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## **The Romanticization of Violent Male Offenders: How Trauma and Internalized Sexism Can Explain Women's Fascination with Serial Killers**

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Explain Women's Fascination with Serial Killers

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### Abstract

Past research has noted that women are interested in true crime more than men (Vicary & Fraley, 2014), and that some women romanticize violent male offenders (Isenberg, 1991). This study investigated women's fascination with serial killers compared to other offenders and the psychological correlates of women who are fascinated with serial killers. I hypothesized women's fascination was unique to serial killers and may be related to safe and culturally acceptable ways of coping with interpersonal trauma. Results largely support these hypotheses, indicating women were more fascinated with serial killers compared to other offenders, and with PTSD, child abuse, intimacy attitudes, and internalized sexism being correlates. This suggests traumatic events, negative attitudes toward intimacy, and internalized sexism influence women's fascination with serial killers.

*Keywords:* true crime, serial killers, trauma, repetition compulsion, identification with the aggressor

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### Literature Review

#### Women and True Crime

Western consumers' fascination with true crime is longstanding, with English writings about true crime dating back to as early as the 1550s (Burger, 2016). Public fascination with true crime drastically increased with the Lizzie Borden murders in 1892 (Burger, 2016), and Truman Capote's (1965) book *In Cold Blood* popularized true crime as a book genre in American culture (Cruz, 2015). In the 21st century, there has been an explosion of digital media, television, books, and podcasts that focus on true crime; in other words, as new media platforms have developed, opportunities for true crime content to be published have also developed — possibly increasing the trend of people's fascination with this topic.

While people's fascination with true crime has not received much empirical research, an interesting early finding in the only empirical study on this topic is that women favor true crime over men. Specifically, Vicary and Fraley's (2014) study asked men and women to make forced-choice judgments between two books (true crime versus non-true crime). The researchers found that women were more drawn to stories of true crime than men, and preferred true crime books with female victims and/or survival tricks (Vicary & Fraley, 2014).

Not all violent true crime content is equally fascinating to individuals. While empirical research is scarce, movies, books, television shows, and podcasts typically focus on serial killers (Boling & Hull, 2018; Caputi, 1993; Holmes, Tewksbury, & Holmes, 1999; Wiest, 2016). These data suggest that in general, the public is most interested in serial killers, followed by graphic,

violent murders. In contrast, it is intuitively evident that individuals are less interested in other violent offenders, such as domestic abusers and sex offenders. In fact, even posing the question of whether women are less attracted to domestic abusers compared to serial killers sounds patently absurd. Nonetheless, as a step to understanding why some women are fascinated with true crime, a more comprehensive understanding of whether this fascination includes different kinds of offenders, or if this fascination is specific to serial killers, is needed. Such knowledge can help to tease out the larger explanations as to why violence is often glamorized.

Why individuals — specifically, women — are fascinated with true crime is likely influenced by a multitude of complex psychological factors. One set of explanations focus on the general media exposure and easy availability of true crime content. More psychological explanations explore the larger issues of instinctive human fascination with death and the related attraction to powerful predators. The third set of explanations expand the psychological lens with a closer focus on emotional regulation and trauma-related defense mechanisms, including projecting negative emotions and using true crime to process one's fear of victimization and actual experiences of aggression.

In this work, I will explore the extent to which women report being fascinated with serial killers compared to other violent offenders, and if trauma-related explanations are potentially associated with such fascination. I will also examine whether women are more willing to engage interpersonally with serial killers compared to other violent offenders. To this end, in the following sections, I will review existing studies on women's fascination with true crime, focusing on serial killers. In addition, I will also explore three other offender types, specifically, mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders. Due to the high number of mass shootings in the United States, stories of mass shootings are often in the media (Everytown for Gun Safety,

2020); therefore, because serial killers and mass murderers are often in the media's spotlight (Everytown for Gun Safety, 2020; Wiest, 2016), these two types of offenders may be useful in providing a natural comparison. In contrast, domestic abusers and sex offenders receive little media attention beyond crime reporting, are rarely romanticized, and are usually depicted in a negative way (Center for Sex Offender Management, 2010; Martin, 2013); as such, this offers another natural comparison. Finally, since past research *has* been conducted on women who are attracted to — and sometimes even marry incarcerated murderers — I will review this literature in order to better understand the psychological correlates of the types of women who may be fascinated with violent offenders.

### **Women's Attraction to Serial Killers**

Within the portrayal of true crime in the media, numerous television shows, movies, podcasts, and books are dedicated to discussing true and fictitious accounts of serial murders. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a serial killer is a person who kills at least two victims in separate events (Morton, 2008). In an attempt to understand people's fascination with serial killers, scholars have offered a variety of broad cultural analyses. One set of explanations focus on individuals' familiarity with serial killers. Di Leo & McClennen (2012) suggest that serial killers are well-known to American audiences and, as a result, are less repulsive and are more "objects of fascination and entertainment" (p. 243). That is, like studies on the influence of advertisements have shown (Dempsey & Mitchell, 2010), familiarity has bred fondness; the "mystical status" of serial killers is due to the pure number of stories in the media about them (Sarteschi, 2016, p. 10). However, this explanation should be treated as the first incomplete step, as women do not embrace every media image they see, and do not become passively fascinated simply because certain images are more prominent than others.

A second — and more psychological — set of explanations explore why some individuals become fascinated with violent crimes and why some individuals develop emotional attractions to violent offenders. This literature has widely varying explanations that involve individuals' interest in death and pain (Penfold-Mounce, 2016). These explanations suggest the availability of serial killer content provides opportunities for an exploration of a deeper human drive — that of human fascination with predation, death, and pain (Penfold-Mounce, 2016). For example, one explanation for individuals' fascination with death, pain, and serial killers is that the unique and macabre violence generally associated with serial killers serves as a target for emotions (Simpson, 2003). In other words, serial killers may serve as targets for individuals' projections of feelings of disgust, fear, fascination, and anger. Another explanation for individual's fascination with serial killers is a need to understand killers (Sarteschi, 2016). It is possible that individuals display fascination with serial killers due to a desire to understand how and why serial killers commit atrocious crimes (Sarteschi, 2016). Women's broader fascination with serial killers may be related to gendered romantic projections of fascination, fear, and anger, but also an attempt to understand what cannot be understood in a rational or statistical way: why serial killers target women for their own gratification. By processing and reprocessing the childhood history and subsequent actions of serial killers, women repeatedly fulfill the intellectual craving for an explanation of violence. However, because the murders are not rational, rational explanations are never fully satisfactory. Women find themselves moving on to the next Ted Bundy documentary, to excitedly repeat the process of seeking an explanation for why angry men viciously target women.

In addition to a more universal drive to understand male predation and death, on a more intimate level, women may use fantasy engagements with serial killers to process their own

experiences of violence. The mechanism of processing violent experiences and trauma is posited to be similar to using any fantasy to distance or approach one's greatest fears (Bowins, 2010; Freud, 1914). Such fantasy engagements allow for otherwise painful or taboo discussions to occur in a safe, anonymous, and culturally acceptable manner, such as obsessing over violent deaths, reliving the fear and helplessness of the victim, engaging in victim blaming without guilt, and admiring the predatory strength of serial killers without fear of being shamed for identifying with the aggressor. Through popular discussions and light-hearted conversations with family members, friends, and colleagues about these rare killers, women may be distancing themselves from actual violence being committed by ordinary men. Serial killers are framed as extraordinary men who are bright enough to escape detection, while domestic abusers and sex offenders are viewed as ordinary men who are the real abusers.

