# Restorative Justice as a Response to Sexual Harm in Schools: Youth Perspectives and Reasoning

by

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# Abstract

Concerns regarding positive youth development in schools are increasingly tied to the use of technology. The ability to easily share explicit photos and/or videos adds complexity to the issue and can leave young people vulnerable to sexual harassment, coercion, and the non-consensual sharing of their images (Dodge & Spencer, 2018). A growing body of research supports the use of Restorative Justice (RJ) as a means of preventing and responding to bullying and violence in schools (Morrison & Riestenberg, 2019), while socio-moral development has been identified as a factor in the efficacy of RJ interventions (Recchia, Wainryb, & Pareja Conto, 2022). This mixed-methods study examines student perspectives on using RJ in response to peer-to-peer sexual harm in schools, and how these perspectives are informed by the processes of socio-moral reasoning. Data was collected from 145 students in ten classrooms, in five high schools across British Columbia. Student perspectives were surveyed using multiple-choice and short-answer questions focused on scenarios that depict common behaviors among youth that can lead to sexual harm. These include sexualized bullying, image sharing, and misunderstandings about consent. The survey was developed using a socio-moral development lens, drawing on social domain theory (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021; Turiel, 1983). To answer the third research question, descriptive methods were used to analyse multiple choice survey data, and an inductive approach was used to analyse short answer data. To answer the first and second research questions, descriptive, inductive, and deductive methods were used in a sub-analyses of 100 survey respondents from Schools A, B, and C. Results reveal that students across a range of schools and grades do not want school staff to ignore peer-to peer sexual harm, even when occurrences are minor or ambiguous. A mix of restorative and punitive measures was preferred in response to four out of six sexual harm scenarios, and preference for punitive versus restorative measures appeared to be influenced by the intent of the harm doer, and relational factors between the harm doer and the person who was harmed. Along with situational influences, considerations relating to youth socio-moral development guide youth reasoning on this topic, such as privacy, social image, and a desire for perpetrators of peer sexual harm to understand the harm they caused and learn from their behavior.

# Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Mom, Cathy Reed for inspiring me to go to University and teaching me how to write papers.

# Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge Robyn Ilten-Gee for agreeing to be my supervisor, and for her patience and persistence in supporting me to finish this thesis.

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# Introduction

Peer-to-peer sexual offending and peer-to-peer sexual harm amongst school-aged youth, is an under-researched issue that is complicated by unprecedented access to digital technology and exposure to sexualized content through the internet and other media sources (Robb & Mann, 2023). While young people today are particularly vulnerable to sexual harm, they are also at risk of adopting harmful sexual behaviors with consequences they may not predict or fully understand (Dodge & Spencer, 2018). In 2017, a meta-analytic review of 96 studies from English speaking countries which examined peer-to-peer dating violence, found that 20% of high-school aged adolescents experience physical dating violence at the hands of peers, and 9% experience sexual dating violence at the hands of peers (Wincentak, Connolly, & Card, 2017).

While research examining peer-to-peer sexual harm in Canada is lacking, a 2019 study which surveyed a nationally representative sample of 13,677 U.S. public and private high school students in grades 9–12, found that an estimated 8.2% of American high school students experience sexual dating violence, of which 92% is perpetrated by a peer (Basile et al., 2019). When the definition of sexual harm is expanded to include sexual harassment and sexualized bullying, an estimated 52% of females, and 35% of males in grades 7-12 experience sexual harm in the U.S. (Basile et al., 2019), up to 44% of which is experienced at school (Young, Grey, & Boyd, 2009). In recent decades, the social lives of high-school-aged youth have increasingly become entwined with technology. Student use of social media apps throughout the school day on personal smart phones, for example, is normalized within many schools (Radesky et al., 2023).

While smart phones and online platforms can facilitate positive social interactions, an estimated 30% of youth in grades 7-12 experience online/digital sexualized bullying and harassment (Hill & Kearl, 2011). Meanwhile, research has found that 73% of youth under the age of 17 and 54% of youth under the age of 13 have been exposed to pornography online. According to a large study by Robb and Mann (2023), which surveyed American youth aged 12-17, pornography acts as a primary source of sex education for young people. Meanwhile the pornography that is easily accessed

online by young people frequently depicts behavior informed by harmful stereotypes, and viewing this content has been linked to harmful behaviors in young people.

A growing body of research supports the use of Restorative Justice (RJ) as a means of preventing and responding to bullying and violence in schools (Morrison & Riestenberg, 2019). RJ has also been shown to facilitate positive socio-moral development, because it promotes perspective taking and empathic understanding (Recchia, Wainryb, & Pareja Conto, 2022). When RJ is implemented using a whole school approach, it can be used as both a response to harm in schools, and a preventive measure (Morrison, 2012). Although there is no research examining the use of RJ in response to peer-to-peer sexual harm in schools, initial research on the use of RJ in response to sexual harm in the criminal justice context suggests that a victim-centered approach to RJ can improve victim experience with navigating the criminal justice system and facilitate emotional healing from sexual harm. The aim of this study was to survey high school students' perspectives on using RJ in response to peer-to-peer sexual harm in schools, and to examine the socio-moral reasoning behind these perspectives using social domain theory (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021; Turiel, 1983). Results are intended to guide school-based peer-to-peer sexual harm interventions.

## 1.1. Background

### 1.1.1. What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice (RJ) is an alternative to traditional school disciplinary measures and criminal justice processes that has been adapted from the cultural practices of Indigenous communities of the South Pacific and North America (Diplock & Monroe, 2015; Zehr, 2003). RJ is a non-punitive approach for responding to harm which promotes offender accountability, while also supporting the offender to examine their behavior, and make decisions in the future that are more prosocial (McCold, 2001). RJ has been described as a process informed by a set of values that promotes reconciliation, community healing, and offender re-integration. While RJ practices are informed by the assumption that everyone who participates in RJ should have a chance to share their perspective (Zehr, 2015), successful participation in RJ requires that the offender or harm doer take responsibility for the harm they have caused and take steps

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to repair the harm. Figuring out how the harm can be repaired is part of the RJ process and depends on the wishes of the victim.

RJ processes vary and are also referred to as reactive practices, responsive circles, and restorative conferences. These are all processes used in response to a concrete occurrence of harm involving a harmed person or persons, and a person or persons who were harmed. Restorative practice is a broader term which includes proactive circles, community-building circles, and restorative conversations. These are used to respond to or prevent a general issue within a community, or as a follow up to a previous RJ process. Other restorative practices include peer-to-peer mediation and mentorship (Zakzeski & Rutherford, 2021).

The RJ process begins with the person or people who were harmed explaining what happened, and how they were affected by the actions of the person who harmed them. Next, the supporters of the harmed person, the person who caused harm, the support people of both the victim and the offender, and anyone else participating offer their version of what happened and explain how they have been affected by the situation. The conversations then move towards a discussion about how the offender can repair the harm they caused. This process affords harm doers an opportunity to understand the effects of their actions, and to mitigate shame by committing to repairing the harm they have caused. In smaller communities, the goal of RJ may be forgiveness and re-integration of the offender back into the community, but this depends on the circumstances and severity of the crime (Gregory & Evans, 2020; Napolean & Friedland 2016).

Evidence suggests that RJ can be an effective means of reducing recidivism in youth involved in the criminal justice system as it offers them an opportunity to learn how their actions have affected others, and ideally facilitates a process of personal reflection informing future actions (Bouffad et al., 2017). The RJ process used in response to police and courtroom referrals in BC Canada is a standardized procedure based on the implementation of a single RJ circle where facilitators follow a script to ensure consistency and the focus is on the restoration of peace and order (Diplock & Monroe, 2015). These referrals are made in response to minor offences, or for first-time offenders as a diversion from criminal charges, or as an alternative sentencing measure. However, RJ is not generally used in response to sexual offences.

RJ processes vary according to the context within which they are applied, and the theory that informs them. While RJ in the criminal justice system is focused on victim satisfaction, and reducing recidivism in offenders (Diplock & Monroe, 2015), RJ in schools deals with incidents within the school community and is focused on responding to incidents of harm while building student socio-emotional capacity and a stronger school community (Morrison, 2012). The RJ process used in the BC criminal justice system is informed by a training course developed by the RCMP (Diplock & Monroe, 2015). In some BC schools, RJ is facilitated by community organizations that use the RCMP model to respond to incidents of harm. Other schools in BC have instituted a whole school approach where RJ is used to respond to incidents of harm, and restorative practices are used to respond to general issues within the school, and to prevent harm from occurring (Morrison, 2012).

Transformative RJ is a more in-depth approach which explicitly addresses the ways that identity informs the dynamics at play between youth and their peers, and adult authority figures, within and outside an RJ circle (Kim, 2021). Practitioners and researchers using this form of RJ maintain that historical and current inequities relating to the specific identities of individual RJ participants, such as those pertaining to race, gender, and ability, must inform RJ dialogue to ensure that inequity is not implicitly reinforced within an RJ circle (Winn, 2018). Within the RJ circle, the potential for dialogue to be informed by stereotyped assumptions relating to the identities of participants is critically examined. For example, dialogue which assumes that men are naturally more violent, and less emotional than women would be examined within a transformative RJ circle for its potential to erase the internal experiences and realities of those within and outside the RJ circle, who identify as males. This approach to RJ acknowledges that time limits can act as barriers to victim healing and offender accountability. For this reason, two or more RJ circles may be used to address harm in the short term, and on a long-term basis.

## 1.1.2. Peer-to-Peer Youth Sexual Offending and Sexual Harm in Schools

Peer to peer sexual harm is an under-researched issue which has received media attention in recent years, as young people navigate socio-sexual development amid new technologies which can lead to forms of sexual harm that were unknown to

previous generations (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019; Firmin, 2019). Sharing intimate images through instant messaging on cell phones, for example, has become common among North American and British youth. In some cases, this has led to criminal charges against minors for the production and/or distribution of child pornography (Dodge & Spencer, 2018). A 2002 Justice Canada report states that youth under the age of 18 commit sexual crimes at a higher rate than any other age group (Kong et al., 2003). This report indicates that sexual crimes were decreasing in the late 1990s to early 2000s. A 2021 Statistics Canada report shows that sexual offences against minors have increased by 20% between 2020 and 2022 (Moreau, 2022). In many cases, this increase has been related to the use of technology. According to statistics Canada data, the 20% increase also pertains to sexual assault. As of 2021, 83% of level 1 sexual assaults in Canada were committed by youth between the ages of 12 and 17 (Statistics Canada, 2021).

While youth are the most common perpetrators of level one sexual assault (assault violating the sexual integrity of the victim), youth in Canada commit only 3% of level 2 sexual assaults (sexual assault with a weapon/causing bodily harm) and less than one percent of level 3 sexual assaults (aggravated). This difference may be explained by research which indicates that youth sex offenders differ from adult sex offenders. While youth sex offenders tend to target their own age-group, those who move on to become adult sex offenders target younger children. Most youth sexual offending begins to decrease after age eighteen and ceases by age 24. This is not true for the minority of youth who become adult sex offenders (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005). In Canada, females aged 15-18 are five times more likely than males to be sexually assaulted and over half of sexual assault incidents are perpetrated by a friend or acquaintance. Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+ youth and youth with disabilities are also targeted more frequently than other youth. Meanwhile sexual crimes are the least likely crime to be reported to police in Canada, and prosecution for these crimes occurs less frequently than other crimes. While only six percent of sexual assaults are reported to police in Canada (Miladinovic, 2019), sexual offences are not considered eligible for RJ referral within the adult or youth criminal justice systems (Diplock & Monroe, 2015).

In Canada, research on sexual harm in schools is lacking. In the U.S., an estimated 20% of high school-aged young people experience peer-to-peer physical dating violence, or peer-to-peer sexual dating violence (Basile et al., 2020; Wincentak et

al., 2017). When the definition of sexual harm includes less severe occurrences, such as unwelcome comments and touching, research suggests that 54% of females, and 48% of males in grades 7-12 report being victimized by a peer (Hill & Kearl, 2011). A recent study which examined the smart phone use of 203 adolescents aged 11-17 in the U.S. shows how cell phones have become integral to the lives of adolescents. This study found that 97% of participants used their phones, for a median of 43 minutes per day, during school hours, and that most of this time was spent using social media apps (Radesky et al., 2023). According to Allnock and Atkinson (2019), sexual harm in high schools usually involves both digital and in-person behaviors.

Despite the frequency with which sexual harassment, coercion, and the unwanted sharing of intimate images occurs among high school-aged youth, these phenomena have only recently been considered in the literature separately from other forms of online bullying (Copp et al., 2021). Cell phone technology and social media platforms such as SNAPCHAT have evolved in such a way that the social and sexual behaviors of youth are difficult for adults to monitor, and sexualized behaviors, such as the sharing of intimate images, is frequently normalized within peer groups. This often means that harm occurring in digital spaces does not come to adults' attention (Ehman & Gross, 2019). Several in-school interventions aimed at preventing sexual abuse and online exploitation of minors have been found to increase student wellbeing, knowledge, self-protective behavior, as well as abuse disclosure (Topping & Barron, 2009). However, these interventions address online sexual harm caused by unknown adults, rather than peers at schools. There is currently a lack of school-based interventions which address issues relating to healthy sexuality and peer-to-peer interactions (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019).

While young people may have little exposure to sex education in schools, they have unprecedented access to sexually explicit material on the Internet compared to previous generations. According to data collected by the University of Calgary in 2019, the average age that a young person in Canada is first exposed to pornography is between 9 and 12 years old (Temple, Browne & Madigan, 2019). Similarly, a US nationwide study that surveyed a representative sample of 1300 youth found that 73% of youth under the age of 17 have been exposed to pornography online, and 54% of youth under the age of 13. While 58% of these youth stated that their exposure to pornography was accidental, 45% stated that pornography gives them helpful information about sex,

27% reported that online pornography accurately represents real sex, and 30% of 13–17-year-olds reported viewing pornography at school (Robb & Mann, 2023).

Research examining the effects of under-age pornography viewing has found that early pornography exposure can be harmful to psycho-social development in young people. It has also been linked to sexually abusive behavior. For example, a report by the Children's Commissioner in the United Kingdom, which examined large samples of young people, found that more than half of sexually harmful acts carried out by children and youth against peers were directly influenced by violent pornography that was accessed online (Children's Commissioner of the United Kingdom, 2023). The pornographic content that is free and easily accessible online has increasingly depicted scenes involving violence, non-consensual, or rough sex in recent decades. Online pornography also tends to re-enforce harmful stereotypes about women and racial minorities, as these groups are often depicted as passive objects used to please White men (Mori et al., 2019). In the US, an estimated 44% of 16–17-year-olds have been asked to do something pornographic that a partner watched on the Internet, and 39% had tried to copy a pornographic act they had viewed online (Robb & Mann, 2023).

### 1.1.3. Restorative Justice and the Canadian Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)

The Canadian Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) came into effect in 2003 in response to Canada's high rates of youth incarceration, unfair sentencing practices, and a need to be more responsive to the needs of victims (Department of Justice Canada, 2013). The YCJA is less punitive than its predecessor, the Young Offenders Act (YOA) and is intended to facilitate developmentally appropriate guidance and support from adults as a means of mitigating the underlying causes of anti-social behavior. However, barriers remain to the equal implementation of the less punitive aspects of the YCJA, which does not appear to adequately address the needs of Indigenous youth, or those with cognitive disabilities.

The YCJA encourages the use of RJ whenever possible as a diversionary measure, or as an alternate sentencing option (Dept. of Justice Canada, 2013). In BC sexual crimes are not refereed to RJ and the 26% reduction in youth trials that has occurred since 2003 is specific to less serious crimes, such as minor theft and mischief.

There are several factors informing policy which prevents RJ referral for sexual crimes in the criminal justice context. These include insurance restrictions, a lack of funding and training for RJ facilitators, and a lack of RJ research informing best practices for responding to sexual harm (Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates, 2010; Diplock & Monroe, 2015).

In addition to the allowance of extrajudicial sanctions under YCJA, Gladue rights provide routes to alternative justice options for Indigenous young offenders (Barkaskas et al., 2019). Gladue rights are exercised through written reports presented to the judge at sentencing, and Gladue factors are the considerations made by a judge when sentencing an individual who identifies as Indigenous. Gladue reports outline the systemic factors that have influenced the individual's life within the context of colonialism, such as displacement and loss of language/culture, intergenerational trauma, involvement in the child welfare system, lack of educational opportunity, poverty, and mental health struggles.

Despite the implementation of Gladue rights and the success of the YCJA (2003) in reducing youth incarceration rates, the Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates reported in 2010 that the likelihood that an Indigenous youth would be involved in the criminal justice system in Canada, was still greater than the likelihood they would graduate high school. As of 2015 there was only a 23% percent reduction in Indigenous youth incarceration compared to a 35% percent reduction in incarceration of non-Indigenous youth. This means that the ratio of Indigenous to non-Indigenous incarcerated youth increased after the introduction of the YCJA in 2003 (Jackson, 2015). A tendency for law enforcement and the courts to delay RJ until the sentencing phase of the criminal justice process has been established as a major contributing factor to the continuation of disproportionate rates of Indigenous youth incarceration. The International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy (2021) and the Canadian Council of Provincial Child and Youth Advocates (2010) both cite the need for extrajudicial sanctions at earlier stages of the criminal justice process, and for preventative measures before youth come into contact with the criminal justice system, as integral to the reduction of Indigenous youth incarceration rates in Canada.

Despite the stated commitment of the YCJA to respond to the developmental needs of youth involved in the criminal justice system, a review by Flannigan et al.

(2018) points to the overrepresentation of fetal alcohol syndrome and other developmental disorders among individuals involved in the criminal justice system in Canada and the United States, and a lack of screening, staff training, and youth support around this issue. For example, Stinson and Robbins (2014) found that 55% of a justice-involved youth sample were assessed as having an intellectual disability, 22% had a traumatic brain injury, 15% had a pervasive developmental disability, and 23% were found to have an alcohol related disorder under the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder umbrella. According to McLachlan et. al (2014), these youth frequently have challenges relating to auditory processing, memory, and communication. They are also less likely to understand their rights relating to criminal justice processes.

