors' best interests influenced their support for *consented disclosure*.

Access to support

Participants also explained that the *consented disclosure* policy would be in the victim's best interest because it would allow them to choose with whom they want to talk and receive support without the fear of a mandated report. For example, participants wrote, "I think that the survivor/student should be able to reach out to university employees that they trust for resources, help, or emotional support without the fear or mandate of a report" (ID 866, college student, nonbinary, White, gay, survivor) and "victims should be able to trust that they can confide in someone like a professor for advice, emotional support, or whatever else without fear of their privacy being taken away by having it reported." (ID 43, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, survivor).

Participants described how trust is key when a survivor is deciding with whom to speak about their experience, and that mandatory reporting would undermine survivors' trust. For example, participants who supported the consented disclosure policy explained, "The student trusted the

employee enough to confide this information, and I don't think that that trust needs to be broken by requiring the employee to file a report against their wishes" (ID 569, college student, trans man, White, bisexual, survivor) and "The employee should not report if the victim doesn't want to. That could cause tremendous stress for them and possibly ruin the trust that may have been established between that employee and the victim" (ID 569, college student, cis man, White, gay, non-victim). A resident assistant described this problem from their experience as a mandatory reporter: "Sometimes a student comes forward because they trust you and they want to talk about it but they aren't ready to take those kinds of steps toward reporting. It is hard to stop them, tell them that you're a mandatory reporter, and that they should go talk about their experience to some stranger that they don't know or trust" (ID 995, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor). For these participants, their policy choice was influenced by their belief that it was in the victim's best interest to protect their trusted relationships with employees.

There were also participants who expressed concern that if a victim is unable to speak to an employee they trust without the fear of a mandated report, they would be less likely to disclose and receive needed support. For example, participants explained, "the victim will never tell anyone if they don't feel they have a choice" (ID 183, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim) and "If people are required to tell, even without consent, that might keep victims from stepping forward and talking to someone" (ID 749, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Similarly, another participant wrote, "Any policy that may discourage victims from telling someone and getting some form of help shouldn't be used. A victim who doesn't want the assault reported should still be able to get information on resources available to them" (ID 477, non-student, cis woman, White, bisexual, non-victim). These participants chose the *consented disclosure* policy over the *compelled disclosure* policy because it would ensure that survivors can seek help.

Mandated reporting is in the victim's best interest

Although most participants who discussed the victim's best interest preferred the *consented disclosure* policy approach, some responses in this category were made by those who agreed with *compelled disclosure*. Some of these participants believed survivors are incapable of making decisions after the assault, so it is in survivors' best interest for someone else to make decisions for them. For example, participants wrote, "I think a record should be kept because the victim may not be in condition to make a decision on what to do at that moment" (ID 388, non-student, cis man, Black, heterosexual, non-victim) and "The victims may be in shock or afraid, therefore the victim may not be in the best mental state to make a decision" (ID 151, non-student, cis man, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim). Respondents also expressed that survivors who do not want to report are not thinking rationally, so it is in their best interest for a mandatory reporter to make the report, such as, "The victim is in a very vulnerable, frightened state. They are not thinking rationally" (ID 388, non-student, cis woman, Black, heterosexual, non-victim) and "A report should be made because the victim is under severe distress and cannot be trusted to think entirely rationally" (ID 301, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim).

Similarly, participants believed that victims are unable to see how reporting will benefit them, so the *compelled disclosure* policy would help to ensure that victims receive protection and assistance. For instance, a participant explained, "I agree with the policy I selected because some people are too afraid to report sexual assault themselves, but it is necessary to protect these people" (ID 178, college student, cis woman, White, lesbian, survivor). Another participant who preferred the *compelled disclosure* policy wrote, "I think a student who is sexually assaulted will be in distraught and want to just move on, but I believe it is important for both their safety and mental

health to report it, so that actions can be taken" (ID 510, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim).

Others believed that victims would come to see that reporting was the best decision after the mandated report was made. For example, participants stated "The victim may not understand or agree with the choice at first. But I believe they will begin to see that it will help and benefit them" (ID 680, college student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim), "Better safe than sorry and make sure that you make a proper decision that'll help you down the road rather than cause you more harm and regrets." (ID 887, college student, cis man, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim), and "the experience can be a lot to handle and the student may not know that they need help until they receive it" (ID 861, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim). These participants presumed that the victim would experience benefits of reporting and, as a result, would realize that an employee making a mandated report was the best decision, even if they had not wanted to report initially. Overall, these participants believed that victims who do not want to report are misguided and too traumatized to make "rational" decisions, so a *compelled disclosure* policy would be in victims' best interests.