It is also possible that individuals' fascination with serial killers serves as defense mechanisms for processing their own trauma. These defense mechanisms can be divided into two groups: repetition compulsion and identifying with the aggressor. Repetition compulsion describes how individuals who have experienced trauma will repress and then repeat the repressed material in order to process the trauma (Chu, 1991; Holmes, 2013; Freud, 1914; Shepherd, 2013; Zellner, 2013). Using this defense mechanism allows individuals who have experienced trauma to problem-solve and work their way through their trauma. It is possible that women who are fascinated with serial killers are symbolically using repetition compulsion in a culturally acceptable way in order to process and resolve personal traumas.

In contrast, Ferenczi's concept of identification with the aggressor describes a defense mechanism where abused individuals replace their experiences with those of the aggressor, therefore identifying with and submitting to the aggressor, rather than fearing and hating him

(Frankel, 1998). The purpose of identifying with an aggressor is to try to resolve the conflict of feeling trapped by and afraid of an aggressor or an “inescapable threat” (Frankel, 2002, p. 101). When individuals identify with an aggressor, they “mentally subordinate” to the aggressor, which allows them to understand what the aggressor is thinking and feeling, allowing for his actions to be anticipated (Frankel, 2002, p. 103). The reverse of identifying with the aggressor is victim blaming. By using the double defenses of identifying with the aggressor and blaming the victim for her misfortune, individuals are able to maximize their survival by acting on what they think will save them; oftentimes, this includes being submissive to the aggressor (Frankel, 2002) and contemptuous of the victim. While there has been literature over the years that has reviewed Ferenczi’s theory (Frankel, 1998; Frankel, 2002; Frankel, 2004; Papiasvili, 2014; Soreanu, 2018), there is a lack of research that empirically tests this concept (Lahav, Talmon, & Ginzburg, 2019).

In some rare cases, women’s fascination with serial killers appears to transcend fantasy. Despite the fact that serial killers rape, torture, and kill women, numerous serial killers have been in romantic relationships with women they met *after* being convicted of serial murder. For example, Ted Bundy, Richard “the Night Stalker” Ramirez, John Wayne Gacy, “Son of Sam” David Berkowitz, and the “Hillside Stranglers” Kenneth Bianchi and Angelo Buono married women they met during their incarceration (Bergeron, 2018; Isenberg, 1991). It is unclear what the spectrum is for women’s fascination with serial killers — that is, their fantasy interest versus their willingness to actually engage with serial killers. Thus, in this study, two aspects of women’s fascination with serial killers were explored: their fascination with serial killers, and their willingness to engage with them. These aspects were explored in order to examine the

extent to which women's fascination with serial killers stayed within bounds of fantasy versus actual contact.

### **Women's Attraction to Other Violent Male Offenders**

**Mass murderers.** Are women primarily fascinated with serial killers, or are they also fascinated with other types of violent offenders? One group of possible competitive candidates for women's fascination is mass murderers. According to the FBI, a mass murderer is a person who kills at least four people in a single event with no "cooling-off period" between the murders (Morton, 2008). Like serial killers, mass murderers receive a lot of media attention, especially when crimes involve stranger victims, occur in a public place, and have a large number of casualties (Duwe, 2000). There is little research on how individuals may perceive mass murderers; however, anecdotal data indicate that some women are still willing to engage with well-known mass murderers. For example, James Holmes (who killed 70 people at a movie theater in Colorado), Dylann Roof (who killed 9 people at a church in South Carolina), Nikolas Cruz (who killed 17 students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School), Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (who killed 12 students and 1 teacher at Columbine High School), and Chris Watts (who killed his pregnant wife and two toddler daughters) are all romanticized, as seen by love letters received while in prison (Baker, 2015; Paul, 2018; Rosenberg, 2018) and online cult-like followings (Weill, 2019). As a first step in examining women's potential fascination with mass murderers, one goal of this study was to compare women's fascination with serial killers to women's fascination with mass murderers.

**Domestic abusers.** While many women are fascinated with true crime, not all types of offenders are viewed as equally fascinating. Domestic violence/intimate partner violence, for the purposes of this study, is defined as "physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, or

psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse” (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.). Like mass murderers, men who abuse their partners (domestic abusers) typically are not the focus of true crime stories. Beck (2014) notes that because stories of domestic violence “zoom in and out of the news so frequently,” the stories are less likely to receive the amount of public attention that serial killers and mass murderers receive. In other words, the media normalizes domestic violence and desensitizes individuals to it (Kohlman et al., 2014). Another explanation for why domestic abusers are infrequently featured in the true crime genre may be due to the personalized nature of domestic violence. While most women will never encounter a serial killer, 1 in 4 women experience some form of domestic violence in their lifetime (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.). In contrast to serial murder, domestic violence has little to do with fantasies; rather, domestic violence is reality for many women. The media reflects this reality by rarely glamorizing domestic violence, and instead discusses the hardships women face as a result of domestic violence.

Interestingly, while most domestic abusers are not romanticized, exceptions to this can be seen in high-profile cases such as Scott Peterson, Josh Powell, and Chris Watts, all of whom killed their wives. Despite being convicted domestic abusers and murderers, both Scott Peterson and Chris Watts received love letters from women while imprisoned (Paul, 2018; Sutton, 2013). Anecdotally, these data suggest that domestic abusers are not romanticized and sensationalized unless the offender actually kills his partner; the interest in domestic abusers is not in the abuse, but rather, in the death that occurs.

The current study sought to examine how women perceive domestic abusers as a counterpoint to serial killers. Specifically, it was posited that women would be less likely to

display fascination with domestic abusers since domestic violence and sexual assault from an intimate partner are personal crimes for many women.

**Sex offenders.** The final group of interest in the current study is sex offenders. The term “sex offender” can be applied to any person who is convicted of a sex crime, such as sexual assault, rape, and molestation. It is important to note that not all sex offenders are pedophiles; the label “sex offender” encompasses individuals who commit many different sex crimes where pedophilia may or may not be a factor. Numerous past studies have shown that people in the general public have extremely negative attitudes toward sex offenders (Center for Sex Offender Management, 2010; Comartin, Kernsmith, & Kernsmith, 2009; Harris & Socia, 2014; Katz Schiavone & Jeglic, 2009; Mancini & Mears, 2010; Payne, Tewksbury, & Mustaine, 2010; Rogers & Ferguson, 2011; Tendayi Viki, Fullerton, Raggett, Tait, & Wiltshire, 2012; Willis, Malienen, & Johnston, 2013). Given society’s negative views on sexual offending (Center for Sex Offender Management, 2010; Comartin et al., 2009; Harris & Socia, 2014; Katz Schiavone & Jeglic, 2009; Mancini & Mears, 2010; Payne et al., 2010; Rogers & Ferguson, 2011; Tendayi Viki et al., 2012; Willis et al., 2013), as well as many women’s negative experiences of sexual harassment and assault (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.), it would be surprising if women proffered positive views toward sex offenders. Similar to domestic abusers, because many women experience sexual harassment and/or sexual assault, it would not be expected for women to find sex offenders fascinating and want to engage with them. While not directly measuring if women glamorize sex offenders, existing research indicates that women are more likely than men to experience fear or negative emotions regarding sex offenders (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007; Willis et al., 2013). Given this, it was hypothesized that compared to serial killers, women would be less likely to express fascination with sex offenders.