## 1.2. Theoretical Perspective

The idea that schools inform the moral character of students and their ability to act as engaged members of society is a premise of scholarship in moral education. From this perspective, behavioral and emotional regulation are part of a broader developmental process of character development, rather than ends in themselves. Moral development from a social domain theory perspective (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021) differs from other moral developmental theories, which tend to conceptualize morality in terms of virtues and vices that are acquired through family values, religion, and/or socio-cultural influence. For example, social domain theory differs from Kohlberg's theory of moral development as a series of universal stages (Kohlberg, 1958). From a social domain theory perspective, children are predisposed to develop morally in the sense that harming others is viewed as wrong from an early age, but how this plays out is subject to socio-cultural influence and individual experience.

Kohlberg's (1958) view of moral development as a set of universal stages has been challenged by Gilligan (1982) for being male-centric in its focus on justice over relational concerns. The universality of moral development has also been challenged by postmodern theory (e.g., Foucault, 1976), which emphasizes the notion of cultural plurality. The conceptualization of morality as a set of virtues has been challenged by social domain theory research (Nucci, 2019), which shows that people act differently in different situations. According to this research, contextual influences can outweigh virtues once thought to be ingrained in the character of individuals. For example, people who consider themselves and others to be honest, are often able to recall circumstances

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where they lied to protect themselves or a friend. Similarly, individuals who condemn the practice of cheating on an academic test may recall instances where they engaged in cheating themselves, even though they manage to resist the urge to cheat most of the time (Nucci et al., 2017).

From a social domain theory perspective, morality is a developmental system of identity formation embedded in socio-cultural processes and individually constructed. This process of identity formation is facilitated by navigating situations where moral, personal, and conventional domain considerations are interpreted according to previous experience, and informational assumptions. This creates diversity in individual reasoning about similar situations (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). Social domain theory can be used to explore individual differences in reasoning within specific contexts. In this study social domain theory has been used to develop and analyze the results of a survey which shows how high school student participants reasoned about sexual harm in a variety of situations.

The current study addresses a need to provide sexual harm interventions to high school students which are developmentally suitable, and which seek to actively challenge the reproduction of systemic inequity within and outside of schools. Social domain theory provides a developmental framework in which to consider reasoning related to sexual harm and, consequently, to identify age-related trends that can assist educators in creating appropriate curricular interventions. This study situates the issue of responding to peer sexual harm as a social justice issue in that Indigenous, BIPOC, and LGBT+ youth experience sexual harm at disproportionate rates compared to other youth, while Indigenous youth are disproportionately affected by the school to prison pipeline phenomenon. While it has been suggested that RJ may be used to prevent youth involvement in the criminal justice system, social domain theory may be used in conjunction with RJ as a means of addressing sexual harm in a way that highlights experiences of identity-related oppression and facilitates student awareness and critique of the societal conventions which cause and/or maintain it. Social domain theory was selected as a theoretical framework specifically because it has been aligned with critical pedagogy by Nucci & Ilten-Gee (2021), who suggest an educational approach that acknowledges social inequities and prioritizes societal power dynamics.

This study explores the issue of responding to peer sexual harm within the framework of social moral development, while also viewing it in terms of social justice considerations. In this way, this study's theoretical approach incorporates the ideas of critical educational psychology, defined by Teo (2015), and Vassallo (2014). Research from a critical educational psychology perspective seeks to understand subjects within a socio-historical context rather than an individualistic framework. Critical educational psychologists seek to incorporate unique perspectives, acknowledge the social embeddedness of subjectivity, and work towards identifying and challenging societal power differentials. From a critical educational psychology perspective, research is seen as a means of advancement towards social justice (Teo, 2015). Like moral development from a social domain theory perspective, socio-emotional learning from a critical educational psychology perspective necessarily involves the context of the learner and cannot be reduced to a series of steps that are 'value free' (Vassallo, 2014). The aim of this study is to explore high school students' reasoning about RJ in response to sexual harm. The outcomes may inform sexual harm interventions in schools which facilitate reasoning and positive socio-moral development of young people, while promoting their ability to reason morally and act as engaged members of society.

## 1.3. Research Questions

To address the issue of sexual harm within the theoretical framework and the aims of this study, the following research questions were posed:

- What are the perspectives of BC students in grades 8-12 on the use of RJ in response to sexual harm in schools? Do they prefer a restorative approach, a punitive approach, or a mixed approach? Or do they prefer that staff ignore the issue?

- How do students decide which approach they prefer? Which domains of social reasoning do they employ to make these decisions?

- What are the perspectives of BC high school students on the issue of sexual harm in their schools, and the response of school staff? How often are students reporting experiences of sexual harm to school staff, and what are their reasons for reporting, or not reporting, these experiences?

# Chapter 2.

# Literature Review

## 2.1. Restorative Justice in Response to Sexual Offending: Victim Perspectives

While there is a history of often conflicting opinions about RJ, there is a lack of empirical research examining the use of RJ in response to sexual offending. Some authors (e.g., Hudson, 2002) argue that facing the perpetrator of a sexual offence in an RJ circle is re-traumatizing and potentially dangerous for the victim, especially in domestic abuse cases where there is a potential for the abuse to continue. Others maintain that using RJ instead of more punitive measures risks diminishing the perception of sexual violence as a serious crime (Coker, 2002). Meanwhile, sexual crimes remain chronically under-reported and those who have been victimized by an intimate partner, family member, or friend, may be reluctant to pursue criminal charges because they fear relational and/or social repercussions.

When sexual assault or related charges are pursued through the criminal justice system, case-closure without prosecution is common due to a lack of evidence. Survivors also frequently disengage from the criminal justice process prematurely because they feel unsupported, blamed, or scrutinized (Burns & Sinko, 2021). As evidenced by Marsh and Wager (2015), even successful criminal justice proceedings can be re-traumatizing for victims, due to the focus on identifying the details of the events that occurred, as a means of providing evidence against offenders. In these cases, offenders are not required to demonstrate genuine understanding or personal accountability for the harm they have caused, and for many victims this is another barrier to healing (Marsh & Wager, 2015).

Concerns about sexual violence survivors' and other types of victims' experiences with RJ have prompted the development of the 'victim-centered' approach to RJ (Wilson, 2005; Zehr, 2013). In cases involving sexual violence, concerns such as perceived pressure on the victims to accept a superficial apology, and ignoring underlying inequities or power imbalances between victim and offender, are particularly acute (Coker, 2002). The victim-centered approach to RJ prioritizes victim agency and

repairing victim harm, but research examining the experiences and/or perspectives of survivors on the use of RJ in response to sexual violence is limited.

A 2021 scoping review by Burns and Sinko (2021) found only two empirical studies examining the use of RJ in response to sexual harm from survivors' perspectives. Both studies provide preliminary evidence supporting the use of RJ in response to sexual crimes. The first study identified by Burns and Sinko evaluates the RESTORE program, a pilot initiative that conducted RJ circles with the perpetrators and survivors of sexual assault, after regular criminal justice proceedings had finished. Offenders were referred to the program by the prosecutors on their case, and participation in the program was voluntary. Both survivors and offenders participated in pre-conferencing before the RJ circles commenced. Pre-conferences are meetings where RJ facilitators meet with potential RJ circle participants to ensure they are ready to participate and know what to expect. For example, these meetings can be used to gauge whether an offender is prepared to take responsibility for their actions, and whether a survivor is ready to face the perpetrator of the crime in the RJ circle. Support people for both survivors and offenders also participated in the RJ process (Koss, 2014).

Survivors who participated in this study were supported by RESTORE counselors trained in responding to sexual violence, and they were surveyed about their experience and reasons for participating after the RJ process was complete. The most frequently reported motivations for survivor participation were: holding the offender accountable; explaining how they were affected; taking back their power; and making sure the offender did not do this to anyone else. Koss (2014), found that most survivor participants reported feeling safe, supported, and listened to during the RJ process. They did not report feeling blamed or revictimized, and some reported a decrease in post-traumatic stress symptomology post-study.

A 2015 survey conducted by Marsh and Wager was the second empirical study identified by Burns and Sinko. The survey asked members of the public about their preferences and opinions regarding the use of RJ in response to sexual violence. Marsh and Wager (2015) found that victims of sexual assault support the idea of using RJ in response to sexual offending when the victim is allowed to decide how, and at what stage of the criminal justice process, RJ will occur. Results of the survey showed that survivors of sexual violence who had made a police report preferred the idea of RJ

taking place after, or during regular criminal justice proceedings. In comparison, respondents who had not been victimized or who had not reported the experience to police, were more likely to prefer the idea of using RJ instead of regular criminal justice proceedings. From the findings of their review, Burns and Sinko (2021) summarize best practices for applying RJ in cases of sexual violence. These include ensuring commitment from offenders to repair the harm they caused, allowing victims to determine the structure of the conference/meeting, offering psychological support services to both parties, and mandatory post-RJ supervision to ensure the safety of both parties and compliance with the agreement formed during the RJ process.

## 2.2. Restorative Justice in Schools

Efforts aimed at tackling peer-to-peer harm in U.S. and Canadian schools have traditionally consisted of punitive disciplinary tactics and policies of zero tolerance. More recently, research has deemed these policies to be harmful, inequitable, and ineffective (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2006). As an alternative means of reducing behavioral concerns, many schools have adopted multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). These systems offer an improvement over zero tolerance disciplinary policies, but implementing equitable and effective behavioral consequences within these frameworks continues to be a challenge for most schools. In both Canada and the U.S., the phenomenon of the school to prison pipeline (Bartanen, 2016) illustrates ongoing incompatibility between the current structure of institutionalized education, and the needs of racial minority students and students with disabilities. Meanwhile, peer harm in schools remains a significant issue linked to many negative outcomes, including risky sexual behaviors, substance abuse, and physical health symptoms (Basile et al., 2020). As much of the social lives of high school-aged children and youth have shifted to online and digital spaces, online bullying and harassment have added complexity to the issue of peer-to-peer harm. In accordance with this shift, both online and offline bullying is considered an adverse childhood experience (ACE) and a public health issue affecting schools (Hill & Kearl, 2011).

In their systematic review of research examining restorative practices in schools, Zakzeski and Rutherford (2021) identify a dramatic increase since the late 2000s in studies examining the use of RJ in schools as an alternative to traditional disciplinary practices. Overall, these studies suggest that RJ can improve student-teacher

relationships and mitigate racial disparities in school disciplinary practices by promoting positive student-teacher relations. For example, a randomized control trial by Augustine and colleagues (2018) found a significant reduction in school discipline disparities after RJ was implemented in 22 schools. However, Zakzeski and Rutherford (2021) also found ambiguity and inconsistency within the literature regarding the definition of RJ, and how it is best implemented. In the studies that they reviewed, operational definitions of RJ were frequently lacking, along with discrete descriptions of the RJ procedures used in the study. According to Zakzeski and Rutherford (2021) this lack, along with a tendency toward inadequate measurement and reporting of RJ implementations strategies, inhibits rigorous quantitative evaluation of RJ outcomes in schools.

The results of a narrative review by Darling-Hammond, Fronius and Sutherland (2020) support the use of RJ as a means of preventing bullying in schools, particularly when RJ conferences prioritize the emotional safety of the victim, and trained adult facilitators are brought into the schools (Molnar-Main, 2014). For example, a randomized control trial that implemented RJ using a whole school approach found that students whose teachers used restorative practices experienced significantly less physical bullying as well as cyberbullying, and significantly higher levels of peer attachment, and positive peer relationships (Acosta et al., 2019). However, Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2020) also found mixed results in the research they reviewed, which indicated procedural inconsistencies such as those identified by Zakzeski and Rutherford (2021). For example, a survey study by Henson-Nash (2015) found a statistically significant drop in female victimization after RJ implementation, and a drop in overall school bullying that was not statistically significant. Meanwhile a study by Armour (2014), which involved 44 U.S. schools, found that bullying increased overall after RJ implementation.

A challenge to successfully implementing restorative practice in schools is that a shift in school culture may be required for restorative interventions to be effective. In schools where punitive or exclusionary policies and authoritarian disciplinary practices have led to alienation amongst some groups of pupils, responding restoratively to isolated incidents could lead to confusion. In many cases, a shift towards a more restorative school culture would entail a need for teachers and other staff members to critically examine deeply held beliefs and/or assumptions about the role of authority

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figures in schools. For this reason, Winn (2018) suggests that implementing RJ in schools should entail that all teachers receive paid RJ training.

Explicit examination of the role that identity plays within the dynamics of the RJ circle is another factor that has been found to support successful RJ implementation in schools, particularly when BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ youth are involved (Gregory & Evans, 2020). RJ that incorporates analyses of the identity and dynamics between youth, their peers, and adult authority figures is called transformative RJ. Practitioners and researchers using this type of RJ maintain that historical and current inequities relating to the specific identities of individual RJ participants must inform RJ dialogue to ensure that inequity is not implicitly reinforced within an RJ circle (Winn, 2018). Assumptions about gender, such as those implicit to the phrase 'boys will be boys," for example, may undermine the RJ process when they are used in a way that subtly excuses the inappropriate behavior of boys. According to Romano and Almengor (2021), failure to engage in critical examination of these types of underlying assumptions may result in RJ circles that are superficial and ineffective, because they are limited to "peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts" rather than effecting real change leading to long term "peace building."

Evans and Lester (2013) have summarized seven key principles meant to guide successful RJ implementation in schools that incorporate elements of Transformative RJ. These are: (a) acknowledging troubling behaviors as expressions of unmet needs and striving to uncover and meet these needs; (b) balancing expectations, consistency, and authoritative disciplinary tactics with high levels of support; (c) allowing individuals the opportunity to repair harm they have caused and make things right again; (d) conceptualizing conflicts between students and school staff as learning opportunities; (e) constructing healthy learning communities using a relational approach; (f) repairing interpersonal relationships when emotional harm occurs; (g) identifying and addressing power balances and inequity; and (h) challenging the systematic conditions that create and sustain them.

The whole school approach to RJ has emerged as a means of implementing such key principles. This approach simultaneously employs three levels of RJ interventions to build safer schools and communities (Morrison, 2012). The first level targets general social-emotional competency in students. This level serves to re-affirm

positive school relationships using talking circles, academic circles, and "proactive circles." These circle processes are used to share perspectives and build shared understanding around a specific issue, and/or to proactively discuss how to respond to an issue in a way that appropriately reflects the school community's values.

The second level of the whole school approach is focused on rebuilding disrupted relationships. Here difficulties that arise between members of a school community are addressed using "restorative chats" peer conferencing, or "responsive circles." This may involve a group conferencing process where other members of the school community can voice their perspectives on the matter. The third level of the whole school approach is focused on repairing relationships when harm has occurred. At this level, more serious issues are addressed through restorative conferencing, or "conflict circles." These processes involve parents, social-workers, and others who are affected or have a stake in the matter (restorativeschoolstoolkit.org). When RJ is implemented as an everyday occurrence, it has been found to facilitate conflict resolution skills and emotional regulation for students, as well as an increased ability to empathize with the perspectives of others (Jain et al., 2014).

## 2.3.  Restorative Justice and Socio-Moral Development

The literature examining the use of RJ in response to adult sexual harm in a criminal justice context, and the use of RJ in response to peer harm in schools, provides some indication that RJ may be a relevant response to peer-to peer sexual harm. Recchia and colleagues (2022) summarize research on adolescent reasoning about harm, forgiveness, and retribution and offer insight into age-related trends in moral understandings and social-cognitive abilities. While none of this research deals with peer-to-peer sexual harm directly, it points to the relevance of age-related developments in socio-moral reasoning with regard to the use of RJ, and the issue of peer-to-peer harm in schools.

Recchia and colleagues (2022), address the identification of harm by young people. They point out that participation in RJ requires that a young person has the ability and willingness to identify their actions as harmful, to understand why, and to proceed under the assumption that hurting another person is problematic, even if there was no intention to cause harm. This research shows that from about the age of three,

recognition of obvious forms of harm comes easily to children, whereas more complex forms of harm follow a developmental trajectory related to age. For example, Heck, Bregant, and Kinzler (2021) found that children under five recognize hitting, pushing, and stealing as harmful. Emotionally harmful behaviors which do not involve a physical act, such as name calling, are much more likely to be recognized by children between the ages of five and ten. In adolescence, the importance placed on social relationships and reputation facilitates an awareness of the potential for harm to be experienced through relationships, such as social exclusion and relationship breakups (Somerville, 2013). While younger children may need 'scaffolding' to recognize harm caused by themselves or another child, adolescents have more complex understandings about harm. As mentioned previously, adolescents who do not have prior experience with a particular situation or type of harm, can also have trouble identifying when it occurs, and empathizing with the person who was harmed. (Seider et al., 2019),

Recchia and colleagues (2022) summarize age-related trends in young people's reasoning about harm, forgiveness, and retribution. Overall, this research points to a restorative orientation in both children and adolescents. However, this is mediated by developmental, as well as contextual, factors. For example, young children accept apologies much more readily than older children. When a child is offered an apology, they report feeling better, and being more willing to forgive the child who caused the harm (Smith & Harris, 2012). If the child who harmed them is to receive a punishment, young children will even suggest that the punishment should be less harsh if the child apologizes (Banerjee et al., 2010).

Young children also view forgiveness in simpler terms than older children. For example, Ball et al. (2021) found that young children tend to view forgiveness as synonymous with resuming a friendship after receiving an apology. In general, research indicates that children view retributive acts such as physical aggression against harm doers as wrong; however, this depends partially on the actions of the harm doer. Retributive acts are viewed as less problematic when they occur in response to aggression that was meaningless or unprovoked, or when the target of the retaliation is considered a 'bully' (Ball et al., 2021)

While older children are more likely than younger children to understand that harm can be caused accidentally through misunderstandings and differing perspectives

(Ross, Recchia & Carpendale, 2005), forgiveness in adolescence is a more complicated psychological process, where the motivation of the harm doer, and the potential for alternate courses of action are weighed (Ohbuchi & Sato, 1994; Wainryb et al., 2020). Although they are more likely to simply 'move on' from negative feelings, older children are less likely to accept an apology at face value. Resuming a friendship with a peer who has caused harm tends to require an apology containing more psychological depth. For example, Banerjee et al. (2010) found that adolescents were more forgiving when the person who harmed them explained their behavior. By adolescence, apologies that are coerced by adults are not accepted because they are not considered genuine (Smith et al., 2018).