University accountability and liability

The final, and least frequent, category was university accountability and liability. This category included participant responses that focused on holding universities accountable or liable for sexual assault as a reason for their policy choice. This category was only expressed by 25 participants who selected the *compelled disclosure* policy. These participants explained that universities have their own interests in mind, so having a *compelled disclosure* policy would prevent the institution from ignoring or covering up sexual assault. For instance, one participant stated, "The school has an interest in keeping this info quiet" (ID 140, non-student, cis man, White, bisexual, survivor). Another participant explained that they agreed with the *compelled disclosure* policy because, "[...] if [a report] is not filed it may get swept under the rug" (ID 613, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, survivor). These participants were aware of institutions' problematic responses to sexual assault and believed that *compelled disclosure* policies could help ameliorate this issue.

Additionally, some participants felt that *compelled disclosure* policies held universities accountable for responding adequately to victims of sexual assault. For example, one participant explained, "If kept secret among school staff, there is no guarantee that the victim will be treated fairly" (ID 313, non-student, cis man, Asian, heterosexual, non-victim). Similarly, another stated, "I think if it is reported, then it will be more likely that actions will be followed through instead of nothing happening and the victim just has to deal with what happened by themselves" (ID 814, college student, cis woman, White, heterosexual, non-victim). For these participants, *compelled disclosure* was seen as a safeguard against inadequate responses to sexual assault.

Within this category, there were also participants who expressed that a *compelled disclosure* policy would help to protect the institution from legal liability. For example, one participant wrote, "I think it puts the University at great legal risk if they have this information and don't forward it" (ID 160, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). Another participant explained that they preferred the *compelled disclosure* policy over the *consented disclosure* policy because "The [consented disclosure] option opens the University up for legal issues if the victim becomes assaulted again" (ID 128, non-student, cis man, White, heterosexual, non-victim). In sum, the university accountability and liability category demonstrated how some people's support for

compelled disclosure policies for sexual assault could help to hold universities accountable and protect universities from legal liability.

DISCUSSION

Our findings offer insight into which IHE mandatory reporting policy approaches people prefer and why they support such policies. When a sample of current college students and non-student adults were presented with both a *compelled* and *consented disclosure* policy approach, the majority of participants preferred the *consented disclosure* policy over the *compelled disclosure* policy (61% vs. 39%, respectively). Support for a *compelled disclosure* policy in the current study was lower than found in previous research (e.g., Budd & Frye, 2023; Johnson et al., 2023; Koon-Magnin & Mancini, 2023; Mancini & Koon-Magnin, 2023; Mancini et al., 2016), but support for this approach has often been assessed in the absence of other reporting policy approaches. When other policy approaches are provided, participants are less supportive of *compelled disclosure* (e.g., Holland et al., 2021; Poole & Gray, 2024; see Budd & Frye, 2023 for an exception). Our findings, coupled with previous research, suggest that assessing perceptions of mandatory reporting policies when only presenting a *compelled disclosure* approach may inflate people's support for *compelled disclosure* policies.

We also found some evidence that participant characteristics may be associated with a greater likelihood of supporting the *consented disclosure* policy over *compelled disclosure*. At the bivariate level, sexual assault survivors were more likely to support the *consented disclosure* policy over *compelled disclosure* compared to non-victims (64% of survivors preferred *consented disclosure* compared to 58% of non-victims), likely driven by the current student sexual assault survivors. This aligns with previous research that found college sexual assault survivors prefer reporting policies that afford them control over the report (e.g., Holland et al., 2021). The demographic characteristics we included as covariates were also associated with policy choice. Cisgender women and TGE participants were more likely than cisgender men to support *consented disclosure*, and current college student participants were more likely than non-students to support *consented disclosure*. Greater potential for being personally impacted by sexual assault, and the IHE policy regarding sexual assault may explain greater support for *consented disclosure* among these groups. Cisgender women and TGE individuals experience higher rates of sexual assault victimization (Canan et al., 2024; Coulter et al., 2017) and receive more sexual assault disclosures (Dardis et al., 2021; Dworkin et al., 2016) relative to cisgender men. Current college students are also directly impacted by IHE employee reporting policies as they are subject to those policies, whereas non-students are not.