### **Factors Explaining Women's Attraction to Violent Men**

Much of the research trying to understand why some women are attracted to violent male offenders has been conducted on women who are actually romantically involved with incarcerated men (Altson, 2018; Comfort, 2003; Comfort, Grinstead, McCartner, Bourgois, & Knight, 2005; Fishman, 1988; Giebel & Elbert, 2014; Girshick, 1992; Harman, Smith, & Egan, 2007; Isenberg, 1991; Moerings, 1992; Seeman, 2018; Seka, 2000; Slavikova & Panza, 2014). Although the media focuses on serial killers, several studies have shown that women are attracted to men who have been convicted of any homicide — even when the victim was a woman (Girshick, 1992; Slavikova & Panza, 2014). The type of homicide and type of victim (domestic, acquaintance, or stranger) do not appear to influence the offender's attractiveness. These results suggest that the type of homicide and type of victim are not what fascinates some women; rather, the death that occurs is what piques women's interest.

Existing literature on the psychological correlates of women who are attracted to violent male offenders has indicated that traumatic histories are common (Comfort et al., 2005; Giebel & Elbert, 2014; Girshick, 1992; Harman et al., 2007; Isenberg, 1991; Slavikova & Panza, 2014). Specifically, research focusing on the traits of women who are attracted to violent male offenders have found a history of abuse, familial problems, poor relationships with men, and a need for power and control to be common characteristics (Isenberg, 1991; Slavikova & Panza, 2014). These traits suggest a direct relationship between trauma and attraction to violence, although few explanations were offered for why this may be so.

Another group of studies have focused on the potential outcomes of abuse that may drive women's attraction to violent male offenders (Comfort et al., 2005; Giebel & Elbert, 2014; Girshick, 1992; Harman et al., 2007). Specifically, several studies have found that these women

have distorted concepts of intimacy, sex, and love that could partially account for their attraction to male offenders (Comfort et al., 2005; Giebel & Elbert, 2014; Girshick, 1992). These types of analyses suggest an indirect relationship to trauma via difficulties with intimacy. Although little theory is offered by way of explanation, one speculative reason could be that women with early trauma have distorted concepts of intimacy. These distortions in intimacy may shape women's attraction to violent male offenders because relationships with offenders — whether real or a fantasy — flirt with danger (identification with the aggressor), though the men behind bars cannot actually control or hurt the women.

In addition, some studies have suggested that women who are attracted to male offenders have internalized sexist views (Comfort et al., 2005; Girshick, 1992; Harman et al., 2007), such that violence against women is seen as being justified and therefore can be safely enjoyed in fantasy. It is not entirely clear why some women hold internalized sexist views, as there is little research on this topic. One possibility could be that such views may have developed a result of early trauma or negative experiences with an abuser and/or from witnessing other women undergo traumatic experiences. It is possible that women who have experienced abuse use internalized sexism to distance themselves from fears of harassment or abuse by deflecting blame and hostility to other women and aligning with the abuser — a form of identification with the aggressor.

Taken together, these findings are partially consistent with theories that suggest women who have experienced violence are attracted to violent men who kill, and that such attractions may be influenced or amplified by direct and indirect trauma histories. Fantasies and fascination with violent men — specifically, serial killers — may serve as a way to regulate emotions and cope with one's own experience of violence.

## Goals and Hypotheses

This study had two overarching goals. One, I wished to explore the extent to which women expressed fascination with serial killers, and whether that fascination was specific to serial killers, or also included other violent male offenders. Specifically, I wanted to compare whether women were more fascinated with serial killers compared to mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders. In addition, I wished to explore if women would also express a willingness to engage specifically with serial killers compared to other types of violent male offenders. Two, as a preliminary step to understanding why this fascination with violent male offenders appears to be so prevalent, I also wished to explore whether traumatic events — indexed by child abuse and poor parental relationships — and traumatic outcomes — indexed by symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), internalized sexism, and negative attitudes toward intimacy — would help to explain women’s fascination with serial killers.

Accordingly, I proposed the following hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis 1: Women would report more fascination with serial killers (reflected by higher mean scores of fascination) compared to mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders (reflected by lower mean scores).
2. Hypothesis 2: Women would report more willingness to engage with serial killers (reflected by higher mean scores of engagement) compared to mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders (reflected by lower mean scores).
3. Hypothesis 3: Higher mean scores in both indices of traumatic events — including self-reported child abuse and poor parental relationships — would be associated with higher mean scores of fascination with serial killers.

4. Hypothesis 4: Higher mean scores in both indices of traumatic events — including self-reported child abuse and poor parental relationships — would be associated with higher mean scores in three potential indices of traumatic outcomes, including higher scores of symptoms of PTSD, negative attitudes toward intimacy, and internalized sexism.
5. Hypothesis 5: The three potential indices of traumatic outcomes (symptoms of PTSD, negative attitudes toward intimacy, and internalized sexism) would be related to higher mean scores of fascination with serial killers.
6. Exploratory Aim 1: I wished to conduct an exploratory analysis (Exploratory Analysis 1) to examine if traumatic events (child abuse and poor parental relationships) were directly associated with more fascination with serial killers, or if this relationship was indirectly associated through the relationship between trauma and traumatic outcomes (symptoms of PTSD, negative attitudes toward intimacy, and internalized sexism). For a direct relationship to hold true, Hypothesis 3 should be confirmed. For an indirect relationship to be held true, Hypothesis 3 should be disconfirmed, but Hypothesis 4 should be confirmed. In addition, traumatic events should correlate positively with the potential traumatic outcomes proposed in Hypothesis 5.
7. Exploratory Aim 2: I also wished to examine the relative contributions of five predictor variables — child abuse, symptoms of PTSD, internalized sexism, negative attitudes toward intimacy, and poor parental relationships — on women's fascination with serial killers to gauge which variables were more statistically important (Exploratory Analysis 2).

## Methods

### Procedure

The current study was a part of a larger, ongoing study on sexual coercion among female college students at a large metropolitan university. Only measures pertinent to this study will be reported. IRB approval was obtained prior to data collection, and informed consent (Appendix I) was obtained from all participants prior to the administration of the electronic questionnaire.

Eligible participants were recruited from undergraduate students enrolled in a Psychology 100 (PSY 100) course. The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows: (1) identified as female, (2) at least 18-years-old, and (3) enrolled in a PSY 100 course at the college. The questionnaire was administered online through Qualtrics Survey Software. Debriefing occurred after completion of the questionnaire (Appendix H). After successfully completing the questionnaire, participants received credit for their PSY 100 course. The study is still ongoing; data reported were those available at the time of analysis.

### Participants

At the time of thesis completion, 96 participants had completed the survey. Seven participants were excluded from data analyses for missing data and for not meeting inclusion criteria. The average age of participants was 19.67 years ( $SD = 2.49$  years, range = 18-35). Six participants did not disclose their age. A little over half of the sample identified as Latinx ( $n = 51$ ; 54.80%). Sixteen women identified as White (17.20%); 12 as Asian (12.90%); 10 as Black (10.80%); 3 as American Indian/Native (3.20%); and 1 as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1.10%). Three participants did not disclose their race. About two thirds of participants identified as heterosexual (74.90%); 21 as bisexual (21.90%); and 5 preferred not to say (5.20%).

Socioeconomic status was varied. Thirty-two women reported having an income under \$20,000 (34.04%); 26 between \$20,000 and \$40,000 (27.66%); 22 above \$60,000 (23.40%); and 14 between \$40,000 and \$60,000 (14.89%). Two participants did not specify their socioeconomic status.