In adolescence, young people who are harmed by a peer may struggle with retributive urges or feelings, while also expressing a preference for a restorative versus retributive resolution. Whether they act on retributive urges can depend on whether the person who harmed them is part of the social group with which they identify. If the youth who caused the harm is perceived as an outsider, retributive action may be easier to justify for some youth. In these situations, youth may perceive retribution as valid, or a 'necessary evil' to resolve the situation; however, discussing these feelings in a supportive environment may lead the youth to refrain from acting upon them (Recchia et al., 2019). Regardless of the outcome after harm occurs, older youth who cause or experience harm from a peer are more equipped than younger children at conceptualizing conflict as a learning experience (Wainryb et al., 2020).

In schools that use traditional disciplinary tactics, harmful student behaviors tend to be evaluated by school staff in terms of rule violations, rather than in terms of the relational harm they have caused (Goodman, 2006). The problem with this orientation, according to socio-moral research, is that students may lose the opportunity to understand and repair harm when schools respond to harmful behaviors with punishments that do not address the actual harm that occurred or facilitate opportunities for students to critically evaluate and learn from their behavior in a supportive environment Dahl (2018). Punitive educational environments have been found to discourage children who have inflicted harm on others from truly taking responsibility for their actions and to motivate them to avoid punishment. At the same time, such environments are thought to encourage victims to describe conflict in ways that attribute

as much blame as possible to the actions of the other party in a conflict (Talwar & Lee, 2011).

Research examining adolescent perceptions of disciplinary policies in schools shows that youth tend to find punitive discipline unfair (Rote et al., 2021), ineffective, or detrimental to school safety (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). In contrast, when teachers respond to student infractions by pointing out the harm that has been caused instead of focusing solely on the rule that was broken, they are rated more positively by students (Nucci, 1984). According to Pareja Conto and colleagues (2022), restorative involvement by school staff in conflicts between peers can provide guidance and emotional comfort to victims, while also promoting the development of autonomy in students.

## 2.4. Social Domain Theory: Adolescent Socio-Moral Development and Reasoning

According to social domain theory, adolescent socio-moral development is a process that involves drawing upon our moral, conventional, and personal understandings to make decisions and factoring those outcomes into our lived experiences and sense of self (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). In adolescence, the development of the moral 'self' is shaped by efforts to meaningfully coordinate contextual considerations to inform action and decision-making. This process, according to social domain theory, is accomplished by drawing upon three different, and sometimes conflicting, domains of reasoning: the moral domain, the personal domain, and the conventional domain. The basic premise of social domain theory states that when making judgments about social actions, we apply criteria that influence our assessment of right and wrong. These distinct sets of criteria delineate the moral, conventional, and personal domains of social reasoning. The moral domain encompasses concerns of harm to others, welfare, fairness, and rights. Morality has been associated with societal conventions and rules that guide 'good' behavior. However, social domain theory research has found that across different cultures and religions, children and adults make distinctions between actions that are moral (harm others/are unfair) and ones that are conventional or personal (Nucci, 1983; Turiel, 2002; Smetana 2011; Nucci, 2014)

This distinction between convention and morality has been examined extensively in research showing that children who are raised within a religion differentiate between religious rules that prevent harm from occurring, such as stealing and physically harming another person, and those that govern conventions, such as traditional dress, days of rest, and interfaith marriage. Interviews with Muslim, Hindu, Orthodox Jewish, and Catholic children from a variety of backgrounds (Srinivasan, Kaplan & Dahl, 2019; Nucci, 2001) revealed that children unanimously identified behavior as wrong when it defied religious rule. When asked if the same behavior would be wrong if there was no rule against it, participants reliably replied that it would not be wrong unless it caused harm to another person, in which case it was considered wrong. A study by Kuyel and Cesur (2013) found that 87% of Christians, 95% of Jewish, and 100% of Muslim participants stated that it would still be wrong to engage in harmful actions towards another person, even if their religion condoned it.

Personal domain reasoning encompasses issues of privacy, autonomy, and preferences of individuals (Nucci, 2014). These issues are not judged to be right or wrong because of moral obligation, but because of one's personal preference. These include decisions regarding style of dress, diet, dating, friendship choice, social media privacy settings, physical privacy, and lifestyle. Research findings over the last 50 years show that issues associated with personal autonomy and privacy are considered differently than those associated with conventional or moral domain considerations. However, the degree of personal choice and autonomy that is exercised in the areas mentioned above depends on age and other factors, such as social conventions. Personal domain reasoning in the middle school grades (grades 6-8) tends to be focused on considerations of privacy and autonomy. This focus on privacy and autonomy allows for the development of an 'inner mental life' (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021) which is of central concern to adolescent identity development. The development of an inner life may be facilitated by writing in a journal or diary or other activities that provide a youth with a means of identifying and reflecting upon the ideas, opinions, values, and emotions that are uniquely theirs. This development of a private life is accompanied by a drive towards unique external self-expression. For this reason, middle school students pay a lot of attention to social image and their choices of clothing and hairstyle.

There is a tension, however, between developing a unique self-expression and fitting in with peers. What constitutes the self in a young person remains somewhat

unstable as they develop a sense of personal identity. What falls within the personal domain is routinely contested by young people who are in the process of developing a sense of identity. Often, they feel that their parents or caregivers are hindering their freedom of self-expression. For example, unique expressions of gender tend to surface in the middle school years, which may not fit with the norms of a child's family or school culture. While this can pose a challenge for parents and other adult authorities, allowing young people the freedom to explore and express their identity facilitates the development of a strong sense of self (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021).

In high school years, the inner self develops into an entity that is no longer defined solely by superficial things like clothing, hairstyle, or choice of music. Matters of privacy, personal choice, and autonomy are still of primary importance; however older youth are usually more confident in their developing sense of self. In the high-school years, personal considerations are focused around aligning this inner 'core' of the self with social conventions, or re-examining and discarding those conventions. This is a non-linear process where social conventions are examined in relation to oneself as a young person develops their values and sense of self in relation to others and the conventions of society (Turiel,1983).

Conventional domain reasoning is centered around the laws, rules, and other conventions of a society. Conventions are social in nature and are often attached to unexamined assumptions about the natural social order of a society, culture, or group of people. For adolescents, reasoning in this domain often revolves around issues of rules and authority as well as the conventions of peers. Social actions pertaining to these issues are judged to be right or wrong depending on the specific governing norms, conventions, or rules.  Research has shown that students in the middle school grades (grades 6-8) often identify the conventions of adult authority figures as arbitrary (Turiel, 1983). Social domain theory has shown that young people around this age have a strong tendency to transition from unquestioningly conflating adult rules with morality, to the wholesale rejection of the notion that rules reflect anything but the preferences of those who occupy positions of authority. How this is reflected in behavior can vary. Rules that function to maintain basic order may not be contested. Some youth may be compelled to follow adult rules more than others in order to maintain positive relationships, despite a growing awareness of the apparently abstract nature of rules and conventions (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021).

Conventional domain reasoning in the lower high school grades (grades 9-10) is characterized by a developing awareness of the notion of society as a social system where individuals occupy fixed roles that come with obligations (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). A more balanced view of adult rules and conventions emerges with the understanding that adherence to the rules and norms of social systems is required for participation in that system (Midgette et al., 2016). This new appreciation for societal convention also extends to peers. Social norms and conventions within peer groups begin to occupy a place of primary importance, making this age group particularly susceptible to peer pressure. This susceptibility to peer pressure is also reflected in an increased tendency to exclude others when they do not ascribe to social norms (Horn, 2003).

In the upper high school grades, adolescents have usually moved on from the notion that conventions are simply the dictates of authority. They also begin to understand that social conventions serve to uphold the function of social systems which benefit some more than others. This allows young people to move towards an understanding of social convention as a collection of norms that pertain to societies and social systems. While social convention is understood as necessary to the functioning and order of society, there is a growing awareness that laws, rules, and norms change over time and do not always reflect what is 'right' or fair. To this end, young people begin to acquire the ability to critique social systems and the cultural assumptions that inform ideas about power, privilege, ethnicity, gender, and disability, among others (Nucci and Ilten-Gee, 2021).

As explained by Nucci, Turiel, & Roded (2021), the development of moral reasoning skills in adolescence proceeds in a U-shaped, rather than a linear fashion. Adolescent reasoning about moral domain issues in the middle-to lower high school years (grades 6-9) is focused around developing functional understandings about equality versus equity (Damon, 1977). Where younger children define fairness as equal treatment, middle school children are more likely to describe treatment that attends to differences in individual needs as fair—e.g., distributing more food to people who need it most. This evolving orientation towards equity versus equality also extends to reasoning about retribution. Children at this stage are less likely to define retributive acts as constituting fair treatment towards a person who has acted in a way that is hurtful (Rizzo, et. al., 2016).

Moral reasoning in middle school-lower high school grades is described by Nucci and Ilten-Gee (2021) as a transitional period in the socio-moral development of young people. During this transition, young people who are faced with situations that create moral ambiguity due to competing interests are more likely to prioritize their personal domain considerations over moral or conventional considerations. For example, in a study that asked participants if they would have the right to keep a ten-dollar bill that was unknowingly dropped on the bus, youth in this age group were more likely to say yes than older youth, or younger children.

While prioritization of personal domain considerations may be interpreted by bystanders as lack of caring for others in this age group, it is more accurately described as a lack of strategic coordination of moral and non-moral considerations, combined with a developmental need prioritize personal domain considerations (Nucci and Ilten-Gee, 2021). When the same youth were asked if they would keep the money if it were dropped by a person with a disability, they were far less likely to say they would keep the money (Nucci, Turiel & Roded, 2017). In the upper high school years, moral reasoning becomes more systematic. This entails an ability to weigh the different moral, personal, and conventional facets of a situation in a way that gives rise to more balanced decision-making.

## 2.5. Domain Coordination, Lived Experience, and Informational Assumptions

While it is possible to frame issues as solely personal, moral, or conventional, more nuanced understandings and solutions arise when issues are addressed through the coordination of multiple domains. As discussed previously, individual ability to understand and coordinate multiple domains of reasoning is influenced by age-related trends in development. It is also informed by lived experience and informational assumptions. When social convention overlaps with moral domain considerations, this process is straightforward. For example, the convention of standing in line is compatible with the basic understandings of fairness held by most people. While the convention of standing in line may not reflect one's personal desire to get to the front of the line as soon as possible, even children are able coordinate this conflict between their personal interests and their interest in behaving in a socially acceptable manner (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021).

In complex situations where moral considerations do not align neatly with social convention, and/or personal interest, young people must wrestle with which concerns to prioritize. In the previous example, middle school-aged youth kept the money that was dropped because it benefited them personally and they saw no direct harm in keeping it, while younger children defaulted to their understanding that stealing is against the rules. According to social domain theory research, older youth in this situation are more equipped to systematically coordinate personal, moral, and conventional domain considerations in their decision not to keep the money. For these youth, a developing understanding of societal convention as a means of creating and sustaining just societies would have guided them to conclude that it would be better to live in a society where people return lost items to their rightful owner (Nucci, Turiel & Roded, 2017).

In this example, it would be easy for most people to understand why a person who dropped money would be upset if they did not get it back. In other situations, potentially harmful experiences are less obviously identified or remedied, particularly if a person has no prior experience to draw on (Seider et al., 2019). This can play out in conflicts between young people and their parents when the same issue is approached through conflicting domain considerations (Smetana, 2011). A lack of prior experience with societal injustice can also feed into conflicting domain considerations. For example, Turiel (2002) found that women who live in societies where they are afforded fewer legal rights and less personal power and freedom of movement than men, tend to evaluate their role in family decision-making in terms of gendered social conventions as well as the moral domain consideration of unfairness. At the same time, men in such societies frame the same decisions as a matter of personal choice and are typically oblivious to the perspectives of female family members (Turiel & Wainryb, 2000)

The development of understandings about racial discrimination, prejudice, and other forms of systemic injustice in adolescence, is subject to prior experience and can be inhibited by unexamined assumptions born out of relative positions of privilege. For example, Seider et al., (2019) found that youth who identify as Black and Latinx tend to develop understandings about prejudice and discrimination at an earlier age than their Caucasian peers, who experience less identity-related micro-aggression (West, 2019). While this fits with Turiel's (2002) findings on the differing perspectives of family members whose experiences were shaped by gender inequality, research by Patchin and Hinduja (2018) has found that young people tend to behave in ways that are harmful

to others because they fail to predict, or lack understanding of the effects of their actions, not because they do not care, or wish to cause harm.

During adolescence, decision making becomes more complex, as it interacts with the development of personal identity and a deepening understanding of society's norms and rules (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). This period of development affords educators the opportunity to guide young people towards more nuanced understandings of the realities and perceptions of others in relation to themselves, and towards more sophisticated ideas about social justice. According to Seider and colleagues (2019), the ability to identify, understand, and respond empathetically to other people's experiences of identity based micro-aggression, is influenced by a young person's exposure to similar experiences. However, educational practices based on dialogue may provide a similar function (Recchia et al., 2022). For example, 'responsive engagement,' is described as an interactive form of student participation in the classroom where learning takes place through listening to the perspectives of others with an open mind and being willing to change one's assumptions or opinions about a matter, or to agree to disagree without judgement (Laden, 2012). According to Dahl (2018) and West (2019), RJ interventions in schools are one way to facilitate this type of learning.

In addition to developmental trends and lived experience, individual moral reasoning and decision-making is guided by informational assumptions. Informational assumptions include religious and cultural beliefs, and scientific and situational facts, that are used to inform decision making. Uncovering informational assumptions can offer insight into the reasoning and decision-making of others when they are thinking or acting in ways that disregard the suffering of others. For example, Shweder and colleagues (1987) asked members of a Hindu temple to rate 39 behaviors according to how they violate social norms. They found that a son's failure to get a haircut and to eat chicken the day after his father dies was rated as more harmful than a man beating his wife. From the outside, this appeared to indicate that this culture valued personal grooming and eating habits more than the safety and wellbeing of married women. However, once it was revealed that these Hindus believe that a son who fails to cut his hair and eat chicken after his father's death puts his father's soul in danger, it is then easier to understand the reasoning behind the results of the rating activity. According to Nucci and Ilten-Gee (2021), framing potentially contentious and/or divisive issues in terms of domains of reasoning, personal experience, and informational assumptions, can be a

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means of promoting critical thinking and positive moral development in schools without promoting a particular political stance or worldview.

## 2.6. Using Social Domain Theory to Understand and Address Sexual Harm

As mentioned previously, social domain theory research shows that reasoning in the lower high school grades tends to be influenced by an emerging understanding of social systems (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021) which allows young people to cultivate an awareness of societal rules and norms as necessary to the functioning of society (Midgette et al., 2016). This new awareness of convention facilitates a more balanced view of adult rules and conventions, and youth in this age group may be more amenable to conventional adult guidance. Presumably, this may include guidance around intimacy, dating, and sexual matters. However, instant messaging, social media, and online dating have become integral to the social lives of high school youth (Robb & Mann, 2023), and this reality entails a disconnect between the social lives of young people today, compared to those experienced by their parents and teachers. In many of the contemporary social contexts inhabited by youth, adult social conventions guiding potential behavioral antecedents to sexual harm are lacking.

During the younger high school years, a new appreciation for convention pertains to both adult, and peer group convention. During this time, peer group social norms often become more influential and 'fitting in' becomes a priority. However, an uncritical acceptance of peer norms (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021), combined with the current generation's unprecedented access to technologies and digital spaces (Copp et al., 2021), likely entails vulnerability to both physical, and digital forms of sexual harm. Although sexting, dating profiles, and pornography viewing are technically illegal for youth under the age of 18, these behaviors are both extremely common, and normalized within youth culture (Copp et al., 2021). This apparent lack of concern for the laws governing access to online social spaces and sexualized content exemplifies 'multidimensional uncontrolled' (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021) reasoning in youth. For young people who are navigating new situations involving intimacy and sexual behavior, the incorporation of digital and online elements may contribute to a sense of moral ambiguity affecting socio-moral reasoning and decision making. While it is likely that most youth in the early high school grades would recognize sexual acts such as rape or incest as both

illegal, and harmful, it may be more difficult for youth with no prior experience to see the potential for less obvious forms of sexual harm to occur, especially in complex situations that involve technology.

While young people tend to behave in ways that are harmful to others because they fail to predict, or lack understanding of, the effects of their actions (Patchin & Hinduja, 2018), addressing peer-to-peer sexual harm by simply raising awareness of the issue is likely to fall short of facilitating the kind of in-depth understanding of sexual harm, which was emphasized as important by the participants in this study. For example, the #MeToo movement has been instrumental in raising awareness about sexual assault and harassment in institutionalized settings. The movement has also been criticized for its failure to recognize the unique experiences and heightened vulnerability of women of color to sexual harm (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018). At the same time, the #MeToo movement has given rise to a backlash of 'masculinity politics,' a movement which is characterized by a surge in popularity of harmful ideas relating to sex and gender among young men and male adolescents. These ideas are often communicated in short online videos, and they range from blaming feminism for problems experienced by men, and what is described as a state of 'aggrieved manhood' (Ging, 2019), to discourses that attempt to legitimize the sexual assault of women (Sayogi et al., 2023).