Trust in the university's response to sexual assault reports was also associated with policy preference. Participants who had greater trust in university response to sexual assault were more likely to support *compelled disclosure*, and participants who had less trust in university response were more likely to support *consented disclosure*, aligning with previous research on the role of trust in university response in support for mandatory reporting policies (e.g., Holland, 2019; Koon-Magnin & Mancini, 2023; Mancini & Koon-Magnin, 2023; Poole & Gray, 2024). In the multivariate analyses, survivor status was not associated with policy preference, which may be explained by trust in university response. Research finds that having less trust in university response to sexual assault may help explain why college sexual assault survivors have more negative perceptions of mandatory reporting (Holland, 2019). Similarly, in our study, when survivor status and trust were both included in the model, only trust remained a significant predictor of participants' policy choice. This suggests that perspectives like lacking trust in how universities respond to sexual assault,

which is more common among survivors, may be more influential for policy choice than having experienced a sexual assault. Overall, if individuals have concerns about how institutions respond to sexual assault reports—such as how survivors are treated or whether there are positive outcomes for survivors—they are more likely to prefer a *consented* over a *compelled disclosure* policy approach.

Participants who supported the *consented disclosure* policy also centered survivors in their explanation of their policy preference. For instance, participants who preferred *consented disclosure* believed that survivors are autonomous adults who should be able to make their own decisions. These participants centered survivor wellbeing and recovery by prioritizing the importance of support after an assault, and acknowledging that the Title IX reporting process is often antithetical to needed support and can be detrimental to survivor wellbeing and recovery. Our qualitative findings may provide further context for quantitative research finding less support for *compelled disclosure* when there is concern for survivor autonomy and re-traumatization (Budd & Frye, 2023; Koon-Magnin & Mancini, 2023), and that those who know a survivor or have relevant experience (e.g., teach about gender, more experience with how Title IX works in practice) are less likely to support *compelled disclosure* (Koon-Magnin & Mancini, 2023; Mancini & Koon-Magnin, 2023). For instance, people who personally know a victim or have expertise in sexual violence victimization may also be more concerned about victim wellbeing, which could shape their policy preferences.

In contrast, participants who preferred the *compelled disclosure* policy often centered people other than the survivor in their rationale for their policy preference. These participants most often focused on the wellbeing of students, employees, and/or the campus community than the wellbeing of survivors themselves. Some participants placed the wellbeing of survivors and others at odds, explicitly stating that they believed the wellbeing of other students is more important. Participants who supported *compelled disclosure* also prioritized their own sense of justice, which was often characterized by the need to report, investigate, and hold the perpetrator accountable via formal reporting processes. For those who supported *compelled disclosure*, the focus on justice and accountability also extended to the university itself, with some participants believing the policy to be a remedy for inadequate university response to sexual assault. These findings contextualize and add support for previous research finding that preference for *compelled disclosure* can be driven by a desire for campus safety, perpetrator punishment, and university accountability (Johnson et al., 2023; Mancini & Koon-Magnin, 2023; Mancini et al., 2016). When participants who preferred *compelled disclosure* did focus on the survivor, they often expressed a belief that this policy would best connect survivors with resources and/or investigative processes. These participants often did not acknowledge the potential harm of these processes, instead they focused on how survivors may not know they need resources or may come to regret not making a report. For these participants, the appeal of the benefits of *compelled disclosure* outweighed (or nullified) potential harms.

Although perhaps driven by good intentions, our findings illustrated that support for *compelled disclosure* was largely predicated on unfounded assumptions, such that *compelled disclosure* will enable institutions to respond more effectively to sexual assault and benefit survivors (Holland et al., 2018). However, recent research finds that broad *compelled disclosure* policies do not result in more reports, investigations, or sanctions for perpetrators (Richards et al., 2023) and that mandated reports often do not result in meaningful resources or support for survivors (Cipriano et al., 2023). Additionally, college sexual assault survivors indicate they would be less likely to report under a *compelled disclosure* policy (Newins et al., 2018; Newins & White, 2018; Poole & Gray, 2024; Sears-Greer & Meston, 2024). There is increasing evidence of a disconnect between

participants' rationale for supporting *compelled disclosure* and the actual outcomes of such policies. In contrast, many participants who preferred *consented disclosure* were concerned about the potential harms of reporting, which is backed by ample evidence (e.g., Cipriano et al., 2023; Holland & Cipriano, 2021; Lorenz et al., 2024).

Practice and policy implications

Mandatory reporting policies are often developed by administrators, lawyers, independent organizations (e.g., Association of Title IX Administrators), and government representatives (Eriksen et al., 2024), who may be likely to buy into the assumed benefits of *compelled disclosure*. Our findings suggest that when the experiences and voices of students and survivors are not intentionally elicited, there may be less consideration of the potential harms of *compelled disclosure* policies and alternative reporting approaches that prioritize survivor autonomy. Policymakers at the IHE, state, and university levels should intentionally elicit feedback from college students, especially survivors, and meaningfully consider and integrate feedback into policy development and refinement.