## Measures

**Attitudes toward violent male offenders.** The Offender Attitude Scale (OAS) is a 53-item scale written for this study. This measure assesses (1) fascination, indexed by items regarding whether participants display positive feelings toward serial killers, mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders, and (2) whether participants are willing to engage with serial killers, mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders. The following four fascination subscales were used: Fascination with Serial Killers ( $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ,  $\alpha = 0.71$ ), Fascination with Mass Murderers ( $M = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ,  $\alpha = 0.75$ ), Fascination with Domestic Abusers ( $M = 1.80$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ,  $\alpha = 0.73$ ), and Fascination with Sex Offenders ( $M = 1.70$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ,  $\alpha = 0.74$ ). In addition, the following four engagement subscales were used: Engagement with Serial Killers ( $M = 1.97$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ,  $\alpha = 0.85$ ); Engagement with Mass Murderers ( $M = 1.75$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ,  $\alpha = 0.85$ ); Engagement with Domestic Abusers ( $M = 1.39$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ,  $\alpha = 0.93$ ); and Engagement with Sex Offenders ( $M = 1.32$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ,  $\alpha = 0.94$ ).

Respondents indicate their agreement with the statements on a 5-point Likert-format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores on the fascination subscales indicate more fascination with offenders, and higher scores on the engagement subscales indicate more willingness to engage with offenders. As can be seen, internal reliability on the subscales were acceptable to high ( $\alpha$  ranging from 0.71 to 0.94) in this sample.

**Traumatic events.** *The Adverse Childhood Experiences Abuse Short Form (ACE-ASF;* Meinck, Cosma, Mikton, & Baban, 2017) was used to assess a history of child abuse, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. This measure includes 8 items in a 4-point Likert-format ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (many times), where higher scores indicate a higher prevalence of childhood abuse. Mean scores were used in this study ( $M = 1.52$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ). This measure had acceptable reliability in this sample ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ). *The Parental Control-Disrespect Scale (PCDS;* Barber Xia, Olsen, Mcneely, & Bose, 2012) was used to assess participants' relationships with their mothers and fathers. Questions in this measure ask individuals to rate how well statements describe their mothers and fathers. This measure includes 16 items in a 3-point Likert-format ranging from 1 (not like her/him) to 3 (a lot like her/him), where higher scores indicate more severe parental control. Mean scores were used in this study ( $M = 1.48$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ). The measure had moderate reliability in this sample ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

**Traumatic outcomes.** *The PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5;* Weathers, Litz, Keane, Palmieri, Marx, & Schnurr, 2013) was used to assess participants' self-reports of PTSD symptoms. Questions in this measure ask participants to rate the severity of symptoms they may have experienced in response to a past trauma. This measure includes 20 items in a 5-point Likert-format ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely), where higher scores indicate more severe symptoms of PTSD. Mean scores were used in this study ( $M = 0.88$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). This measure had high reliability in this sample ( $\alpha = 0.98$ ). The 51-item *Intimacy Attitude Scale (IAS;* Amidon & Kavanaugh, 1976) was used to assess participants' attitudes toward intimacy. For the purposes of this study, only the IAS negative subscale was used, where higher scores indicate more negative attitudes toward intimacy. Possible responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The negative subscale had acceptable reliability in this sample ( $\alpha = 0.72$ ).

Mean scores of the negative subscale were used in this study ( $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ). *The Internalized Misogyny Scale (IMS)*; Piggott, 2004) was used to assess participants' attitudes toward other women, as well as toward men. This measure includes 17 items in a 6-point Likert-format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), where higher scores indicate higher levels of misogyny. Mean scores were used in this study ( $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ). This measure had high reliability in this sample ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ).

### Results

To test Hypothesis 1 — that women would report more fascination with serial killers compared to mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders — I compared the four mean scores of the fascination subscales. Results (Table 1a) indicated that women reported significantly ( $p < 0.000$ ) more fascination with serial killers ( $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ) compared to mass murderers ( $M = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ), domestic abusers ( $M = 1.80$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ), and sex offenders ( $M = 1.70$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ). As such, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

Table 1a

*Women's Fascination with Offenders*

Offender Type	n	M	SD	t	p
Serial killers	94	2.85	0.73	38.11	0.000
Mass murderers	94	2.44	0.76	31.13	0.000
Domestic abusers	95	1.80	0.61	28.94	0.000
Sex offenders	96	1.70	0.57	29.38	0.000

Table 1b

*Women's Willingness to Engage with Offenders*

Offender Type	n	M	SD	t	p
Serial killers	94	1.98	0.92	20.77	0.000
Mass murderers	94	1.77	0.81	21.04	0.000
Domestic abusers	95	1.40	0.59	23.27	0.000
Sex offenders	95	1.33	0.56	23.15	0.000

Next, to test Hypothesis 2 — that women would report more willingness to engage with serial killers compared to mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders — I compared the four mean scores of the engagement subscales. Results (Table 1b) indicated that women reported significantly ( $p < 0.000$ ) more willingness to engage with serial killers ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ) compared to mass murderers ( $M = 1.77$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), domestic abusers ( $M = 1.40$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ), and sex offenders ( $M = 1.33$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). Similarly to Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed.

To test Hypothesis 3, I correlated the two traumatic event indices, a history of child abuse (ACE-ASF) and poor parental relationships (PCDS), with women's fascination with serial killers (Fascination with Serial Killers subscale). As can be seen in Table 3a, ACE-ASF was significantly positively correlated with the Fascination with Serial Killers subscale ( $r = 0.21$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ). However, PCDS was not significantly correlated with the Fascination with Serial Killers subscale ( $r = 0.11$ ,  $p = 0.27$ ). As such, Hypothesis 3 was partially confirmed. In addition, these findings indicate that ACE-ASF may have a direct relationship with women's fascination with serial killers, while PCDS may have an indirect relationship with women's fascination with serial killers.

Table 3a

*Correlation Between Traumatic Events and Women's Fascination with Serial Killers*

Measure	OAS	ACE-ASF	PCDS
OAS	—	0.21*	0.11
ACE-ASF	0.21*	—	0.62**
PCDS	0.11	0.62	—

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3b

*Correlation Between Traumatic Events and Traumatic Outcomes*

Measure	ACE-ASF	PCDS	PCL-5	IAS	IMS
ACE-ASF	—	0.62**	0.26**	0.07	0.06
PCDS	0.62**	—	0.28**	0.11	0.08
PCL-5	0.26**	0.28**	—	0.31**	0.03
IAS	0.07	0.11	0.31**	—	0.21*
IMS	0.06	0.08	0.03	0.21*	—

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3c

*Correlation Between Traumatic Outcomes and Women's Fascination with Serial Killers*

Measure	OAS	PCL-5	IAS	IMS
OAS	—	0.36**	0.21*	0.28**
PCL-5	0.36**	—	0.31**	0.03
IAS	0.21*	0.31**	—	0.21*
IMS	0.28**	0.03	0.21*	—

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Next, to test Hypothesis 4, I examined if traumatic events (child abuse and poor parental relationships) were associated with the hypothesized traumatic outcomes, as indexed by symptoms of PTSD (PCL-5), negative attitudes toward intimacy (IAS), and internalized sexism (IMS). As can be seen in Table 3b, ACE-ASF ( $r = 0.26$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) and PCDS ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) were both significantly positively correlated with PCL-5, but not with IAS or IMS. Hypothesis 4 was partially confirmed, suggesting that while symptoms of PTSD are directly associated with traumatic events, neither negative attitudes toward intimacy nor internalized sexism were directly associated with traumatic events.

To test Hypothesis 5, I examined if the traumatic outcomes were associated with women's fascination with serial killers (Fascination with Serial Killers subscale), as indexed by symptoms of PTSD (PCL-5), negative attitudes toward intimacy (IAS), and internalized sexism

(IMS). As can be seen in Table 3c, PCL-5 ( $r = 0.36, p < 0.000$ ), IAS ( $r = 0.21, p = 0.05$ ), and IMS ( $r = 0.28, p = 0.007$ ) were all significantly positively correlated with the Fascination with Serial Killers subscale, thus confirming Hypothesis 5.