Identifying the role of media influences on the behaviour and informational assumptions of students who have experienced or caused sexual harm in schools may be necessary if these issues are to be addressed in ways that promote socio-moral understandings relating to sex and gender. It may also be advisable to address issues pertaining to sexuality and identity in schools through a socio-historical lens, so that individual interactions are informed by an awareness of sex and identity as social constructions, rather than gender essentialism. While topics of this nature are usually taught at the university level, social domain theory has identified the middle-to-upper high school years as a developmental window of opportunity for socio-moral education and the fostering of critical evaluation of the societal forces which serve to create and maintain institutionalized forms of oppression (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). Addressing informational assumptions about sex and gender in ways that promote critical awareness and responsive dialogue in high schools could afford young people the ability to evaluate media and other influences on behavior as sexually harmful. At the individual level, the language of social domain theory offers a means of discussing issues relating

to sexual harm in schools that emphasizes the common humanity of students as moral agents, rather than emphasizing their differences.

# Chapter 3.
# Methodology and Procedures

This study entailed generating and implementing a multiple-choice survey with high school-aged youth. The survey consisted of six scenarios depicting common examples of peer-to-peer sexual harm. Participants were surveyed using multiple choice questions about their preferences for a restorative, punitive, mixed, or an ignore response from school staff to each scenario. They were asked to justify their choice of response with multiple choice options that corresponded to different domains of social reasoning (moral, conventional, and personal) (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). Students were also given the option of commenting on or clarifying their responses to each scenario in writing. At the end of the survey, they were asked questions about sexual harm and the climate in their own schools.

Participants' response choices, justifications/reasoning, and school climate data from the survey were compiled into tables in order to compare responses across scenarios and across schools. Descriptive statistics were compiled to summarize participants' preferences and to illuminate patterns across schools and scenarios. Thematic analysis was used to identify situational factors depicted in scenarios as influencing response choice. Themes in short answer responses were also identified and then categorized using an iterative process (Cresswell & Gutterman, 2019) described in detail later in this section.

## 3.1. Development of Materials

### 3.1.1. Survey Development Overview

Survey development began with the creation of six scenarios that depict common instances of sexual harm among school-aged youth. The first question after each scenario asks the participant to choose which approach school staff should take in dealing with the situation described. The choices were: restorative, punitive, a mix of restorative and punitive, ignore the issue, and I don't know. The next question asked why they chose that approach. If a restorative, punitive, or ignore approach was chosen,

the survey presented the participant with six justifications relating specifically to their chosen approach and asked them to choose three that they agreed with. If mixed or I don't know was chosen, the survey presented the participant with all 18 justifications and participants chose three that they agreed with most. The first question, which asked participants about their preference for a restorative or a punitive response, was included in part to assess whether students understood the difference between a punitive versus a restorative response. The survey was designed to tailor reasoning justifications to the particular response choice (restorative, punitive, ignore). If participants chose a "mixed approach" one would expect a mix of restorative and punitive justifications to be selected. If this was not the case, then it may indicate that students did not understand the difference between a punitive versus restorative response.

At the end of the questions associated with each scenario, there was space for participants to write any additional thoughts or comments relating to the scenario. The second part of the survey consists of five multiple choice questions that gauge student perceptions of the climate within their own school, the issue of peer-to-peer sexual harm, and response from school staff. Once the survey was finalized it was digitized using the Microsoft Forms platform. A copy of the entire survey can be viewed in Appendix A, and screenshots of the digital survey may be viewed in Appendix B.

## 1.3.2. Scenario Creation

The survey scenarios were based on the researcher's experiences and observations working with high school-aged young people as an education assistant, youth worker, support and supervision worker (ISSP) for youth on probation, RJ coordinator, and child and youth mental health clinician. In these positions, the researcher noticed that youth-perpetrated sexual crimes often seemed to occur because of a lack of guidance, supervision, and experience, rather than a predatory intent to harm. At the same time, there was an observation that young people who had experienced sexual harm by a peer often did not seek help from adults until much later if at all, due to social pressures and/or privacy concerns. Charges for sexual crimes are not eligible for referral to RJ in British Columbia. In her position as an ISSP worker, the researcher observed that this left young people with a lack of guidance regarding where they went wrong, and how to repair the harm they caused. In small communities, this

was particularly difficult as young people could be ostracized, and find it difficult to re-integrate into the community, and/or their school.

The scenarios differ in the severity and nature of the harm, the legal implications, and the level of clarity about what happened. Other factors that differentiate the scenarios pertain to the relationship between the harm doer and the person who was harmed. None of the scenarios portray a situation where there is a clear path towards criminal charges, and it is sometimes unclear whether any specific rule was broken, or who, if anyone, is to blame. Each scenario contains one or more elements of digital technology such as social media and cell phones, which can facilitate or complicate experiences of sexual harm among youth. In these ways the scenarios portray the day-to-day situations that youth often encounter.

Once the scenarios were drafted, the researcher recruited high school and college-age youth from a summer program at a local library to vet the content of the scenarios and offer feedback. The youth were emailed the scenarios to read, and then they met with the researcher at the library for an hour to provide feedback. The main feedback related to the type of social media used and the associated wording. For example, the youth pointed out that Facebook and Instagram can be monitored by schools and other adults, so anything private or potentially incriminating would be shared amongst high school-aged youth through text message or SNAPCHAT. Another major piece of feedback from the youth was a request to include a new scenario that reflected a common issue at their school, where older students were pressuring younger students to send them explicit pictures (Scenario 4). Once scenarios were drafted, they were reviewed by the researcher's supervisor, who provided input until final drafts were completed. The following paragraphs summarize each scenario and describe the intended relevant situational factors.

***Scenario 1.*** Scenario 1 depicts a situation where seventeen-year-old Rebecca regrets engaging in sexual activity with Liam after he breaks up with her. Although her actions were consensual at the time, she feels in retrospect that she was coerced by Liam. She also fears that her privacy may be at risk due to a video that was created by herself and Liam. Since breaking up with Rebecca, eighteen-year-old Liam has been 'cancelled' by many of their mutual friends at school. He has been labelled a rapist and has begun to dread going to school, and he is not clear what exactly he did wrong.

In this scenario, there is an alleged sexual assault but there is a lack of clarity around what happened. Rebecca is emotionally wounded by Liam breaking up with her, and this has caused her to contemplate the situation, and to attribute a different meaning to their sexual interactions than she had previously. Although she now feels that the interaction was harmful to her now, it was consensual at the time.

**Scenario 2.** In scenario 2, Casey is bullied at school and online by Jake and his friends after she rejects a kiss from Jake at a party. Casey begins to feel uncomfortable about going to school and decides to tell a teacher. In a workplace setting, this behaviour would be considered sexual harassment and could lead to the perpetrator being fired. In the school setting, it is unlikely that Jake would be expelled for his behaviour and staff would have to decide how to resolve the issue in a way that Casey feels comfortable attending school.

**Scenario 3.** In scenario 3, eighteen-year-old Trevor uses his status as an older player on the soccer team to befriend fourteen-year-old Daniel and then proceeds to invade his privacy. At first Daniel tells himself that Trevor is just joking around, but he becomes increasingly uncomfortable when Trevor continues to take pictures of him when he changes his clothes after practice. When Daniel protests, it results in Trevor bullying him in front of their soccer teammates and downplaying his ability as a player. After this, Daniel becomes concerned about what Trevor might be doing with the photos he took. This scenario has potential legal implications in that Trevor could potentially be charged with the distribution and/or creation of child pornography if he were caught with the pictures on his phone or computer. In this scenario there is a significant age difference, and Trevor is someone Daniel looks up to. The implication is that there is a predatory element to Trevor's behavior

**Scenario 4.** Scenario 4 depicts the situation of 13-year-old Shaelyn, a new grade 8 student who recently started dating Aaron, a grade 12 student who is known to have dated a lot of girls over the last few years. When Aaron asks Shaelyn to send him intimate pictures of herself on her phone, she agrees because it seems like this is what people do in high school. When she hears that Aaron has shared the pictures, she is not sure what to do. She does not feel good about it but wonders if that is also normal behavior in high school. She is not sure how to talk to Aaron about it, and she wants to tell the school counselor, but she doesn't want Aaron to get in trouble. There are legal

implications in this scenario because of the pictures that were shared and the age difference between Aaron and Shaelynn. Aaron could incur child pornography charges for having pictures of Shaelynn on his phone, and for sharing them. However, it would be easy for him to delete the images, and it may be hard to prove that he shared them.

*Scenario 5.* In scenario 5 Sahara tells the school counsellor that she was assaulted by her boyfriend Jaden's friend Chris, after a video of the incident circulates amongst her peers at school. She says she was under the influence of alcohol and drugs and doesn't remember much about the night. Both Chris and Jaden are surprised by this accusation. Chris's understanding is that Sahara and Jaden frequently engage in sexual activity with other kids at Jaden's house, and they are usually under the influence. Chris does not understand how this situation was any different and he feels singled out when the police are called, and he is suspended from school. The teenager's wider friend group is divided over whether Sahara's accusation about Chris is legitimate. The legal implication in this scenario is that Chris could be charged with sexual assault. This scenario differs from the others in that Chris has already been suspended from school. Also, the police have investigated already but were unable to press charges due to a lack of evidence. This means that Chris and Sahara will be attending school together again.

*Scenario 6.* In scenario 6 James is being bullied by Seth, who invades his physical space, and gives him a hard time about his non-binary appearance and mannerisms. Seth calls James names and then downplays his behavior by claiming he was joking. Eventually James has enough of Seth's behavior, and a heated argument breaks out between them in the hall at school. When a teacher intervenes, we find out that Seth is having a hard time at home, and he admits to taking this out on James. In this scenario, the harm is intentional, but Seth admits to bullying James and explains his actions. This scenario differs from the others in that it does not contain any overtly sexual connotations or behavior. The bullying that takes place is only sexual in that it occurs in relation to James's sexuality and gender.

### 3.1.3. Justifications for Restorative or Punitive Responses

Justifications relating to each type of response were written based on the researcher's experience, and some of the language for the justifications for using a

restorative approach was taken from the restorative justice survey by Marsh and Wager (2015), as well as the evaluation of victim perspectives from the RESTORE study, such as victims reasoning for choosing to participate in RJ with the perpetrator of the sexual assault they experienced (Koss, 2014). Next, the justifications were categorized as relating to the moral, personal, or conventional domain of reasoning (See Table 1). Justifications within the conventional domain of reasoning were split into three subcategories to reflect the types of conventions that adolescents use to reason about sexual harm. These include the conventions of authority, peer conventions, and the conventions of school culture. A secondary researcher then reviewed the justifications until agreement was reached on which domain of reasoning was represented in each justification. The following table shows each justification, and the domain of reasoning that was associated with it. For example, the two restorative justifications that use moral reasoning are labelled Mr1, and Mr2. The same justifications were used for each scenario, but names were changed accordingly.

**Table 1.       Justifications/Reasoning for Restorative/Punitive/Ignore Response**

| Response | Restorative | Punitive | Ignore |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Domain of Reasoning** | | | |
| **Moral/Restorative - 1 (Mr1)** | The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying issue, which is that someone was harmed | | |
| **Moral/Restorative - 2 (Mr2)** | Sexual harm is painful/ detrimental even when no specific rule broken | | |
| **Moral/Punitive - 1 (Mp1)** | | (X Student) should be suspended or expelled from school to protect (Y Student) from further harm. | |

| Response | Restorative | Punitive | Ignore |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Moral/Punitive - 2 (Mp2)** | | (X Student) should be suspended or expelled because he is a threat to other students. | |
| **Moral/Punitive - 3 (Mp3)** | | It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished | |
| **Moral/Ignore (Mig)** | | | Adult intervention could make the situation worse because the (harm doer) could retaliate. |
| **Personal/Restorative (Pr)** | | Talking through the problem could help (X student/s) feel empowered, happier, and healthier again. | |
| **Personal/Punitive (Pp)** | | (Y Student) has a right to see that (X Student) is punished. | |
| **Personal/Ignore - 1 (Pig1)** | | | Participating in Restorative Justice will be embarrassing they have a right to keep their lives private |
| **Personal/Ignore - 2 (Pig2)** | | | Kids should be able to make their own choices and deal with the consequences without adults interfering. |

| Response | Restorative | Punitive | Ignore |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Conventional Authority/ Punitive - 1 (CAp1)** | | What (X student) did was illegal or against the rules, they could/should be punished, arrested, suspended, etc. | |
| **Conventional Authority/ Punitive - 2 (CAp2)** | | Other students should know that (X Students) behavior is against the rules. | |
| **Ignore - (CAig1)** | | | Student X's) participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, they might just apologize just to get out of trouble |
| **Conventional Peer/ Ignore - 1(CPig1)** | | | This is normal teenage behavior, it can be worked out between Student X and Y |
| **Conventional Peer/ Ignore - 2(CPig2)** | | | This is no one's fault, they were just copying what they saw others do, or saw on TV |
| **Conventional School Culture/Restorative (CSCr)** | Both (Student Y) should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and community | | |

### 3.1.4. School Climate

The first question of the school climate section of the survey asks students if they think there are students who experience sexual harm in their schools. This question was asked as a means of gauging student perceptions/experience on the issue and to provide more information in the case that the schools varied significantly in their answers to the scenario questions. The second school climate question asks, "If you or someone you knew at school experienced sexual harm, how likely is it that you would tell a school staff member such as a counsellor or teacher?" This multiple-choice question with four options ranging from "Very likely" to "Very unlikely" was intended to elucidate the issue of underreporting instances of sexual harm in the high school population.

The third and fourth questions about school climate were: "Why would you or someone you know want to tell a school staff member?" and "Why might you be reluctant to discuss the situation with a school staff person?" These were multiple choice questions with five different answers that have similar themes to the justifications for scenarios. The answers were: "to get support;" "so the person is punished;" "it could make the situation worse;" and "they/I wouldn't want to get in trouble." These questions were again intended to provide information on the issue of underreporting in the high school population. The fifth question asks how the staff at school usually respond if/when they hear about a student's experience of sexual harm. The final question is, "If you or someone you know from school experienced sexual harm, would you be more likely to tell an adult at your school, if you knew they would respond in a way that was restorative, punitive, or both?" These questions were meant to provide information about students' preferences/perspectives when an adult is not already aware of the situation.

### 3.1.5. Power Point Presentation

A power point presentation was created to introduce the research topic to students, and to offer information related to participation in the study. The first slide introduced the researcher as an MA student and child and youth mental health clinician. Here the researcher discussed working previously with youth on probation and how that partially inspired their interest in the topic. The second slide prompted an explanation of thesis research in general, an invitation to participate, and the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study. The third slide covered the purpose of the study: "to learn more

about how high school students perceive and think about sexual harm," and "to help determine the best way to respond if/when high school students experience sexual harm." The fourth slide explained the survey participation process starting with the consent form, then the reading of each scenario and answering of associated questions, and the questions about the student's own school. The fifth slide prompted an explanation of the definition of sexual harm being used in the study. The sixth slide introduced RJ. The researcher asked students if they had heard of RJ and invited students to share any thoughts or experiences in this regard. The following three slides covered the differences between restorative and punitive responses to wrongdoing/harm.

Once the slides were finished the researcher went through a practice scenario. The practice scenario was an extra scenario that was developed, but not included in the survey, because it was deemed to be less relevant than the other scenarios. The practice survey used the same format Microsoft Forms platform as the actual survey. After reading the scenario aloud and the different responses in relation to the scenario, the researcher checked for understanding of the process and concepts in the survey by asking the class for suggestions on what answer to select. After the practice scenario was completed, students were encouraged to ask questions.

## 3. 2. Study Procedures

### 3.2.1. School Recruitment

After receiving SFU ethics approval, school districts in the lower mainland of British Columbia, the southern interior, and on Vancouver Island were sent recruitment emails. Principals who agreed to participate in the study were asked to recruit school counsellors and teachers based on their interest and/or willingness to participate in the study. The intention in recruiting school counsellors alongside classroom teachers was to ensure that students had counselling support during and after completing the survey in class, should they find the subject matter triggering or difficult to process on their own.

A total of 10 classrooms in five schools within four different districts were recruited. Once school counsellors and teachers had been recruited to participate in the study, information about the study was emailed to those who were participating, and

dates to go into the classrooms were arranged. In some cases, zoom meetings or phone calls were arranged to explain the study and answer questions from teachers and school counsellors. Teachers were emailed parent information sheets to send home before the study, and a youth mental health resource list to distribute to participating students.

In recruiting schools for this study, the intention was to include a diverse range of grade 8-10 students in BC from both urban and rural districts. The study was designed to place as little demand on teachers as possible given that schools are frequently understaffed, and teachers have little extra time to spend on extracurricular content, especially in rural areas. Recruitment emails sent out to school districts and principals explained that the study would only take the duration of a single class, and that it could be used as a starting point for fulfilling sex ed curricular outcomes, an area that can be challenging for some teachers. Recruitment nevertheless proved to be a challenge. A related factor that challenged recruitment was that participation in the study required that each student had access to their own computer during class. This meant that schools with limited resources may have been less likely to respond to recruitment emails.

These challenges with recruitment required that recruitment efforts be expanded to include additional districts to ensure there were enough participants for the study. This also meant that the protocol needed to be updated and the changes approved by the Simon Fraser University Ethics committee. This was repeated until the first three schools had agreed to participate. In the end, two more schools agreed to participate, and survey data was submitted by 145 students in total.

*School A.* The first study site was a Grade 10 Physical Health and Education (PHE) class in School A. School A is a small independent school with about 40 students. These are mainly upper middle class Caucasian students whose parents pay a yearly tuition for them to attend. The school is on the campus of a private Liberal Arts College. School A has a high teacher-to-student ratio and a unique curriculum that is intended to prepare students for success in university. PHE is a core requirement for Grade 10 students. The PHE teacher at school A planned to incorporate the content of the survey/study into the sex-ed curriculum she had been developing for the class.

*School B*. The second study site was a Grade 10 Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) classroom at School B, where four different classes were surveyed. The

researcher's supervisor had worked with this school previously and the principal agreed to participate and asked two teachers to accommodate the study in their classrooms. School B is a racially diverse public high school with 800 students of moderate to low socio-economic status in Burnaby, BC. CAPP is a core course requirement for Grade 10 students in BC, and a mandatory class for Grade 10 students at School B.