Our findings also suggest that support for *compelled disclosure* policies is rooted in assumptions that are likely not realized in practice. IHEs should establish metrics by which their mandatory reporting policy will be assessed to elucidate policy outcomes. For example, Title IX Offices could track data about the reports they receive, such as the percentage of reports that come from survivors and mandatory reporters, as well as the outcomes of survivor-initiated and mandatory reporter-initiated reports (e.g., pursuit of a formal complaint, engagement in grievance processes, use of supportive measures). IHEs could also assess survivors' satisfaction with received services (e.g., Does satisfaction with services differ when initial contact with the Title IX Office is voluntary or mandated?). With a clearer idea of what a mandatory reporting policy actually achieves, greater focus can then be placed on refinement of policies and practices that may better accomplish desired outcomes (e.g., increased prevention efforts to reduce rates of sexual violence in the community, grievance procedures that are trauma-informed and less harmful for survivors, resources that help survivors heal and excel in their education).

Limitations and future directions

Study limitations should be considered when interpreting our findings. First, this research was conducted as part of a larger study on people's perceptions of university sexual assault policies, including people's perceptions of policies requiring universities to report sexual assault to the police (Holland, Cipriano, Goodman-Williams et al., 2021). Participants were asked about their perceptions of university-to-police reporting policies prior to employee-to-university reporting policies, which may have influenced the extent to which participants focused on crime, punishment, and police involvement in our findings. That said, our findings were not inconsistent with prior research on people's perceptions of policies requiring IHE employees to report to the institution, which also finds that some people consider perpetrator punishment and accountability in support for *compelled disclosure* policies (Koon-Magnin & Mancini, 2023).

Next, although both policies explicated reporting requirements, the *consented disclosure* policy included the additional requirement for employees to provide information about resources, whereas the *compelled disclosure* policy did not. As a result, it was not possible to discern the

extent to which the resource information sharing requirement influenced participants' preferred policy selection. Although *compelled disclosure* policies typically include little to no expectations for mandatory reporters to share information about resources (Holland et al., 2023), policy makers increasingly try to frame *compelled disclosure* policies as away to ensure resources are provided to survivors by the Title IX Office (e.g., OCR, 2024). Future research could explore how the sharing of resources informs people's reporting policy preferences.

Another limitation was that our quantitative analysis explained only a small amount of variance in policy choice. Thus, there are other variables that were not included in the study that could better explain people's mandatory reporting policy preference. Our qualitative findings offer insight into other factors that may be influential, such as being punishment-oriented, prioritizing the student body over individual survivors, or understanding the importance of survivor autonomy. There are also concerns about data quality for MTurk participants. We took several recommended steps to protect data quality, but it could be beneficial for future research to replicate and extend our findings using other recruitment methods for non-students.

Lastly, although this study sampled both college students and non-student adults, our sample was predominantly White, cisgender, and heterosexual, limiting the scope of lived experiences represented and, consequently, our understanding of people's preferences and perceptions of mandatory reporting policies. Some research finds that sexual minority college students (Smidt et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2016) and college students of Color (Sall & Littleton, 2022) experience more instances of their university responding inadequately to sexual assault, which can result in distinct harm (Smith & Freyd, 2014). These experiences may uniquely inform people's stance on mandatory reporting policies, particularly as *compelled disclosure* policies mandate contact with the university that may be perpetrating frequent and distinct harm. More research is needed that prioritizes the inclusion and perspectives of diverse populations to more fully understand the factors shaping perceptions of mandatory reporting policies.

Conclusion

In the current study, we explored support for a *compelled disclosure* (i.e., employees report sexual assault to the university regardless of survivor consent) and a *consented disclosure* (i.e., employees report sexual assault to the university *only with* survivor consent) policy approach. Overall, we found that most participants preferred *consented* over *compelled disclosure*, and that current college students, cisgender women and TGE individuals, and those with less trust in university response to sexual assault reports were especially likely to support a *consented disclosure* approach. Participants' rationale for their support of *consented disclosure* predominantly centered the survivor, focusing on the importance of survivor choice and wellbeing. In contrast, those who supported *compelled disclosure* predominantly focused on individuals other than the survivor (e.g., the perpetrator, other students) and their own beliefs about crime and punishment. Support for *compelled disclosure* also reflected unsubstantiated assumptions about compelled disclosure (e.g., compelled disclosure is beneficial for survivors). Our findings highlight the different considerations between those who support *compelled* vs. *consented disclosure* policies and the importance of including a greater diversity of perspectives in the development of mandatory reporting policies at IHE, state, and federal levels.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data are not shared publicly but are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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