Next, as detailed in Exploratory Aim 1, I wished to examine whether traumatic events were directly associated with women's fascination with serial killers, or if women's fascination with serial killers was indirectly associated through the relationship between traumatic events and traumatic outcomes. Hypothesis 3 was partially disconfirmed, suggesting an indirect relationship between traumatic events and women's fascination with serial killers since ACE-ASF was significantly directly related to the Fascination with Serial Killers subscale. Further, because IMS and IAS were not significantly associated with traumatic events, these variables were not considered for the direct versus indirect comparison. No further analyses were required; findings suggest that poor parental relationships (PCDS) indirectly contribute to women's fascination with serial killers via symptoms of PTSD (PCL-5).

Table 4

*Pearson Correlates of Women's Fascination with Serial Killers*

Measure	OAS	IAS	IMS	PCDS	ACE-ASF	PCL-5
OAS	—	0.21*	0.28**	0.11	0.21*	0.36**
IAS	0.21*	—	0.21*	0.11	0.07	0.31**
IMS	0.28**	0.21*	—	0.08	0.06	0.03
PCDS	0.11	0.11	0.08	—	0.62**	0.28**
ACE-ASF	0.21*	0.07	0.06	0.62**	—	0.26**
PCL-5	0.36**	0.31**	0.03	0.28**	0.26**	—

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Finally, as detailed in Exploratory Aim 2, I examined the relative contributions of the different predictor variables. First, I calculated the bivariate correlations to examine the univariate relationships. As shown in Table 4, ACE-ASF, ( $r = 0.21, p = 0.04$ ), PCL-5 ( $r = 0.36,$

$p < 0.000$ ), IAS ( $r = 0.21$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ), and IMS ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) were all significantly correlated with the Fascination with Serial Killers subscale, such that higher scores of fascination with serial killers were associated with a history of more frequent child abuse, more severe symptoms of PTSD, more negative attitudes toward intimacy, and more internalized sexism. PCDS was not significantly correlated with women's fascination with serial killers ( $r = 0.11$ ,  $p = 0.27$ ), and was not included in this multivariate analysis.

Next, to examine the predictor variables simultaneously to assess their relative contributions, I conducted a simple linear regression. Specifically, this model included PCL-5, ACE-ASF, IAS, and IMS, and was used to predict women's fascination with serial killers. The model was significant ( $F(4, 86) = 5.73$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ) and the variables accounted for 21.1% of the variance in the model ( $R = 0.46$ ). As Table 5 shows, IMS ( $t = 2.45$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ) and PCL-5 ( $t = 3.07$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) significantly contributed to the model; at the multivariate level, IAS and ACE-ASF were no longer significant. These findings suggest that IAS relationship to OAS is fully explained by IAS relationship to symptoms of PTSD, and that this variable did not contribute any unique variance to the model. These findings also suggest that ACE-ASF may have a mediated relationship to OAS, such that ACE-ASF contributes to symptoms of PTSD and to OAS. Symptoms of PTSD contribute to OAS, and when symptoms of PTSD are included in the final model, ACE-ASF no longer contributes directly to OAS.

Table 5

*Linear Regression of Correlates of Women's Fascination with Serial Killers*

	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	1.69	0.53		3.18	0.002
IAS	0.07	0.17	0.04	0.41	0.69
IMS	0.22	0.09	0.24	2.46	0.02
ACE-ASF	0.17	0.14	0.12	1.24	0.22
PCL-5	0.23	0.08	0.32	3.07	0.003

### Discussion

The current study sought to better understand the widespread phenomenon of women's interest in true crime, with a particular reference to serial killers. Interestingly, despite widespread media assumptions, women reported neutral levels of fascination with serial killers. However, as predicted, women reported being more fascinated with serial killers compared to mass murderers, domestic abusers, and sex offenders. These findings are the first to empirically support previous speculation that women find serial killers more fascinating than other violent male offenders, suggesting that women's fascination with violent male offenders is unique to serial killers. Perhaps this unique fascination is a result of widespread media coverage of serial killers' extreme violence, and also the sustained predatory nature of the kills, which distinguishes serial killers from mass murderers who kill in single events. Similarly, as predicted, women also reported being more willing to engage with serial killers compared to the other types of violent offenders. However, participants' responses indicated they did not desire to engage with any type of offender, suggesting that in this sample, fascination with serial killers remains in the domain of fantasy. These results are not consistent with past accounts of women engaging with — and sometimes even marrying — serial killers. This suggests that in college samples, women's fascination with serial killers may reflect fantasies that women are not actually willing to act upon.

Perhaps the most interesting results of this study are those relating to the direct and indirect influences on women's fascination with serial killers. The relationships were complex and multifaceted. Specifically, while child abuse was directly correlated with women's fascination with serial killers, poor parental relationships were not. Instead, it appears that poor parental relationships have an indirect association with women's fascination with serial killers

through its association with self-reported PTSD symptoms. However, child abuse was both directly and indirectly associated with women's fascination with serial killers. These findings support the broader idea that women who have experienced traumatic events are fascinated with serial killers.

Subsequently, I wished to explore potential psychological reasons for which women might be fascinated with serial killers. As predicted, negative attitudes toward intimacy and internalized sexism were related to women's fascination with serial killers. At a first glance, this suggests that women who disliked intimacy and viewed other women with suspicion and hostility were more likely to be fascinated with serial killers. These findings suggest that fascination with serial killers may be one way for women to regulate emotions regarding intimacy and discomfort toward themselves, expressed as hostility toward other women. In other words, instead of projecting feelings of fear and disgust onto serial killers as previously suggested in the existing literature, it is possible that women are projecting negative feelings toward intimacy and hostility toward other women onto these offenders. By doing this, it appears women in this sample were using a form of identification with the aggressor to process their feelings regarding intimacy and other women.

Interestingly, contrary to my prediction, while negative attitudes toward intimacy and internalized sexism were associated with women's fascination with serial killers, neither had a relationship with past trauma. To complicate matters further, poor parental relationships contributed to trauma, but not to women's fascination with serial killers. Taken together, these findings suggest interesting avenues to explore. For example, traumatic events, such as child abuse and poor parental relationships, contribute to PTSD symptoms, which in turn are associated with an increased fascination with serial killers. These findings suggest that women's

fascination with serial killers may be an attempt to regulate symptoms of PTSD that are a result from past trauma, such as child abuse and poor parental relationships. It is possible that women become fascinated with serial killers because they can relate to the abuse and suffering the victims experienced. By listening to or reading stories about serial killers, women place themselves in situations similar to those of the original trauma, which safely restarts their flight or fight responses. In these stories, women with past trauma are able to relate to the experiences of the victims (or alternatively, gloat over their misfortune), and consequently triumph when the serial killer is caught in the end. Doing this repetitively may be a symbolic form of repetition compulsion, where women's repetitive exposure to stories about serial killers and consequent fascination with the offenders allows them to relive and reprocess their personal trauma over and over. While speculative, perhaps burying oneself in true crime literature may help to process past trauma in a safe and culturally acceptable way. Longitudinal studies examining exposure to violent true crime and subsequent trauma symptoms could help address this question.