*School C.* The third study site was two Grade 11/12 classrooms in School C where the study was administered to two Grade 11/12 First Peoples classes, and one Social Justice class. HSS is a racially diverse public school of 1500 students in North Vancouver with a mix of mostly high/moderate SES students. Both classes were optional Grade 11 and 12 electives. The teacher who volunteered expressed significant interest in the study. She planned to integrate the topics into her class curriculum by using students' experiences and impressions from the study as a starting point for class discussion about RJ and sexual harm, and to link these discussions to course content that had been covered previously in the classes.

*School D.* The fourth study site was a Grade 11/12 law classroom at School D in Victoria, BC. School D is a racially diverse public high school with eight hundred and fifty students of mixed socio-economic status. Two small Law classes were surveyed. Both the teacher and school counsellor felt that the study was an opportunity for the students to learn about RJ, and to think about the laws and conventions surrounding sexual harm.

*School E.* The fifth study site was School E, an independent alternative high school in Victoria, BC that is funded through private donors. School E has about 50 students, and is a school for female youth, and female-identifying trans youth who have "resisted conventional programs and require an intentional community to find support and success." The school also operates a young parent program which includes an on-site childcare center. The counsellor at this school thought that it might be beneficial and/or interesting for School E students to participate in research on sexual harm and have an opportunity to have their voices heard, given that many of them had experiences with peer-to-peer sexual harm in the mainstream school system. Participation in the survey was offered as an alternative option to the regular afternoon classes and activities.

### 3.2.2. Student Recruitment and Data Collection

Teachers were provided with a link to the digital consent form and survey the day before the survey was administered so they could post it on their class blog or email it to students. Pamphlets with mental health resources were also emailed to teachers so they could be sent digitally or printed and distributed to students. The researcher presented information about study participation through the PowerPoint presentation. If students decided to participate, they signed the digital consent form that was posted or emailed to them by their teacher before opening the link to the survey. Students who did not want to participate remained anonymous as they were instructed to stay seated and work on another assignment on their laptop.

Any students who wished to opt out of the study after beginning the survey were instructed not to press the submit button so that that data would not be used. After questions were answered, the researcher remained throughout the administration of the survey to answer any additional questions. No demographic information was collected from students directly, but student data was organized by school, and district by creating a new copy of the survey for each school with a corresponding file name. Data from the surveys was compiled at the end of the class and stored on SFU's secure cloud-based server.

## 3.3. Methods of Analyses

### 3.3.1. Descriptive Sub-analysis of Multiple-Choice Responses (Schools A, B, and C)

***Preferred response to scenarios and justifications.*** The preferred responses to scenarios (restorative, punitive, mixed, or ignore) were identified in the Microsoft Forms survey results from schools A, B and C, and then placed into a table which showed the number of participants within each school that chose each type of response for each scenario. Response preference for each scenario was determined by first calculating the percentage of participants within each school who chose each type of response (restorative, punitive, mixed, ignore). Next, the weighted average from each school was calculated for each type of response (restorative, punitive, mixed, or ignore). This sub-analysis was conducted on schools A, B, and C, rather than the whole sample

due to time constraints. After calculating the average preferred responses to scenarios, justification data from each school was placed in tables and weighted averages were calculated in the same way that response preference averages were calculated.

For scenarios where averages for two response choices were too similar to indicate a indicate a clear response preference, justification data was used to determine a secondary preference. For example, in two scenarios the mixed response was preferred only slightly more than the restorative response. For this reason the "mixed" response preference was further broken down into mixed-restorative, mixed-punitive, or mixed, based on whether most justifications for this choice were restorative or punitive. If justifications for the mixed response choice were a relatively equal mix of restorative and punitive, the response choice was considered mixed with no secondary response preference. If justifications for a mixed response choice were mostly restorative, or mostly punitive, the response preference was considered mixed-restorative, or mixed-punitive (please see tables 2-4). Because very few participants chose the ignore response and justifications, the breakdown of mixed data according to average participant justifications did not include a mixed-ignore response for any of the scenarios.

***Domain-related justifications for choosing restorative or punitive responses Sub-Analysis (Schools A, B, C).*** Response justifications were not coded automatically for domains of reasoning in the Microsoft Forms survey. This meant that the domain of reasoning associated with each justification had to be identified manually. This entailed looking through the justification data for Schools A, B, and C, and each scenario, to identify which domain code each justification belonged to (e.g., Mr1, CAp2, P1).  the number of responses for that domain and percentages were then place into tables. Next, the weighted average of the school justification/reasoning data was calculated for each justification within each scenario.

***School climate multiple choice data.*** Multiple choice data from for each school from the school climate section of the survey was placed into tables (see Tables 5-10) where the weighted average of data from each school was calculated for each multiple choice option.

### 3.3.2. Thematic Analysis

Written data from the optional short answer questions at the end of each scenario, and the school climate section of the survey, was read to identify emergent themes (those that did not pertain to any pre-existing theory or framework of ideas) using an inductive data analysis process. Themes pertaining to a pre-existing framework of ideas (social domain theory as well as previously identified situational influences in scenarios) were identified through a deductive process of analyses (Creswell & Clark, 2007). As suggested by Creswell and Guetterman (2018), themes from these analyses were then integrated to inform a discussion of the research questions.

***Inductive analysis of written responses to scenarios and school climate questions.*** As described by Creswell and Guetterman (2018), an iterative coding process was utilized for the inductive analyses of short answer data. Iterative coding is a cyclical process where written data is read, themes are identified then coded, and then the data is re-read as new themes are identified and incorporated into the coding scheme. Analysis of short answer responses began with the researcher reading through each written response to get a general sense of the types of answers given. Next, short answer responses were placed in tables. The short answer text was then re-read to identify themes, and these were recorded as memos in the margin of the table. Next, each theme was given a code word and the researcher read through each answer again, writing the code word for the themes identified in each answer in the margin. Each theme/code word was given its own color, and each text/quote within a short answer response was highlighted according to the theme it was associated with. Next, quotes were read through again to identify whether the new themes were present in previously coded text. This process continued until no more new themes/codes were identified. Once the process was completed, a secondary coder read through the short-answer data codes that were developed, and the emergent and deductive themes were discussed and re-worked until an agreement was reached regarding their accuracy.

Short answer responses from all five schools were used in the inductive analysis of short answer responses from the school climate section of the survey. Scenarios one and four were selected for a sub-analysis of the qualitative written responses that accompanied participants' multiple-choice responses. Scenarios one and four had the highest (scenario one) and lowest (scenario four), level of agreement between

participant reasoning about their choice of response to the scenario. The researcher thought that this lack of agreement may be due to the higher level of moral complexity portrayed in scenario four versus scenario one. For this reason, the researcher thought that scenario four may be more likely to generate written responses that exemplified differences between coordinated and uncoordinated socio-moral reasoning, and a greater variety of themes in written responses. Scenario one was chosen because of the higher level of agreement in participant responses. The researcher surmised that this may be due to the more straight-forward nature of the harm depicted, and that this may generate more written responses that exemplified socio-moral reasoning that successfully incorporated multiple domains. These two scenarios were therefore selected so that short answer data could be compared between scenarios with the highest and lowest level of agreement in participant reasoning.

*Deductive analyses of written response questions.* Participant quotes from scenarios one and four were also analyzed deductively in relation to the moral, personal, and conventional domains of reasoning (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). This process began with the creation of a table with a column for each domain of reasoning. Each written response was placed in its own row of the table, and the written response was broken up into quotes that were placed into the moral, personal, and/or conventional domains of reasoning columns. For example, quotes that identified harm were placed in the moral domain reasoning column, whereas quotes that emphasized a need for personal autonomy were placed in the personal domain reasoning column.

Any text that did not fit into a specific domain of reasoning was placed in a separate column; this allowed for the text from each short answer to be read as a whole, so that quotes were not misinterpreted or taken out of context. This also allowed the researcher to see how many domains of reasoning were drawn upon in a single written response. Scenarios one and four were chosen for this analysis because scenario one had the highest level of agreement in participant reasoning, and scenario four had the lowest level of agreement. This allowed the researcher to compare participant reasoning about the variety and complexity of themes in scenario four, to the themes in scenario one, which were less complex and varied.

*Analyses of situational influences on response choice between scenarios*. It was hypothesized that the nature and severity of the alleged harm

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depicted in the scenarios would be a major influence on response choice, along with the potential legal implications of the actions of the person who inflicted harm, and the severity of the harm that occurred (e.g. sexual harassment versus alleged sexual assault). However, a clear connection between the nature and severity of the harm and its legal implications appeared to be lacking in the data, so it was hypothesized that the lack of clarity depicted in many of the scenarios may have led to other situational influences in the scenarios having a more significant influence on participant response choice. This was explored by identifying additional situational elements within scenarios, such as the level of clarity around what happened, and the elements pertaining to the relationship between the harmed person and the person who caused the harm.

For example, in some scenarios it was unclear whether sexual harm occurred, and who was responsible, if anyone. While some of the scenarios portrayed sexual harm occurring between youth who were only acquainted, others portrayed harm that occurred between young people who were, or had been, dating. The average participant response choice for each scenario was used to guide deductive analyses (Creswell & Clark, 2007) of these situational elements within scenarios. To this end, a new table was created which included the additional situational elements on one side. Using this table, response choice between scenarios was compared to each situational element. These results are shown in Table 14, and were also reported using a narrative summary which identified the elements that appeared most salient in differentiating response choice between scenarios.

# Chapter 4:
# Results

## 4.1. Multiple Choice Results

### 4.1.1. Scenario Response Preference and Justifications

Table 2 shows the dominant response preference for each scenario in bold. The dominant response preference was determined for each scenario by calculating the weighted average for each response across schools. The weighted averages are shown in table two, however these are averages are almost the same as the non-weighted averages across schools as the differences in sample sizes between schools were relatively small. The average response preference for Scenario 1 was restorative, the average response preference for Scenario 3 was punitive, and for all other scenarios the response preference was mixed. As shown in Table 3, justifications for Scenario 1 were 79% restorative which aligned with the average (restorative) participant response preference to this scenario. For Scenario 3 the response preference was punitive. Justifications were 60% punitive in Scenario 3, which shows that there was a clear overall preference for a punitive response (see Table 4). The average response preferences for all schools to Scenarios 2 and 4 were mixed. Justifications for Scenario 2 were 46% restorative, and 43% punitive which aligns with the mixed response preference. Justifications for Scenario 4 were 48% restorative, and 40% punitive, which also aligns with the mixed response preference for this scenario. The response preferences for Scenarios 5 and 6 were also mixed, but the secondary response preference for these scenarios was restorative. As shown in Table 3, justifications for Scenario 5 were 56% restorative and 32% punitive. Justifications for Scenario 6 were 63% restorative and 25% punitive. Table 4 shows participant response preference for each scenario, alongside the secondary response preference that is based on justification/reasoning percentages (shown in Table 3).

**Table 2.      Response Preference Percentages by Scenario**

| Scenario | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Response Choice Percentage** | | | | | | |
| Restorative (R) | **52** | 27 | 16 | **32** | **31** | **36** |
| Punitive (P) | 7 | 33 | **45** | 30 | 17 | 16 |
| Mixed (M) | 45 | **38** | 36 | **32** | 36 | **42** |
| Ignore (Ig) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| I Don't Know | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 3 |

Note. n = 100 (Sample size: Schools A, B, C). Participants chose one response choice per scenario. Percentages were calculated from the weighted averages across schools.

**Table 3.      Justifications/Reasoning Percentages (Secondary Response Preference) by Scenario**

| Scenario | One | Two | Three | Four | Five | Six |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Justifications/Reasoning** | | | | | | |
| Restorative (r) | **79** | **46** | 31 | **48** | **56** | **63** |
| Punitive (p) | 14 | **43** | **60** | **40** | 32 | 25 |
| Ignore (ig) | 7 | 11 | 9 | 13 | 8 | 2 |

Note. n = 100 (Sample size: Schools A, B, C). Participants chose three justifications per scenario. Percentages were calculated from the weighted averages across schools.

**Table 4.      Response Preference and Justifications/Reasoning (Secondary Response Preference) by Scenario**

| Scenario | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Response Preference | R | M | P | M | M | M |
| Justification/Reasoning (secondary preference) | r | m | p | m | r | r |

Note: Schools A, B, C.

## 4.1.2. Response Choice and Justifications/Reasoning Between Schools, Across Scenarios

Scenario response preferences were similar between schools. As shown in Table 5, there was a 6% difference between schools in the percentage of respondents who chose a restorative response (School A 34%, B 28%, C 32%). There was a 2% difference between schools in the percentage of respondents who chose a punitive response (School A 24%, B 26%, C 26%), and mixed response choice percentages varied by 2% between schools (School A 37%, B 38%, C 39%). Ignore responses (School A 1%, B 4%, C 2%) and 'I don't know' responses (School A 2%, B 2%, C 4%), also varied 2% between schools. The weighted averages are shown in table five, however these are averages are almost the same as the non-weighted averages across schools as the differences in sample sizes between schools were relatively small.

**Table 5.** **Response Choice and Justifications/Reasoning Between Schools, Across Scenarios**

| School | A | | B | | C | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Response Choice | | | | | | |
| Restorative | 16 | 34 | 37 | 28 | 47 | 32 |
| Punitive | 16 | 24 | 37 | 26 | 47 | 26 |
| Mixed | 16 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 47 | 39 |
| Ignore | 16 | 1 | 37 | 4 | 47 | 2 |
| Don't know | 16 | 2 | 37 | 2 | 47 | 4 |
| | | | | | | |
| Justification/Reasoning | | | | | | |
| Restorative | 48 | 55 | 111 | 51 | 141 | 54 |
| Punitive | 48 | 35 | 111 | 35 | 141 | 36 |
| Ignore | 48 | 8 | 111 | 14 | 141 | 10 |

Note. n = 100 (Schools A, B, C). Participants chose one response and three justifications per scenario. Percentages are the weighted averages across scenarios.

Justification/reasoning about response choice was also similar between schools. Restorative justifications/reasoning percentages from the second question pertaining to each scenario in the survey "Why do you think this approach should be taken?" varied

by 6% between schools (School A 55%, B 51%, C 54%). Punitive justifications/reasoning percentages for individual schools varied by 1% (School A 35%, B 35%, C 36%), while ignore justification/reasoning percentages varied seven percent between schools (School A 8%, B 14%, C 10%).

## 4.1.3. Justifications/Reasoning by Scenario

Table 6 shows that the combinations of justifications/reasoning used by individual participants were diverse in that there were many different combinations of justifications chosen for each scenario. For individual scenarios, the justifications/reasoning used most often were: Mr2, Pr, CSCr, CAp1, CAp2, Mr. These were the three most frequently used justifications in every scenario except for scenario three, where the Moral/Punitive - 2 justification: "(X Student) should be suspended or expelled so they don't do this to other students" was also in the top three most common justifications. As shown bolded in Table 7, justifications/reasoning that were used most often in scenario one, were used between 20% and 28% of the time, while the next most common justification/reasoning in that scenario was only used by 7% of respondents. This is a high level of agreement in reasoning among participants compared to the other scenarios. While scenarios two, three, five, and six had a moderate level of agreement in reasoning among participants, scenario four had the lowest level of agreement in reasoning between participants.

**Table 6.**     **Justifications/Reasoning Percentages by Scenario**

| Scenario | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Justification/ Reasoning | | | | | | |
| Moral/Restorative - 1 (Mr1) | 7 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Moral/Restorative - 2 (Mr2) | **20** | 9 | 8 | **14** | **17** | **13** |
| Moral/Punitive - 1 (Mp1) | 1 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Moral/Punitive - 2 (Mp2) | 0 | 6 | **10** | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| Moral/Punitive - 3 (Mp3) | 3 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Moral/Ignore (Mig) | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Personal/Restorative (Pr) | **28** | **13** | 7 | 10 | **11** | **11** |
| Personal/Punitive (Pp) | 2 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Personal/Ignore - 1 (Pig1) | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personal/Ignore - 2 (Pig2) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Conventional Authority/ Punitive - 1 (CAp1) | 5 | 8 | **20** | **11** | 8 | 10 |
| Conventional Authority/ Punitive - 2 (CAp2) | 3 | **13** | **10** | 6 | 8 | 9 |
| Conventional Authority/ Ignore - (CAig1) | 2 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| Conventional Peer/ Ignore - 1(CPig1) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Conventional Peer/ Ignore - 2(CPig2) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Conventional School Culture/Restorative (CSCr) | **21** | **13** | 8 | **11** | **12** | **15** |

Note. n = 100 (Schools A, B, C). Percentages were calculated from the weighted averages across schools. Bolded numbers are the three highest percentages of reasoning/types of justification within each scenario..

## 4.1.5. School Climate

As shown in Table 7, the percentage of participants within each school who said they thought there were students who have experienced sexual harm at their school, ranged from 71% to 92%. This shows that a large majority of study participants across all schools felt that sexual harm was an issue at their school.

**Table 7.** **Percentage of Students Who Think that Peer-to Peer Sexual Harm is an Issue at their School.**

| School | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 71 | 81 | 92 | 75 | 84 |
| **n** | 16 | 36 | 47 | 22 | 24 |

Note. n = 145 (Schools A, B, C, D, E)

As shown in table 8, between 15 and 19% of study participants said it was very likely that they would tell a school staff member if they or someone they knew experienced peer-to-peer sexual harm at school. Between 0% and 22% said it was very unlikely, while 32% - 63% said it was somewhat likely, and 22% - 50% said it was not very likely.