Finally, I explored how these different factors might help explain women's fascination with serial killers. When considered as a whole, only trauma symptoms and internalized sexism continued to help explain women's fascination with serial killers. Two implications emerge. One, trauma is powerful and exhibits a direct influence on women's fascination with serial killers, such that the influence of child abuse was mediated in this sample. While a mediation analysis is not possible with such a small sample, I will conduct these analyses when the full sample of 200 is obtained in order to examine post hoc explorations of a mediated relationship among child abuse, PTSD, and women's fascination with serial killers. Two, and quite unexpected, negative attitudes toward intimacy were no longer important when symptoms of PTSD were included in the same model. It is possible that negative attitudes toward intimacy are

also mediated by symptoms of PTSD, and I incorrectly categorized negative attitudes toward intimacy as effects of trauma, rather than as correlates of traumatic outcomes. As previously speculated, it is possible that, through the processes of repetition compulsion and/or identification with the aggressor, women's fascination with serial killers allows them to process their personal traumas in ways that are safe and culturally acceptable. Future studies can further clarify these complex relationships.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

While these results are curious in some places and interesting in others, the current study suffered from some limitations. First, because the current study was correlational, causation cannot be established. Thus, I cannot conclude that trauma or internalized sexism led to women's fascination with serial killers. It is possible, for example, that frequently watching violent footage of serial killers may exacerbate existing trauma symptoms. In addition, while the sample of this study was diverse, a larger sample size would have allowed for increased external validity and generalizability. It is also important to note that this study was only conducted on women enrolled in college, which is not necessarily representative of all women in the United States. Further, participants were recruited from a criminal justice school, so their interest in criminal offenders may be greater than the interest exhibited by women in the general public. An internet questionnaire was chosen for data collection since it allows for participants to complete the questionnaire when convenient, making the procedure easier. However, this method systematically excludes participants who do not have access to technology, which could further affect the representativeness of the sample and the external validity of the results. Since the questionnaire was also lengthy, it is possible that some participants rushed through the questionnaire and did not provide thoughtful or accurate responses. Similarly, since the

questionnaire was self-reported, participants may not have answered truthfully in efforts to appear “normal” (i.e. social desirability bias).

This study adds novel information on why women are fascinated with serial killers. The findings hint that the role of trauma and defense mechanisms may be key to understanding, at least in part, women’s widespread fascination with serial killers. Since this area has previously been uninvestigated, many different avenues can be explored, including testing the results in a larger sample and in a non-criminal justice student sample. In addition, future studies could further investigate the relationship between specific types of trauma that influence attitudes toward offenders to better understand the relationship between the two. Ultimately, the preliminary results of the current study indicate that this uninvestigated topic is worth further investigating in order to better understand the relationship between past trauma, defense mechanisms, and women’s fascination with violent male offenders.

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*Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies Conference: The Repetition Compulsion*

*Revisited*, 1-24.

## Appendix A: Demographics

**1) How old are you?**

(write-in)

**2) What is your race?**

1 = White

2 = Black

3 = Asian

4 = American Indian/Native

5 = Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

6 = Other (please specify)

**3) Do you identify as Hispanic/Latinx or are from a country considered as such?**

1 = Yes

2 = No

**4) How would you describe your racial/ethnic identity? (i.e. Latinx, Spanish, Afro-Caribbean, etc.)**

(write-in)

**5) What is your gender?**

1 = male

2 = female

3 = non-binary/gender non-conforming

4 = other (please specify)

5 = prefer not to say

**6) What is your sexual orientation?**

1 = heterosexual

2 = lesbian/gay

3 = bisexual

4 = other (please specify)

5 = prefer not to say

**7) What is your family or household yearly income?**

1 = Less than \$10,000

2 = \$10,000 - \$19,999

3 = \$20,000 - \$29,999

4 = \$30,000 - \$39,999

5 = \$40,000 - \$49,999

6 = \$50,000 - \$59,999

7 = \$60,000 - \$69,999

8 = \$70,000 - \$79,999

9 = More than \$80,000

Appendix B: Offender Attitude Scale

**1) I enjoy television shows, movies, or podcasts about true crime.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**2) I enjoy reading books about true crime.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**3) I find true crime interesting.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**4) I find male killers interesting.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**5) I find female killers interesting.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**For the purposes of this study, a serial killer is a man who kills at least two people in separate events.**

**6) I find serial killers fascinating.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**7) I find serial killers disgusting.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**8) I find serial killers complex.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**9) Serial killers are often misunderstood.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**10) Serial killers are often prematurely judged before we have all of the facts.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**11) I get a thrill when I think about serial killers.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**12) I would like to exchange letters with a serial killer.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**13) I would like to speak to a serial killer on the phone.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**14) I would meet a serial killer if he was incarcerated.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**15) If it could be safely arranged, I would go on a date with a serial killer.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**16) I would be open to having a romantic relationship with a serial killer.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**17) When you hear the term “serial killer,” who is the first serial killer that comes to your mind?**

[open response]

**For the purposes of this study, a mass murderer is a man who kills at least four people in a single event with no “cooling-off period” between the murders.**

**18) I find mass murderers fascinating.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**19) I find mass murderers disgusting.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**20) I find mass murderers complex.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**21) Mass murderers are often misunderstood.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**22) Mass murderers are often prematurely judged before we have all of the facts.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**23) I get a thrill when I think about mass murderers.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**24) I would like to exchange letters with a mass murderer.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**25) I would like to speak to a mass murderer on the phone.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**26) I would meet with a mass murderer if he was incarcerated.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**27) If it could be safely arranged, I would go on a date with a mass murderer.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**28) I would be open to having a romantic relationship with a mass murderer.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**29) When you hear the term “mass murderer,” who is the first mass murderer that comes to your mind?**

[open response]

**For the purposes of this study, a man who abuses his partner (domestic abuser) can perpetrate physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse against his partner.**

**30) I find domestic abusers fascinating.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**31) I find domestic abusers disgusting.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**32) I find domestic abusers complex.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**33) Domestic abusers are often misunderstood.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**34) Domestic abusers are often prematurely judged before we have all of the facts.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**35) I get a thrill when I think about domestic abusers.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**36) I would like to exchange letters with a domestic abuser.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**37) I would like to speak to a domestic abuser on the phone.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**38) I would meet with a domestic abuser.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**39) I would go on a date with a domestic abuser.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**40) I would be open to having a romantic relationship with a domestic abuser.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**41) When you hear the term “domestic abuser,” who is the first domestic abuser that comes to your mind?**

[open response]

**For the purposes of this study, a sex offender is a man who has been convicted of a sex crime (sexual assault, rape, molestation, statutory rape, etc.).**

**42) I find sex offenders fascinating.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**43) I find sex offenders disgusting.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**44) I find sex offenders complex.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**45) Sex offenders are often misunderstood.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**46) Sex offenders are often prematurely judged before we have all of the facts.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**47) I get a thrill when I think about sex offenders.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**48) I would like to exchange letters with a sex offender.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**49) I would like to speak to a sex offender on the phone.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**50) I would meet with a sex offender who was incarcerated.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**51) If it could be safely arranged, I would go on a date with a sex offender.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**52) I would be open to having a romantic relationship with a sex offender.**

1 = completely disagree

2 = slightly disagree

3 = neutral

4 = slightly agree

5 = completely agree

**53) When you hear the term "sex offender," who is the first sex offender that comes to your mind?**

[open response]