**Table 8.      Likelihood of Telling a Staff Member About Sexual Harm**

|  |  | Very likely | Somewhat Likely | Not Very Likely | Very Unlikely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | n | % | % | % | % |
| School |  |  |  |  |  |
| A | 16 | 6 | 50 | 22 | 22 |
| B | 37 | 19 | 38 | 38 | 5 |
| C | 46 | 3 | 32 | 50 | 16 |
| D | 22 | 1 | 63 | 25 | 0 |
| F | 24 | 16 | 37 | 26 | 16 |

Note. n = 145 (Schools A, B, C, D, E)

Table 9 shows the reasons selected most frequently for telling a school staff member about sexual harm. In order of most frequent these were  'so it doesn't happen again" (20% - 25%), "to get support" (20%- 25%), "so it doesn't happen to anyone else" (13% - 25%), "and so they know its wrong" (17% - 20%). The least common reason for telling a school staff member was "so the person is punished" (12% - 17%).

**Table 9.      Reasons for Telling a School Staff Member About Sexual Harm**

|  |  | So it Doesn't Happen Again | To Get Support | So the Person is Punished | Doesn't Happen to Anyone else | So They Know Its wrong |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | n | % | % | % | % | % |
| School |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A | 16 | 22 | 25 | 12 | 21 | 20 |
| B | 37 | 25 | 19 | 16 | 21 | 19 |
| C | 47 | 21 | 22 | 14 | 24 | 19 |

| | | So it Doesn't Happen Again | To Get Support | So the Person is Punished | Doesn't Happen to Anyone else | So They Know Its wrong |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | 24 | 22 | 30 | 17 | 13 | 17 |
| E | 22 | 20 | 22 | 13 | 25 | 20 |

Note. n = 145 (Schools A, B, C, D, E).

Table 10 shows participant reasoning for not telling a school staff member about sexual harm. The reasons that was selected most frequently across schools were "It could make the situation worse" (22% - 35%), "I/they might not be believed or might not get the right support" (20% - 27%), and "and They might invade my/their privacy (15% - 26%),%), not wanting school staff to involve parents (18% - 25%). The reason selected least often for not wanting to tell school staff about sexual harm was "I/they wouldn't want to get in trouble" (0% - 11%).

**Table 10.     Reasons for Not Telling a Staff Member About Sexual Harm**

| School | n | I/they wouldn't want to get in trouble % | They might invade my/their privacy % | I/they wouldn't want them to involve parents % | It could make the situation worse % | I/they might not be believed or might not get the right support % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 16 | 10 | **26** | 18 | **28** | 18 |
| B | 37 | 11 | 15 | 19 | **28** | **27** |
| C | 47 | 8 | **23** | **20** | 27 | **23** |
| D | 22 | 0 | **25** | 20 | **35** | 20 |
| E | 24 | 10 | **20** | **25** | 22 | **23** |

Note. n = 145 (Schools A, B, C, D, E).

Table 11 shows that student perceptions of the way that school staff respond to sexual harm vary. For some schools, the response is mostly punitive, while others incorporate restorative measures as well. It was less common across schools for staff to ignore the issue, but this does seem to occur in all schools some of the time

**Table 11.       How School Staff Members Respond to Sexual Harm**

|  |  | They usually respond punitively | They usually respond restoratively | They usually ignore the problem | They either ignore the problem, or respond punitively | They either ignore the problem, or respond restoratively | This doesn't happen at my school |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | n | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| School |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A | 16 | 8 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 39 |
| B | 37 | 28 | 19 | 3 | 9 | 13 | 28 |
| C | 47 | 24 | 13 | 5 | 30 | 5 | 21 |
| D | 22 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 25 | 25 | 37 |
| E | 24 | 26 | 11 | 17 | 11 | 17 | 18 |

Note. n = 145 (Schools A, B, C, D, E).

Table 12 shows that, across all schools, students said they would be most likely to tell school staff about sexual harm if a mixed approach was taken (75% - 100%). The next most common was a restorative approach (0% - 29%), followed by a punitive approach (0% - 22%).

**Table 12.       Which Approach Would Make You More Likely to Tell School Staff?**

|  |  | Restorative | Punitive | Mixed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | n | % | % | % |
| School |  |  |  |  |
| A | 16 | 29 | 14 | 57 |
| B | 37 | 9 | 22 | 69 |
| C | 47 | 5 | 21 | 66 |
| D | 22 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| E | 24 | 5 | 11 | 84 |

Note. n = 145 (Schools A, B, C, D, E).

## 4.2. Thematic Analyses

### 4.2.1. Situational Influences on Response Choice Between Scenarios

As explained in the methods section, the situational elements that were hypothesized as influencing response preference, were the nature and severity of the alleged harm depicted in the scenarios, and the potential legal implications of the actions of the person who inflicted harm. Once the researcher found that there was no observable connection between response choice and these considerations, an analysis was conducted where the situational elements within scenarios were compared to the average response choice of each scenario. Table 13 shows the situational elements within scenarios that appear to have influenced response choice in this study. These include: clarity about what happened, clarity about consent, whether the harm was mutual (both parties harmed), whether the harm was intentional, whether there was a predatory element to the harm (defined by a power imbalance facilitated by a large age difference), whether the harmed person was in a relationship with the person who harmed them that they wished to maintain, and whether the person who caused the harm had admitted wrongdoing and explained their actions.

**Table 13.     Situational Differences Between Scenarios and Response Preferences**

| Scenario | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Response Preference | Restorative | Mixed | Punitive | Mixed | Mixed/ Restorative | Mixed/ Restorative |
| Situational Differences | | | | | | |
| | Lack of clarity | Intentional | Power imbalance | Power imbalance | Lack of clarity | Intentional |
| | Mutual | | Intentional | Intentional | Lack of consent | Admitted wrongdoing |
| | | | Lack of consent | Lack of consent | | |

| | Harmed person wishes to maintain a relationship with harm doer |
| --- | --- |

## 4.2.2. Situational Influences and Reasoning Between Scenarios

In scenario one, where there was a lack of clarity about what happened and mutual harm, the most commonly drawn upon justification/reasoning was the Personal /Restorative (Pr) justification "Talking through the problem could help (Xstudent/s) feel empowered, happier, and healthier again", followed by the Moral/Restorative-2 justification: "Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful and detrimental, even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken", then the Conventions of School Culture justification: "Student X/Y should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and community".

In scenario five, where there was a lack of clarity about what happened and a lack of consent, the most commonly drawn upon justification/reasoning was the Moral/Restorative-2 justification: "Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful and detrimental, even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken", followed by the Personal /Restorative (Pr) justification "Talking through the problem could help (Xstudent/s) feel empowered, happier, and healthier again", and then the Conventions of School Culture justification: "Student X/Y should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and community".

In scenario six, there was clear and intentional harm, but the harm doer admitted they were wrong and offered an explanation of their behavior. For this scenario, the most commonly drawn upon justification/reasoning was the Conventions of School Culture justification: "Student X/Y should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and community", followed by the Personal /Restorative (Pr) justification "Talking through the problem could help (Xstudent/s) feel empowered, happier, and healthier again", followed by the

Moral/Restorative-2 justification: "Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful and detrimental, even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken."

In scenario two, where there was clear and intentional harm, the most commonly drawn upon justification/reasoning was the Conventional Authority/Punitive-2 justification: "Other students should know that (X Students) behavior is against the rules" (CAp2), followed by the Personal /Restorative (Pr) justification "Talking through the problem could help (Xstudent/s) feel empowered, happier, and healthier again", then the Conventions of School Culture justification: "Student X/Y should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and community".

In scenario three, there was clear and intentional harm, as well as a predatory relationship facilitated by a significant age difference. The most commonly drawn upon justification/reasoning was the Conventional Authority punitive justification-1: "What X student did was illegal or against the rules, they could/should be punished, arrested, suspended" (CAp1), followed by the Conventional Authority/Punitive-2 justification: "Other students should know that (X Students) behavior is against the rules" (CAp2), then the Moral/Punitive-2 justification: "(X Student) should be suspended or expelled so they don't do this to other students" (Mp2)

In scenario four, there was clear and intentional harm, as well as a predatory relationship facilitated by a significant age difference. The harmed person was also in a relationship with the person who caused the harm. For this scenario, there were four, rather than three, justifications/reasoning that were commonly drawn upon to explain response choice, and these justifications/reasoning were more evenly spread out compared to other scenarios.

### 4.2.3. Inductive Analyses of Written Responses to Scenarios 1 and 4

***Scenario One:*** Written student responses from scenario one contained four themes. The first theme was *mutual harm/fairness/responsibility*. Students' written responses encompassing this theme identified that both parties harmed each other in different ways, and that they both behaved in ways that caused harm. The following quote exemplifies responses which claimed both Liam and Rebecca were at fault: "They

both did something wrong and were also harmed." Other quotes which encompassed the theme of mutual harm and fairness claimed that no one was at fault, e.g. "There is no villain of the story or victim. This occurred through miscommunication between the couple, and no one should be punished or blamed." Other responses pertaining to this theme acknowledged the role that the peer group played in the harm that occurred in scenario one: "Now that there are rumours spreading about Liam that are false, it is also affecting him negatively."

The second theme from written responses to scenario one was *understanding/learning.* Responses that related to this theme routinely expressed the view that the protagonists should be given a chance to understand and learn from their behaviour: For example: "Liam doesn't know what he did wrong, and Rebecca didn't understand how it also affected Liam." Similarly, many respondents felt that resolving the situation required understanding each other's perspectives and/or what they did wrong: "It is important to let him learn from his mistake if he genuinely didn't know what he did wrong." Another participant wrote: "He only way to move past it is to discuss and understand how their actions impacted each other." The third category of themes was *resolution through dialogue*. Participants addressed a need to talk things out to resolve the situation, and/or to prevent further harm from occurring. For example, one participant wrote: "I think if they talked about it together, they might be able to talk it out and figure out what is going on."

The fourth theme from written answers to scenario one was *clarity*. Some participant responses which contained this theme expressed that resolution should start by gaining clarity about what happened, whether wrongdoing occurred, and/or who harmed who. For example, one participant wrote: "Without having further insight into the thoughts of the two parties, I feel like it's hard to pass judgement on the situation." Other respondents expressed the view that RJ should specifically be used when it is unclear who is at fault: "I think in this case specifically the restorative approach is best because both parties are being harmed. Liam doesn't know what he did wrong, and Rebecca didn't understand how it also affected Liam." Other responses communicated a need to determine whether the sexual acts depicted in the scenario were consensual to determine wrongdoing, and that a punitive response should only be used if clear wrongdoing occurred. For example, one participant wrote: "To use the punitive approach

or even the mixed approach their needs to be meaningful evidence showing that a law was broken to avoid someone from being falsely accused."

*Scenario 4.* There were four themes from student written responses to scenario four. The first theme was a need for fault and/or *accountability to be identified/facilitated through dialogue* to make amends, while also acknowledging complexity. For example, one student stated: "It must first be addressed whether this rumor is actually true or not, and further actions can be taken from there", and "These issues are complicated and [telling an adult] doesn't always necessarily solve the problem." A second theme emphasized a need for those who caused sexual harm to *learn from these behaviors and/or a need for adult facilitated learning interventions* that prevent sexual harm. For example, one student suggested that the harm doer be given an opportunity to learn from his mistakes: "If this is true, what Aaron has done is wrong and he should be provided an opportunity to learn from his mistakes". Another student points out that "Trying to fit in can be really hard in a relationship. It is important for girls to know that they do not need to feel pressured into sending any pictures."

A third theme in scenario four written responses was a need for acknowledgement of the *role of consent and/or power imbalance* when peer-to-peer sexual harm occurs. For example, one participant expressed the following: "As the older person in the relationship, he has more of an advantage to almost manipulate Shaelyn." Another student addressed this theme with the following quote: "Although she did "agree" to send pictures, the kid is 13 and there is a severe power imbalance leading her to be pressured into sending them." A need for *privacy* to be prioritized when responding to peer to peer sexual harm was another prevalent theme expressed in student written responses to scenario. This is exemplified in the following quotes: "A restorative approach makes sense for an "intimate situation" where privacy is a concern", and "Shaelyn must be informed of her right to privacy".

Within written responses to scenario four there were also quotes that relayed thoughts about the RJ process, and/or that elaborated on the most appropriate response to the scenario. For example, some written responses expressed ideas about using a restorative versus punitive approach. For example: "No punitive punishment would make him think nothing really bad happens to him, no restorative punishment means he would never learn." Another student pointed out: "For many, taking responsibility for your

actions can be more of a punishment than suspension, charges, or detention." Two students communicated a perceived need for adult intervention before or after RJ, while a third felt that adult mediation between Shaelynn and Aaron would help establish what had happened: "After the initial suspension is over, Aaron should have to go through mandatory counselling and education."

### 4.2.4  Scenario 4: Socio-Moral Reasoning Analysis of Written Responses

The 18 students who chose to add a written response to scenario four used ten different combinations of domain-related reasoning in their responses. Personal domain reasoning appeared in 11 student responses, conventional adult reasoning appeared in 10 of the responses, while moral domain reasoning appeared in eight of the responses. Two responses drew upon the conventions of peers to reason about scenario four, and one drew upon the conventions of school culture. There were five students who drew upon just one domain of reasoning in their written response. Ten students combined reasoning from two domains to inform their written response, and three students drew upon three domains of reasoning.

There were ten instances of reasoning involving adult conventions. All these quotes aligned with the conventional authority punitive justification1 (e.g. "What X student did was illegal or against the rules, they could/should be punished, arrested, suspended" (CAp1)), and/or the Conventional Authority/Punitive-2 justification (e.g. "Other students should know that (X Students) behavior is against the rules" (CAp2)). The focus of four of these quotes was identifying Aaron's behavior as illegal and/or identifying a need to punish Aaron as a means of communicating the seriousness of the behavior, and the potential for such behavior to result in criminal charges to him and other students. For example, student #1: "What Aaron did was illegal and if it is considered normal in school, he should be punished to set an example that actions like these are not acceptable." Meanwhile, another student reasoned that no law or rule had been broken: "There were no rules or laws broken because she consented to it and sent them on her own will".

The remaining five references to social conventions were focused on the age difference between Shalynn and Aaron, and student understandings about age

differences and consent. Within these quotes, some students focused on describing their understanding of the law regarding age differences and consent. Other students focused on the personal influence Aaron would have over Shalynn as an older student. For example, student #8: "if I am correct, it is against the law for a 13-year-old and a 17-year-old to date/be in a relationship", and, student #16: "[Aaron] should be punished for taking advantage of someone much younger than him who can be easily influenced". Student #6 focused on the nature of consent and how this should factor into dealing with the situation: "This is not true consent. This needs to be considered when investigating the quite probable distribution of her photos - as this distribution would also be illegal as she is a minor."

There were instances of personal domain reasoning in Scenario 4 written responses. Three of these quotes aligned with the personal/restorative (Pr) justification: "Talking through the problem could help (X student/s) feel empowered, happier, and healthier again." The remaining seven quotes did not fit easily into any of the personal domain justifications used in the survey. Within the quotes that aligned with the PR justification, the first (student #7) focused on allowing Shaelynn the opportunity to tell Aaron how she has been affected so that she can feel heard: "I think Shaelyn also should tell him how she feels pressured by him and he should be able to hear that," while the second (student #3) focused on talking out the issue as a means of educating Aaron and giving him the opportunity to maintain the relationship; "If they talk it out he might see what he is doing wrong and resolve the issue and he would delete the photos and they can continue to date." The third (student #1) quote implies that Aaron will feel better if he talks out the issue with Shaelynn: "He should also be given a chance to make amends with Shaelyn if she wants."

Of the remaining student quotes that used personal domain reasoning, several are concerned with a perceived need to educate Shaelynn about her right to privacy and personal boundaries. For example, student #16 wrote: "Shealyn should definitely talk to someone about consent and setting boundaries in relationships." Other quotes reflected concerns for Shaelynn's psychological health and emotional well-being, and how these may be affected by continuing the relationship with Aaron. For example, student #13 wrote: "Shaelyn should speak to a counsellor when she feels comfortable and get support for the way Aaron's actions have affected her and help to process whether or not the relationship is the best thing for her."

There were eight instances of moral domain reasoning in Scenario 4 written responses. Four of these aligned with the Moral/Restorative-2 justification (Mr2): "Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful and detrimental, even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken" and the Moral/Restorative-1(Mr1) justification: "The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying issue, which is that someone was harmed." For example, student #13 wrote: "Aaron needs to understand and recognize that his actions are not okay rather than being punished for his actions". Within these quotes, however, there was more of an emphasis on the education and rehabilitation than was portrayed in the Mr1 and Mr2 justifications, for example, student #16 wrote: "Aaron should be made to realize that his actions have very real consequences and can drastically affect the lives of others."

There were three student quotes that aligned with the Moral/ignore justification: "adult intervention could make the situation worse because the (harm doer) could retaliate" (Mig). For example, Student #15 wrote: "the fact that a lot of the problem is based on hearsay would make it hard to for any adult to actually actively intervene in a way that would help ameliorate the situation and would not lead to further harm being perpetuated against Shealyn." There was one student quote that aligned with moral reasoning but did not fit with any of the justifications used in the survey. Student #8 communicates the idea that Shaelynn is the one putting Aaron at risk by sending him the photos: "being a minor and taking nude photos of yourself and sending them to others is putting the other person at risk of containing child pornography", however they also contend: "However, I do believe that Aaron is the one in the wrong. As the older person in the relationship, he has more of an advantage to almost manipulate Shaelyn."

There is one instance of conventional peer/ignore (Cpig) reasoning "(Student X) and/or (Student Y's) participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, they might just apologize just to get out of trouble." Student #7 wrote: "It doesn't seem to be his first rodeo so he might just apologize to get away with it, so that's why I think it's important to do a mixed approach." Both student #11, and student #9 appeared to draw on peer convention in identifying Aaron as a "creep": "there is also the issue that a 17-year-old dating a 13-year-old is really creepy".  One student's response aligned with the conventional School Culture/Restorative justification (CSCr): "Student X should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the

school culture and community." Student #2 wrote: "If this is true, what Aaron has done is wrong and he should be provided an opportunity to learn from his mistakes".

### 4.2.5. School Climate/Sexual Harm: Inductive Analyses of Written Responses

At the end of the school climate section of the survey, students were asked to "Please share any additional thoughts or comments you have about disclosing sexual harm". Twenty-one participants from five different schools elected to write responses. Themes from these responses were grouped according to the following categories: the existence of peer-to-peer sexual harm in schools, disclosing sexual harm, response from school staff, resolution of sexual harm, and the need for education about sexual harm. The following paragraphs contain a summary of each theme.

While some students said they did not know or had not heard whether peer-to-peer sexual harm was an issue at their school, others discussed occurrences that had happened to peers at their school, such as sexual coercion, sexual assault, rape, and "catcalling." One student responded to this question to clarify that peer-to-peer sexual harm was not an issue at their school specifically, but that students at their school have experienced peer-to-peer sexual harm outside of the school, or at a school they attended previously. Most of the students who responded to this section in writing voiced discomfort or concern over disclosing peer-to-peer sexual harm to school staff. As one respondent remarked, the issue is not "widely talked about, it often happens and goes unseen because students don't feel comfortable bringing it up to adults within the school." Others remarked that they would only disclose an experience of sexual harm to school staff if it was very severe.

Respondents voiced several reasons for feeling uncomfortable about discussing peer-to-peer sexual harm with school staff. Concerns about privacy, gossip, and not being taken seriously were the most common themes. As one student put it: "I would be concerned that if I told someone at the school, it wouldn't be taken seriously and word would get out, making the situation much worse." Another student described the experience of a peer as an example of how disclosing sexual harm to school staff can go wrong: "She told her counsellor, and in this case talking through it wasn't helping the scenario and it seemed like he walked totally free from the whole issue whereas it

essentially derailed her life and mental health." In some cases, students said they would rather disclose an experience of sexual harm to a parent than school staff, while the importance of having "a safe place to go to that does not get shared with your parents" was also discussed.

Participants wrote that feelings of shame associated with the experience of sexual harm influenced their decisions about disclosing peer-to-peer sexual harm to school staff. For example, one student recounts: "My friend told me she [was sexually harmed] and she said that at the time she [felt] very small, and she tried not to tell anyone." Another reported influence on the disclosure of sexual harm to school staff was students' negative perception of the behavior of school staff, such as behaving inappropriately towards students. As one respondent explained: "This sets a bad example for students, I would guess that knowing this, students are less likely to report these types of problems."

A variety of responses to sexual harm from school staff were described by respondents. While a small number of students reported a mixed response being used, and feeling supported by school staff, others felt that the response at their school was lacking. This was true whether a punitive or more restorative response was taken. A primary issue identified by students with regards to taking a punitive approach was that it does not ensure that the harm doer truly understands the effect of their actions on the harmed person. Many students felt that it was important for the harm doer to show that they understood and could learn from their actions and change their behavior in the future. For some, this understanding was necessary for the harmed person to feel a sense of closure, validation, or justice, while others felt that this was important to ensure the safety of the school for other students. The idea that schools should provide learning opportunities regarding preventing and responding to sexual harm was another common theme. As one student put it: "From my time in school, I am aware that the traditional punitive approach has not been an effective approach to creating a solution that creates justice for the victim and allows the offender to learn and grow from their mistakes."

Issues with responding punitively to more serious accusations of sexual harm were also depicted in student responses. Although referrals to police would be appropriate in dealing with an issue of sexual harm involving accusations of criminal behavior, one student recounts how this created an uncomfortable situation for a student

when the charges were dropped: "The police couldn't gather enough evidence to go any further with an investigation, everyone in the school openly expressed to each other that they didn't believe she was telling the truth, and the [principal] didn't take any restorative or punitive measures to ensure that my friend felt at ease and safe at school". While the need for education about the nature of consent was mentioned in several of the written responses, the following quote illustrates the grey areas that exist around this matter, and how high the stakes can be when a misunderstanding occurs: "the counsellor told her that there was not enough evidence to do anything about it and that she should be more clear with yes and no in the future (victim blaming!)".

Feeling that a disclosure of sexual harm was/could be ignored by school staff, or only dealt with superficially, was a common theme in written answers that discussed the use of 'restorative' measures in absence of punitive measures. In these cases, students reported that school staff would "pretend to acknowledge the issue," but "end up not doing anything about the issue." As one student explained: "It can come off as teachers ignoring the issue and just giving the person a tap on the shoulder and saying its bad, which leads to victims feeling ignored, the school's approach of 'say sorry then forget' was not at all successful."

Concerns about privacy and making the situation worse through gossip and rumors were major themes in student narratives about the response of school staff to peer-to-peer sexual harm. While some students felt that the punitive approach was more likely to lead to gossip and a lack of privacy for the harmed person, others suggested that dealing with sexual harm using restorative measures could "make the issue more public, which many victims would not be okay with." Other students pointed out that any type of response from school staff could potentially draw attention to a very private issue. For example, one participant wrote: "Sometimes the problem is so private, and nobody knows about it, so when you ask for a response, people might find out and it will draw unwanted attention." Several students made suggestions in their written responses regarding how to resolve issues of sexual harm in schools using a mixed approach. The consensus from these responses is that a mixed approach provides a balance that should be adjusted to each unique situation. As one respondent put it: "Restorative is necessary for people to really understand what they did wrong in certain cases, and I think that the victims also deserve to see those that inflicted the harm punished. In a way, it provides closure."

# Chapter 5:

# Discussion

## 5.1. Youth Perspectives on Sexual Harm Prevalence and Reporting in Schools

While the definition of sexual harm used in this study included incidents that are not criminal matters, the results align with Government of Canada crime reporting data showing that youth between the ages of 15 and 18 are the most frequent victims of sexual crimes and are most often victimized by a peer that is known to them. In this study, 71% and 92% of a diverse sample of 145 youth respondents from five schools reported that sexual harm was an issue at their schools. While these numbers fluctuated between schools, it is clear that a large majority of participants in the study felt that sexual harm was a school issue. In Canada, only 5% of sexual crime victims who are 15 and older report the crime to police (Miladinovic, 2019). In the current study, 0% - 22% of participants reported that it was very likely they would tell a school staff member about sexual harm, while 22% - 50% said it was unlikely, and 0% - 22% said that it was very unlikely that they would tell a staff member about sexual harm. These numbers, reflect the low levels of reporting of sexual crimes in the criminal justice system.

Research has found that sexual crimes are seldom reported to police because victims fear they will not be believed, and/or will be scrutinized by police and that, for many, this adds to the original trauma of the incident (Koss, 2014). In the current study, students reported that hypothetical disclosure of sexual harm to school staff would be motivated by a student's desire to 1) access emotional support; 2) ensure that the person who harmed them knows that their behavior was wrong; and 3) prevent further harm from occurring to them and/or to other students. It was less common for students to be motivated by a desire to punish the person who committed the harm. Students said they would feel more comfortable disclosing sexual harm to school staff if: 1) they believed they would be taken seriously; 2), they were sure they would get the support they needed; and 3) they knew their privacy would be prioritized. These findings align with those from the RESTORE study by Koss (2014), where sexual assault survivors were motivated to participate in RJ by a desire to "hold the offender accountable;" "to explain

how they were affected;" "to take back their power;" and "to make sure the offender did not do this to anyone else." This suggests that there are similarities between the current study and the RESTORE program in terms of participant motivation. It also suggests that young people in high school reason about responding to sexual harm in similar ways that adults do, in the criminal justice context.

Examining youth perspectives on responding to sexual harm is a previously unexplored research topic. The findings of this study add to the greater body of empirical knowledge regarding the perspectives of sexual harm victims (Koss, 2014; Marsh & Wager, 2015), and the public (Marsh & Wager (2015), on responding to sexual harm. This is a topic that has previously received little attention in RJ literature, which has often failed to incorporate victim perspectives (Burns & Sinko (2021). While there is disagreement in the RJ literature about offering RJ to survivors of sexual violence, RESTORE program participants, who were offered facilitators and counsellors trained in responding to sexual assault, reported positive experiences with the program.

The current study examines the perspectives of high school students who would be navigating RJ within the secondary school context, rather than adults navigating the criminal justice system. However, participant perspectives and motivations reflect findings from the RESTORE study by Koss (2014). Based on these findings, and the positive results associated with the types of victim support offered to participants of RESTORE, it would be reasonable to assume that offering the same types of supports in schools may be beneficial to students who have experienced sexual harm. For example, offering referrals to specialized counselling and support services, and/or assisting students in making police reports. In BC, school counsellors frequently occupy dual roles as classroom teachers. Results from this study indicate that this may be perceived as an impediment to privacy in cases where the teacher has a positive relationship with the person who caused the harm. Navigating these and other situations to ensure that students feel comfortable with disclosure may require developing school protocols that ensure confidentiality, impartiality, and a sense of agency.

## 5.2. Youth Perspectives on Responding to Peer-to-Peer Sexual Harm in Schools

Despite the infrequency of student disclosure of sexual harm, results from the multiple-choice scenarios, the school climate data, and written response data indicate that high school students do not feel that sexual harm should be ignored by school staff, even minor incidents. In this study, participants tended to prefer a mix of the restorative and punitive approaches to peer-to-peer sexual harm in schools, with an emphasis on the restorative approach. These findings provide initial evidence <u>for considering the use of RJ</u> in response to peer-to-per sexual harm. They also support the findings of Marsh and Wager (2015) whose survey study suggests that adult sexual assault survivors approve of offering RJ to other sexual assault survivors, in conjunction with, or after regular criminal justice proceedings.

In the criminal justice context, a purely restorative approach entails using RJ in response to a sexual crime, instead of pursuing criminal charges. As mentioned, this is not an option offered within the BC criminal justice system. In Marsh and Wager's (2015) survey study, most respondents who were sexual assault survivors preferred the idea of using RJ in conjunction with the regular criminal justice process, or after sentencing. A mixed approach was also used in the study by Koss (2014), which found that adult sexual assault survivors who participated in RJ after sentencing, had a decrease in PTSD symptoms.

In the current study, a punitive approach refers to school disciplinary measures, or pursuing criminal charges, or both. The main difference between the school and criminal justice contexts regarding punitive and restorative disciplinary measures, is that when one or both measures fail to resolve the issue in a school, the harmed student may continue to have unwanted contact with the person who harmed them. Sexual harm is most often the result of interactions between young people who know each other (Miladinovic, 2019). This means it is likely that students who experience sexual harm attend some of the same classes and are part of the same social circle, as the person who caused the harm. Participant responses in the current study indicate that, in these situations, the social repercussions of disclosing even minor incidents of sexual harm can be significant. If the issue is not fully resolved, it can lead to a larger issue involving gossip, social exclusion, and/or bullying.

Student responses describing negative experiences of disclosing sexual harm within school environments that rely on punitive disciplinary tactics share similarities to Marsh and Wager's (2015) descriptions of the experiences of sexual assault victims navigating the criminal justice system. In both contexts, survivors feel there are often psychological and/or social repercussions to disclosing experiences of sexual harm to people in positions of authority. In Marsh and Wager's (2015) survey study, adult sexual assault survivors who had never reported the crime to police were more likely to prefer the idea of using RJ instead of regular criminal justice proceedings. In the current study there was also a minority of students who preferred a purely restorative approach over a punitive or mixed approach.

Student written responses tended to reflect the findings of Rote et al. (2021) on adolescent perceptions of punitive disciplinary policies in schools. While the research of Rote et al. (2021) did not examine sexual harm specifically, responses in this study show how a reliance on criminal investigations and punitive disciplinary tactics may put students who have experienced sexual harm at risk of further harm by failing to address the harm that has already occurred. There were respondents in this study who described experiences with a purely 'restorative' approach from staff, where little was done to truly resolve the situation after sexual harm disclosure occurred. Some respondents had concerns that a purely restorative approach would mean they would be expected to simply accept a superficial apology from the person who harmed them and 'move on.' As these youth responses illustrate, restorative measures that lack psychological depth, do not address the developmental needs of this age group (Wainryb & Pareja Conto, 2022), and are therefore unlikely to facilitate empathetic understanding, forgiveness, and resolution of the issue.

Student accounts of their negative experiences with disclosing sexual harm, and their concerns relating to the restorative responses of school staff, reflect the ambiguity and inconsistency described by Zakzeski and Rutherford (2021) regarding the definition and implementation of RJ in schools, as well as the need for teachers to receive paid RJ training to ensure effective RJ implementation (Winn, 2018). To ensure effective restorative responses to sexual harm in schools, additional training or consultation in responding to young people who have experienced sexual harm would increase the likelihood that schools would be able to meet the needs of these students. Having RJ facilitators trained in responding to sexual harm incidents is another viable way of

ensuring that students get the support they need when they have experienced sexual harm by a peer.

Given that sexual harm is most often experienced by female, 2SLGBTQ+, and BIPOC youth (Allnock & Atkinson, 2019), ensuring that RJ is effecting real change rather than being limited to "peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts" (Romano & Almengor, 2021), needs to be a priority when addressing sexual harm in schools. As suggested by Gregory and Evans (2020), RJ circles that respond to sexually harmful behavior, also need to address the influence of negative racial, gender, or other stereotypes and/or the internalized assumptions of students who have been sexually harmed. This would ensure that historical and current inequities relating to the specific identities of individuals are not implicitly reinforced within RJ circles.

For example, in scenario five, Sahara feels she was sexually assaulted, while Chris feels that he was doing what he thought was 'normal' within that social group and situation. In this instance, an explicit evaluation of the role of gender bias may reveal, for example, that Sahara previously felt pressured to engage in sexual activity because she had observed pornographic material that portrays women as passive objects. Meanwhile, Chris and the other youths' assumption that Sahara was a consenting participant, may have been influenced by her prior willingness to participate, and their own consumption of pornography (along with a lack of awareness regarding the nature of consent). From the transformative RJ perspective (Gregory and Evans, 2020), examining gender stereotypes within the RJ circle would offer Sahara, Chris, and their friends, an opportunity to think about how their behavior was influenced by the messages portrayed within the pornography they were viewing. This new understanding would help them to navigate future situations involving sexual intimacy, with a new sense of awareness and agency.

Research shows that teachers develop more positive relationships with students when they focus on the harm caused by negative behavior, rather than broken rules or social conventions (Nucci, 1984). Avoiding the reproduction of bias regarding identity and sexual activity is another consideration influencing relationships between students and teachers, as well as the outcomes of RJ circles (Gregory & Evans, 2020). Using the current example, it would be helpful for staff to ensure that the dialogue within the RJ circle is not informed by stereotypical notions relating to, for example, the voracity of

male versus female sexuality, so that the focus of the meeting stays on responding to the harm that occurred.

Restorative educational environments have been found to encourage students to take responsibility and learn from their actions, rather than denying accountability to avoid punishment (Talwar & Lee, 2011). However, creating a school culture where students feel comfortable disclosing sexual harm, taking responsibility for harmful sexual behavior, and examining biased assumptions, may require the kind of cultural shift that is implied by administering a whole school approach to RJ (Morrison, 2012). Using the example of scenario five, a whole school approach to RJ could address the influence of pornography in a way that acts to prevent, as well as respond, to these influences. Ideally, this would have a positive effect on youth culture within a school community.

Continuing with the previous example, the first level of intervention of the whole school approach would address the general topic of sexual harm and the potential for pornography to inform negative sexual behavior and stereotypical assumptions. This would be discussed through restorative conversations in classrooms or assemblies. At this level, general topics pertaining to specific populations within the school could also be addressed in circles involving these populations, such as females, males, 2SLGTBQ+ students, etc. This would allow these students to get extra support engaging in the wider conversation. At this level, students could share impressions, perspectives, concerns, or questions about sexual harm, and/or related issues.

At the second level of intervention, using the whole school approach, the group conferencing method could be used to discuss an ongoing issue involving the whole school, or a specific population within the school. This is a restorative circle where everyone gets a chance to speak about how the issue is affecting students, and how they think it should be resolved. This process allows for the identification of the collective values of school community members, and also for discussion about putting these values into action. At this level collective agreements can be made to guide student behavior towards the creation of a safe and respectful school environment.  Ideally, conversations at the second level would be informed by conversations and information sharing that occurred at the first level of intervention. At the second level of intervention using the whole school approach, students would have a chance to share concerns and offer suggestions to school staff based on their own experiences, without having to

speak about them directly. For example, a student who has not disclosed a negative experience regarding the nonconsensual sharing of their intimate images by a peer could suggest ways for school staff to deal with the issue that ensure students feel comfortable coming forward. This could facilitate student agency regarding sexual harm disclosure in a way that would not require that a student put their privacy at risk. Offering RJ facilitation training to students, and allowing them to facilitate or co-facilitate RJ circles, is another means of promoting student agency, and the developmental need to acquire more autonomy during the high school years (Pareja Conto et al., 2022).

At the third level of intervention, RJ circles could be formed in response to a particular incident of sexual harm. RJ circles at the third level of intervention could take place instead of punitive measures, alongside, or after them. For RJ to be victim-centered, the RJ circle's timing and structure at this level would be subject to the preferences of the harmed student (Zehr, 2013). In situations where criminal charges have been pursued and then dropped, or if students are returning to school after a suspension for a sexual harm incident, RJ could be used to ensure that the issue gets resolved. This process of re-integrating the student back into the school community would also address any social exclusion or bullying students have experienced from the harm they caused or experienced.

Within the RJ circle, harmed students have an opportunity to say how the harm can be repaired (Morrison, 2012). When sexual harm has occurred, this might involve, for example, asking the harm doer to write a letter or an essay that demonstrates a deeper understanding of the harm they caused, and that explains how this will guide their future behavior. As noted by Burns and Sinko (2021), post-RJ supervision to ensure the well-being of the harmed party, and the harm doer's compliance with the agreement they formed with the harmed party, helps to ensure that the RJ process is effective in responding to sexual harm.

The results of this study indicate that maintaining the privacy of students who have disclosed sexual harm should be a primary consideration at the third level of RJ intervention. For example, students who have experienced sexual harm may be uncomfortable with the idea of involving their parents in resolving the issue. In some cases, it might just be two students and one mediator participating in the RJ process. In situations where accusations of sexual harm are public knowledge within a school,

and/or there are multiple people who have a stake in the situation, RJ circles may be quite large, even at the third level of intervention.