## Appendix C: PTSD Checklist for DSM-5

**1) In the past month, how much were you bothered by repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**2) In the past month, how much were you bothered by repeated, disturbing dreams of the stressful experience?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**3) In the past month, how much were you bothered by suddenly feeling or acting as if the stressful experience were actually happening again (as if you were actually back there reliving it)?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**4) In the past month, how much were you bothered by feeling very upset when something reminded you of the stressful experience?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**5) In the past month, how much were you bothered by having strong physical reactions when something reminded you of the stressful experience (for example, heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating)?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**6) In the past month, how much were you bothered by avoiding memories, thoughts, or feelings related to the stressful experience?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**7) In the past month, how much were you bothered by avoiding external reminders of the stressful experience (for example, people, places, conversations, activities, objects, or situations)?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**8) In the past month, how much were you bothered by trouble remembering important parts of the stressful experience?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**9) In the past month, how much were you bothered by having strong negative beliefs about yourself, other people, or the world (for example, having thoughts such as: I am bad, there is something seriously wrong with me, no one can be trusted, the world is completely dangerous)?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**10) In the past month, how much were you bothered by blaming yourself or someone else for the stressful experience or what happened after it?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**11) In the past month, how much were you bothered by having strong negative feelings such as fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**12) In the past month, how much were you bothered by loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**13) In the past month, how much were you bothered by feeling distant or cut off from other people?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**14) In the past month, how much were you bothered by trouble experiencing positive feelings (for example, being unable to feel happiness or have loving feelings for people close to you)?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**15) In the past month, how much were you bothered by irritable behavior, angry outbursts, or acting aggressively?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**16) In the past month, how much were you bothered by taking too many risks or doing things that could cause you harm?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**17) In the past month, how much were you bothered by being “superalert” or watchful or on guard?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**18) In the past month, how much were you bothered by feeling jumpy or easily startled?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**19) In the past month, how much were you bothered by having difficulty concentrating?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

**20) In the past month, how much were you bothered by trouble falling or staying asleep?**

0 = Not at all

1 = A little bit

2 = Moderately

3 = Quite a bit

4 = Extremely

Appendix D: Adverse Childhood Experiences Abuse Short Form (ACE-ASF; Meinck, Cosma, Mikton, & Baban, 2017)

**1) As a child, did a parent, guardian or other household member yell, scream or swear at you, insult or humiliate you?**

1 = never

2 = sometimes

3 = a few times

4 = many times

**2) As a child, did a parent, guardian or other household member threaten to, or actually, abandon you or throw you out of the house?**

1 = never

2 = sometimes

3 = a few times

4 = many times

**3) As a child, did a parent, guardian or other household member spank, slap, kick, punch or beat you up?**

1 = never

2 = sometimes

3 = a few times

4 = many times

**4) As a child, did a parent, guardian or other household member hit or cut you with an object, such as a stick (or cane), bottle, club, knife, whip etc.?**

1 = never

2 = sometimes

3 = a few times

4 = many times

**5) As a child, did someone touch or fondle you in a sexual way when you did not want them to?**

1 = never

2 = sometimes

3 = a few times

4 = many times

**6) As a child, did someone make you touch their body in a sexual way when you did not want them to?**

1 = never

2 = sometimes

3 = a few times

4 = many times

**7) As a child, did someone attempt oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you when you did not want them to?**

1 = never

2 = sometimes

3 = a few times

4 = many times

**8) As a child, did someone actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you when you did not want them to?**

1 = never

2 = sometimes

3 = a few times

4 = many times

Appendix E: Psychological Control -- Disrespect Scale (PCDS; Barber, Xia, Olsen, Meneely, & Bose, 2012)

**1) My mother is a person who ridicules me or puts me down (e.g., saying I am stupid, useless, etc.).**

1 = not like her

2 = somewhat like her

3 = a lot like her

**2) My mother is a person who embarrasses me in public (e.g., in front of my friends).**

1 = not like her

2 = somewhat like her

3 = a lot like her

**3) My mother is a person who doesn't respect me as a person (e.g., not letting me talk, favoring others over me, etc.).**

1 = not like her

2 = somewhat like her

3 = a lot like her

**4) My mother is a person who violates my privacy (e.g., entering my room, going through my things, etc.).**

1 = not like her

2 = somewhat like her

3 = a lot like her

**5) My mother is a person who tries to make me feel guilty for something I've done or something she thinks I should do.**

1 = not like her

2 = somewhat like her

3 = a lot like her

**6) My mother is a person who expects too much of me (e.g., to do better in school, to be a better person, etc.).**

1 = not like her

2 = somewhat like her

3 = a lot like her

**7) My mother is a person who often unfairly compares me to someone else (e.g., to my brother or sister, to herself).**

1 = not like her

2 = somewhat like her

3 = a lot like her

**8) My mother is a person who often ignores me (e.g., walking away from me, not paying attention to me).**

1 = not like her

2 = somewhat like her

3 = a lot like her

**9) My father is a person who ridicules me or puts me down (e.g., saying I am stupid, useless, etc.).**

1 = not like him

2 = somewhat like him

3 = a lot like him

**10) My father is a person who embarrasses me in public (e.g., in front of my friends).**

1 = not like him

2 = somewhat like him

3 = a lot like him

**11) My father is a person who doesn't respect me as a person (e.g., not letting me talk, favoring others over me, etc.).**

1 = not like him

2 = somewhat like him

3 = a lot like him

**12) My father is a person who violates my privacy (e.g., entering my room, going through my things, etc.).**

1 = not like him

2 = somewhat like him

3 = a lot like him

**13) My father is a person who tries to make me feel guilty for something I've done or something he thinks I should do.**

1 = not like him

2 = somewhat like him

3 = a lot like him

**14) My father is a person who expects too much of me (e.g., to do better in school, to be a better person, etc.).**

1 = not like him

2 = somewhat like him

3 = a lot like him

**15) My father is a person who often unfairly compares me to someone else (e.g., to my brother or sister, to himself).**

1 = not like him

2 = somewhat like him

3 = a lot like him

**16) My father is a person who ridicules me or puts me down (e.g., saying I am stupid, useless, etc.).**

1 = not like him

2 = somewhat like him

3 = a lot like him

## Appendix G: Intimacy Attitude Scale (IAS; Amidon, Kumar, &amp; Treadwell, 1983)

**1) My concern with rejection inhibits my expression of feelings to others.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**2) I'm concerned with being dominated in a close relationship.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**3) I'm often overly critical of people in a close relationship.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**4) I will tell a person my feelings if I feel very attracted to them.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**5) I want to feel close to people I really like and will reveal my deepest feelings to them.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**6) I would rather not be too close because it usually involves conflict.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**7) When I feel attracted to a person, I want to seek out a close relationship.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**8) People receive their greatest satisfaction through really intimate relationships.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**9) I personally search for close intimate relationships.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**10) I would like to be able to form close relationships easily.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**11) I want to be able to share my feelings and thoughts with others.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**12) I often want to talk with someone about my feelings toward another person with whom I am in a close relationship.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**13) Each person has a personal space that must be defended so others do not come too close.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**14) I tend to distrust people who are concerned with closeness and intimacy.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**15) I have concerns about losing my individuality in close relationships.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**16) People must give up control if they enter into a really intimate relationship.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**17) Being honest and open with another person makes both people feel closer to one another.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**18) If I were another person I would be interested in getting to know me.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**19) Revealing secrets about my sex life makes me feel close to others.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**20) Generally I can feel just as close to a woman as I can to a man.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**21) It's easier for me to be intimate with other people when I am in a place of natural beauty.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**22) I want to be sure that I am in good control before I attempt to become intimate with other people.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**23) My commitments to people prevent me from becoming intimate with other people.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**24) Undressing with members of a group can lead to an increased level of intimacy.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**25) I think that people who want to become intimate have hidden reasons for wanting closeness.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**26) When I become intimate with another, I reduce the possibility of being manipulated by the other person.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**27) Intimacy and sex are related but can exist without each other.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**28) Sex and intimacy are the same and one cannot exist without the other.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**29) I can be most intimate in a physical sexual relationship.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**30) The demands placed on me by those with whom I have intimate relationships often inhibit my own need satisfaction.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

**31) I understand and accept that intimacy leads to bad feelings as well as good feelings.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neutral

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

## Appendix H: Internalized Misogyny Scale (IMS; Piggott, 2004)

**1) Women exaggerate problems they have at work.**

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = moderately disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = slightly agree
- 5 = moderately agree
- 6 = strongly agree

**2) Women are too easily offended.**

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = moderately disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = slightly agree
- 5 = moderately agree
- 6 = strongly agree

**3) Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.**

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = moderately disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = slightly agree
- 5 = moderately agree
- 6 = strongly agree

**4) When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.**

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = moderately disagree
- 3 = slightly disagree
- 4 = slightly agree
- 5 = moderately agree
- 6 = strongly agree

**5) It is generally safer not to trust women too much.**

- 1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**6) When it comes down to it, a lot of women are deceitful.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**7) I think that most women would lie just to get ahead.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**8) I am sure I get a raw deal from other women in my life.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**9) Sometimes other women bother me by just being around.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**10) I believe that most women tell the truth.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**11) When I am in a group consisting of equal numbers of men and women and a woman dominates the conversation I feel uncomfortable.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**12) I am uncomfortable when I hear a woman speaking with authority on male-dominated topics such as football or horse racing.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**13) I prefer to listen to male radio announcers rather than female.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**14) The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**15) I prefer to work for a male boss.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**16) If I were to beat another woman for a job I would feel more satisfied than if I beat a man.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

**17) Generally, I prefer to work with men.**

1 = strongly disagree

2 = moderately disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = slightly agree

5 = moderately agree

6 = strongly agree

### Appendix H: Debriefing Statement

We were interested in your experiences of sexual coercion. Specifically, we wanted to understand how prevalent sexual coercion is within the Latinx community and what tactics are most commonly experienced. Some of the tactics you may have endorsed, included threats and physical force, humiliation and intimidation, relational threats and manipulation, and helplessness. We asked questions about your ethnic self-identification, personal values including familism, religiosity, and your views on intimate relationships. We are interested in how values such as familism are associated with ethnic self-identification and whether these factors impact the disclosure of sexual coercion. We also asked questions about your experiences with sexual coercion and childhood trauma and how you felt, thought, and coped after these experiences. To our knowledge, this study is among the first studies on sexual coercion among college-age Latinx women and this information will help us understand what interventions and treatment would better serve you and women with similar experiences.

If you feel upset or just want to talk about the survey, you can call one of three campus resources listed below. In addition, below is a list of places that provide services that might be of help to you in New York City. If you do not wish to wait or feel the need to speak to someone right away, please refer to the hotlines available or contact Dr. Raghavan, the principal investigator, below.

#### Additional Information

The principal investigator for this project is Dr. Chitra Raghavan. You can contact Dr. Raghavan at the Department of Psychology at John Jay College at (212) 237-8417 or [craghavan@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:craghavan@jjay.cuny.edu) if you have any questions about the content of the research or to obtain more information about the study findings.

To ask any additional questions about your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact the CUNY Research Compliance Administrator at (646) 664-8918.

Thank you very much.

#### Additional Counseling Services

##### *On Campus*

Women's Center for Gender Justice, L.67.00 NB

(212) 237-8184, [womenscenter@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:womenscenter@jjay.cuny.edu)

Jessica Greenfield, Women's Center Counselor

(646) 557-4535, [jgreenfield@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:jgreenfield@jjay.cuny.edu)

Counseling Center, L.68.00 NB

(212) 237-8111, [counseling@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:counseling@jjay.cuny.edu)

##### *Off Campus*

SAVI: (212) 423-2140

Sanctuary for Families: (212) 349-6009 (ex. 221)

Safe Horizon: (347) 328-8110

Black Women's Blueprint: (347) 553-9102/3

Violence Intervention Program: (800) 664-5880

*Hotlines*

Domestic Violence: 1-800-621-4673

Rape and Sexual Assault: 1-212-227-3000

## Appendix I: Informed Consent

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

INFORMED CONSENT

SEXUAL COERCION IN LATINX COMMUNITIES PROJECT

STACEY MORALES, ELLA JOHNSON, AND DR. CHITRA RAGHAVAN, PHD

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to better understand Latinx women's experiences of unwanted sex, also referred to as sexual coercion. Sexual coercion occurs when a partner obtains sex through nagging, threats, bullying, blackmail, and other forms of pressure but does not use physical force. We will also ask you about your personal values. Finally, we will ask questions about how you responded to and coped with your experiences. You have been invited to this study because you are a woman of Latin American descent, are heterosexual or have previous sexual experiences with men, are 18 years of age or older, have been in a sexual relationship that has lasted at least a month, and speak English. Your participation -- or refusal to participate -- in this study will not affect your relationship or standing with your college. That is, you will not be penalized for your decision to participate.

Procedures

If you decide to participate in the study, you will be one of approximately 100 participants. The study is fully online and will take approximately one hour. Several of the questions are of a sensitive and personal nature. In particular, we will ask about negative experiences you may have had with past sexual partners. We will also ask about your personal values. Any information collected during this study will not be shared with anyone other than the research lab. Furthermore, no identifying information will be asked of you (i.e. your name, EMPLID, address, email address, phone number). This survey is completely anonymous and your information will be organized under a randomly assigned 4-digit code.

Participant's Rights

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty if you decide not to participate, and you can stop the survey at any time. You don't have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable and you can stop answering at any time without consequence. In addition, you may select a different research study or complete alternative assignments to receive course credit and are not obligated to participate in this specific study.

Incentive

You will receive 2 academic credits for participation through the SONA system for your introductory psychology course. You will receive credit whether or not you complete the survey.

Potential Benefits of the Research

This research is not intended to directly benefit participants.

Potential Risks, Stress, and Discomfort

There is modest risk associated with participation in this study; it is possible that some questions may make you feel uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel

uncomfortable and you can stop participation at any time. As previously mentioned, all of your answers are confidential. Please feel free to ask any questions either now or in the future by contacting the principal investigator, Dr. Chitra Raghavan.

#### Confidentiality

Any and all information collected during the survey will be kept confidential. All data is collected anonymously and you will not be asked to record any identifying information as part of this study. Therefore, you will never be directly identified in any publications or presentations. All collected data will be available only to the principal investigators and research team. All data collected will be de-identified and stored for future research use but will not be shared with other researchers. All data will be stored in a secure cloud storage, Dropbox, housed by the supervisor of this research study at John Jay College. Research team members will only have access to the data with explicit permission. Please, do not put your name or any other identifying information (i.e. Social Security Number) on any part of the questionnaire.

#### Additional Information

The faculty advisor for this project is Dr. Chitra Raghavan. You can contact Dr. Chitra Raghavan, at the Department of Psychology at John Jay College at (212) 237-8575 or [craghavan@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:craghavan@jjay.cuny.edu), if you have any questions about the content of the research or to obtain information about the study findings. To ask any additional questions about your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact the CUNY Research Compliance Administrator at 646-664-8918. Alternately, you can write to:

CUNY Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

Attn: Research Compliance Administrator

205 East 42nd Street

New York, NY 10017

Thank you very much.

Dr. Chitra Raghavan

Department of Psychology

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York.

#### Participant Agreement Form

Do you consent to participation in this research study?

Yes, I agree to participate.

No, I do not wish to participate.