These circles may involve parents, guardians, friends, and supporters of the harmed party and of the accused, the principal, and/or school counsellor, etc. Scenario five is an example of this type of situation. In scenario five, Chris has been away from school, but the police are not pursuing criminal charges against him, so he will be returning to the school. Sahara and Chris's friend group are divided on whether Sahara's accusations of sexual assault were warranted because Chris's behavior had become normalized within their peer group. From his perspective, and that of his friends who were supporting him, he was only doing 'what everyone else did' when intoxicated, and he does not understand why he was singled out and punished for his behavior.

According to socio-moral research, schools that respond to harmful behaviors with punitive punishments deprive students of the opportunity to receive supportive feedback that allows them to learn from their behavior (Dahl, 2018). In response to scenario five, involving the friends of Chris and Sahara in the RJ circle would allow the group to receive adult guidance in working through the issue. Ideally, this would facilitate a general understanding within the group that balances notions of sex positivity, with the need to identify and communicate about personal boundaries. These understandings could then be used to inform future sexual interactions between peers.

Ideally, implementing restorative practices at the first and second levels would create environments where students feel comfortable discussing issues pertaining to social-sexual development and disclosing sexual harm to staff members without fear of social repercussions such as gossip and bullying. This would allow schools to support students in learning from past behaviors leading to sexual harm. In this study, participant responses indicated a need for youth who cause sexual harm to understand the effects of their actions so that future harm can be avoided. A desire for adult guidance around sexual behaviors, personal rights, and boundaries, was also emphasized. These themes point to a need for restorative interventions in schools, and for these to be informed by research on socio-moral development (Wainryb & Pareja Conto, 2022).

## 5.3. Utilizing Social Domain Theory to Address Peer-to-Peer Sexual Harm

From a social domain theory perspective (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021), individual adolescent reasoning about sexual harm draws on adolescents' moral, personal, and/or conventional understandings to inform behavior in situations involving intimacy and sexual behavior. Research indicates that most young people would view sexual harm as wrong, and retributive and/or punitive responses to sexual harm as less moral than responses which seek to remedy the harm that occurred (Dahl, 2016). According to social domain theory, in the early high school grades, a new appreciation for social convention usually begins to develop (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021; Turiel, 1983). In previous generations, this may have increased the likelihood that adolescents in the early high school grades would abstain from sexual activity. However, in recent decades the influence of religion has decreased, and media influences, such as online pornography, have become a primary source of information guiding the development of adolescent sexuality (Robb & Mann, 2023). In many cases, the decreasing influence of religious convention would support positive socio-moral development in youth. Religion often promotes traditional gender roles, for example, and often forbids same-sex relationships. Without these types of restrictions, youth have more freedom to openly explore and express their identities. At the same time, the absence of conventions guiding sexual behavior may leave young people without any obvious means of critiquing the messages portrayed in the online content which is routinely sought out and viewed as a means of learning about sex.

The early-to-middle high school years is a time when young people often start experimenting with dating and sexual behaviors. According to social domain theory, this is also a time which is often characterized by a transition in the development of social moral reasoning (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). During this transition, younger adolescents are likely to experience moral ambiguity in reasoning about new and complex situations that have the potential to cause sexual harm. This kind of reasoning has been described as 'multidimensional uncontrolled' (Nucci, Turiel, & Roded, 2017). In new and complex situations that have the potential to cause sexual harm, a young person who is attempting to make sense of competing domain considerations may be more likely to exhibit behavior that appears to disregard sexual harm. This may appear as a lack of regard for the impact of sexual harm and may be especially apparent when a young

person has limited, or no, experience to draw upon, and has limited information about sex. For example, a young person who has no prior sexual experience other than viewing pornography, and who also lacks knowledge about female anatomy, may prioritize their own desires in a sexual situation with a female, without understanding the socio-moral repercussions of their actions. From a social domain theory perspective, this apparent prioritization of social-conventional peer "norms" and/or personal interest over concerns about harm and welfare, is likely to be the result of a lack of experience, rather than an intent to harm. This is exemplified in scenario one where Rebecca feels that she was coerced by Liam into filming their sexual activity. In this situation, Liam did not understand what he did wrong, as his actions did not fit the legal definition of rape and fit easily within the realm of peer norms at his school. In these types of situations, RJ can act as a means of educating young people about the importance of perspective taking while navigating consent during intimate encounters. Preferably, youth would be provided opportunities to practice reasoning about the potential effects of different behaviors in intimate situations before sexual harm occurs.

The analysis of situational elements in the previous section illustrates the contextual elements depicted in scenarios, in relation to response choice. Another way to view these response choice results is to look at the level of agreement in justifications/reasoning between participants. While the forced-choice (three justifications per response) format of the survey may have contributed to justification/reasoning that was more spread out across the 16 justification/reasoning options, there is more cohesion within some scenarios compared to others. For example, scenario one contained the highest level of agreement in justifications/reasoning between participants, scenario four contained the lowest level of agreement, and other scenarios contained a moderate level of agreement. When the relative levels of cohesion in justifications/reasoning between scenarios are compared to the relative moral complexity of each scenario, there is more agreement about scenarios with less morally complex themes, and less agreement about scenarios depicting more complex themes.

As mentioned previously, adolescents in the early high school grades have usually developed an understanding of equity versus fairness (Damon, 1977). As they begin to experiment with intimate relationships, they bring understandings about equity and fairness into these new contexts. These basic types of socio-moral understandings are reflected in student responses to scenario one, which begins with an accusation of

sexual assault, but in the end portrays two young people whose feelings were hurt in different ways after a breakup. Themes from written answers to scenario one include mutuality/fairness/responsibility, clarity, understanding/learning, and resolution through dialogue. For example, one student wrote: "Rebecca and Liam should communicate to each other or to RJ people before any punitive responses take place, they both did something wrong and were also harmed." Other quotes communicate the idea that both Rebecca and Liam were equally wrong and lacked understanding of each other's perspective: "I think in this case specifically, the restorative approach is best because both parties are being harmed. Liam does not know what he did wrong, and Rebecca did not understand how it also affected Liam."

While the less complex themes depicted in scenario one, such as fairness and mutual harm elicited the most agreement in justifications/reasoning between participants, scenarios with more complex themes elicited less agreement between participant justifications/reasoning. Scenario four elicited the least agreement in participant justifications/reasoning, and contained the most complex sexual harm themes, such as power imbalance, a significant age difference within a relationship, and a lack of clarity around consent. This lack of agreement was also observed in participants' quotes which demonstrated diverse reasoning about the situation depicted in scenario four. For example, the following quote illustrates a lack of coordination of multiple domain considerations: "Though the grade 12's a creep, the 8th grader is also at fault, she was not forced into doing those things but did it anyways for clout". The student labels Aaron as a 'creep' which may reflect youth dating conventions. However, this participant does not identify the power differential at play in the relationship, and how this might have related to the harm that occurred, and/or bear on Shaelynn's decision making. Instead, they interpret Shaelynn's actions as an attempt to construct her personal image and conclude that Shaelynn was equally at fault in this situation, because sending the pictures was her personal choice.

Another participant quote from scenario four frames the situation in terms of Shealynn's personal health and wellbeing, but does not identify Aaron's actions as necessarily harmful, or wrong: "I think that if what Aaron did was true, they should not be together anyway, and it would probably help her health if they were not." Although this student shows concern for Shaelynn's person health and wellbeing, they do not connect this to any wider socio-cultural understandings that might inform reasoning in this

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situation, such as an understanding of the influence that older students might have over younger ones, or a need for the school to educate younger students about the risks of sharing intimate images. The emphasis these participants placed on personal domain considerations is, according to social domain theory, more a reflection of a lack of strategic coordination of moral and non-moral factors, than a lack of moral character or concern for others (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). Such age-related trends do not mean, however, that socio-moral understandings about sexual harm cannot develop in younger students. From a critical educational psychology, or a transformative RJ perspective, these responses may also reflect a lack of understanding about power structures and their relationship to experiences of marginalization in some groups. Ideally, understanding situations that have the potential to lead to experiences of sexual harm, would be facilitated by socio-moral educational interventions. Facilitating these understandings before young people enter situations that have the potential to be sexually harmful would likely reduce the risk that students experience or cause sexual harm.

Participant quotes from scenario one show that most students did not have difficulty identifying and integrating moral domain considerations into their reasoning about the harm that occurred in the situation that was portrayed. Participant quotes from scenario four show that students had more difficulty identifying and integrating moral domain considerations into their reasoning about the increased moral complexity of the harm that was depicted. The previous participant quotes show that some participants incorporated only one or two domain considerations into their reasoning about scenario four. The following response, shows how one student was able to identify the complexity of the harm that occurred, and integrate moral, personal, and conventional domain considerations into their reasoning about the situation: "Aaron should be made to realize that his actions have very real consequences and can drastically affect the lives of others [*moral*], Shealynn should definitely talk to someone about consent and setting boundaries in relationships [*personal*] and Aaron should be punished for taking advantage of someone much younger than him who can be easily influenced" [*conventional*]. The range of complexity between the three previous quotes illustrates the potential for development of socio-moral reasoning in the high school years. As students mature, there is the potential for decision-making to become more systematic and informed by reasoning that is described as 'multidimensional coordinated" (Nucci & Ilten-

Gee, 202; Nucci; Turiel, & Roded, 2017). In situations involving sexual harm, this would entail an ability to draw upon moral, personal, and conventional considerations to inform action which aligns with an individual's personal health and values, avoids causing harm, and either conforms to existing laws and social conventions, or critically evaluates their function.

In the early high school years, young people tend to become less preoccupied with the personal domain considerations of privacy, personal choice, and autonomy, but these considerations continue to be essential to maintaining a sense of self. In the upper high school years, adolescents ideally begin to develop a core sense of self that becomes less fragile. During this phase, for example, gender identity and sexuality would become less about outward presentation and style, and more integrated with an internal sense of self. In the upper high school years, this sense of self develops further as youth attempt to assess the inner 'core' of who they are in relation to others, and in relation to the norms of society (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). In this study, the prevalence of themes related to protecting the privacy of students who have experienced sexual harm reflects a need to protect the developing sense of self during this period. Participant responses illustrate that disclosure of sexual harm is associated with privacy invasion, gossip, and social exclusion. In high school years, the threat this poses to the development and/or maintenance of the self's inner core may outweigh the benefits of disclosure. For some students in this study, a punitive response was associated with a lack of privacy and a large potential for gossip and social exclusion, while a restorative response meant that the incident would be dealt with discreetly. Other students felt that the RJ process could infringe on student privacy and could lead to negative attention from peers towards the person who was harmed, or who caused harm.

Participant written responses from the school climate section of the survey imply that young people who have experienced sexual harm weigh the likelihood that the harm will be adequately addressed by school staff, with the likelihood that their privacy and social reputation will be disrupted. In instances involving sexual harm where there is ambiguity surrounding the outcome of the disclosure, youth often appear to prioritize the personal domain consideration of privacy and protection of their social image, over attempting to resolve the harm that has occurred. Ideally, RJ sexual harm interventions should be implemented in ways that protect students' privacy, while also addressing the harm that occurred.

For less experienced youth, the identification of harm can be facilitated by social convention. For example, in response to scenario five, one student simply commented: "Rape is inexcusable" As this student points out, sexual assault is both extremely harmful and illegal. However, the situation portrayed in scenario five is complicated by the consumption of alcohol, misunderstandings about consent, and the distribution of a video. In these types of situations, the application of social convention becomes more difficult, and moral ambiguity may cause a youth to prioritize personal domain considerations. For example, one student response implies that the distribution of the video portraying the sexual activity that occurred in scenario five may have influenced Sahara's accusation of sexual harm: "Why should Chris get punished it sounds like an excuse by Sahara to cheat."

While most youth would likely identify obvious and/or illegal sexual acts as harmful, identifying and predicting sexual harm that is less obvious and/or complicated by digital elements may be difficult for youth who lack experience and/or knowledge to draw upon. In these complex situations, inexperienced youth are less likely to understand how sexual harm can occur independently of the intentions or motivations of the people involved. As this quote demonstrates, framing the issue in terms of personal domain motivations is unlikely to be productive. However, relying on convention may fail to address the harm that occurred. The following student quote points out: "You can't consent under the influence, and if Chris wasn't as intoxicated, then that is quite illegal." However, the lack of clarity around the events that occurred in this scenario meant that criminal charges were dropped.

While promoting student understanding about consent is essential to the prevention of peer-to-peer sexual harm, it does not address the issue in its entirety. A fourth student quote from scenario five demonstrates reasoning which incorporates moral, personal, and conventional domain considerations, and perhaps some personal experience into a balanced response to the situation: "What Chris did is very severe [*moral*], and the fact that he thinks what he did is normal because it happens quite often is concerning [*peer convention/moral*]. I think it's important to hear both his and Sahara's sides to understand what she feels [*personal*] and how wrong it is. Knowing what he did wrong, I think he needs to be punished accordingly, even after the week of suspension because that is unacceptable [*conventional*]."

As young people mature through the upper high school grades, they tend to move away from the idea that conventions are simply the dictates of authority (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021), they also become more equipped to view experiences of harm as opportunities for learning (Recchia et al., 2022). From a social domain theory perspective, older high school youth are more able than younger youth to understand that both the societal and peer conventions governing sexual behaviors are simply a collection of norms that can either be accepted or discarded according to the personal values of the individual, or the situation. This understanding allows older youth to critically evaluate whether conventions align with the personal values they have acquired and the new experiences they have.

As such, it is likely that older youth can more readily critique social conventions that have the potential to create sexual harm, and to critique the social systems as well as the cultural assumptions which inform them (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). For example, youth in the younger high school grades may be more likely to accept harmful gender stereotypes portrayed in pornography as 'normal' because all their friends are watching it. Older youth may be more likely to evaluate the potential for harm according to their own values and would likely be more able to understand how the gender stereotypes, for example, that are depicted in pornography are potentially harmful because of the influence on sexual behaviors they can have. For this reason, older youth may also be able to 'scaffold' socio-moral understandings about sexual harm among younger youth. At the same time, older and/or more experienced youth are likely able to contribute to the development of social conventions governing sexual behavior that prevent sexual harm and promote socio-moral understandings regarding sexual behaviors amongst other youth.

As mentioned in the literature review, research suggests that how gender is experienced within a given society/context can affect the way that issues are framed by different genders. When men have more rights than women, they tend to view their role in family decision-making as a matter of personal choice, while women tend to reason about these decisions in moral domain terms that highlight a lack of fairness (Turiel, 2002). Although differences in experiences, roles, and rights between genders may be less stark in some societies and contexts, these findings suggest that young people may reason differently about situations which have the potential to cause sexual harm. As mentioned previously, underage viewing of pornographic content has the potential to

lead to behaviors that are influenced by the gender stereotypes which are often depicted in free online sexual content. For young males with no prior experience, the depiction of women as passive objects, for example, may re-enforce a tendency in younger youth to prioritize personal domain considerations in morally complex situations. Meanwhile, female youth who are influenced by the same content, may be more likely to reason about the depiction of the female sexual roles, according to the moral domain concern of unfairness, especially if their sexual experiences reflect what they are viewing online. BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ youth may also be more likely to draw on the moral domain concern of unfairness if/when their sexual experiences are influenced by negative stereotypes depicted in sexual online content.

According to Seider et al. (2019), the development of understandings about racial discrimination, prejudice, and other forms of systemic injustice in adolescence, is subject to prior experience and can be inhibited by unexamined assumptions born out of relative positions of privilege. Meanwhile, West (2019) has found that understandings about prejudice and discrimination develop at an earlier age in youth who experience more identity-related micro-aggression (West, 2019). The research findings on socio-moral development that have been discussed in this section suggest that older youth may be able to 'scaffold' socio-moral understandings about sexual harm among younger youth. At the same time, youth who have previous experience with sexual harm and/or identity-related oppression or micro-aggression may be more prepared to identify and reason in more complex and morally responsible ways than other youth about situations which have the potential to cause sexual harm. In schools, older youth, more experienced youth, and youth who have developed understandings about identity-based oppression may therefore be able to make unique contributions to the development of social conventions and/or rules governing sexual behavior in schools.

## 5.4. Restorative Justice, Socio-Moral Development, and Peer-to-Peer Sexual Harm

While research on socio-moral development has not examined understandings of sexual harm specifically, research from a social domain theory perspective demonstrates that young people want to avoid harming others, and reason that it is wrong to do so (Wainryb & Pareja Conto, 2022). Research shows that this reasoning also informs views about responding to harm. Young people tend to view retributive

responses to harm as undesirable, and to prefer restorative over punitive measures in addressing moral wrongdoing (Wainryb & Pareja Conto, 2022). Results from this study support the findings of Wainryb and Pareja Conto (2022). Across all scenarios in the current study, the response preferred most often by participants was a mix of restorative and punitive responses. This was followed closely by a preference for the restorative approach. Meanwhile, the reasoning used to justify participants' choice of response was primarily moral/restorative.

In accordance with the findings of previous socio-moral development research (Wainryb & Pareja Conto, 2022), results of the current study align with research which shows that forgiveness is a complex process in adolescence (Wainryb et al., 2020). Forgiveness of peers, or even the ability to simply 'move on' from sexual harm, was not shown to be facilitated by simple apologies, especially when the apologies were superficial, or made only to please school staff. In accordance with the findings of Banerjee and colleagues (2010), youth in the current study describe a need for harm doers to explain their actions, and demonstrate understanding of the harm that occurred. Like the participants in the study by Banerjee et al. (2010), young people in the current study describe weighing the motivations of the harm doer to inform their responses to harm, and harm that was intentional was judged more severely.

Youth in this study expressed through their justification choices and written response data that they wanted to be sure that the person who harmed them understood why their actions were harmful and that they planned to change their behavior in the future. These results indicate that restorative measures which facilitate in-depth understanding on the part of the harm doer of the nature and extent of the harm that was caused will be most effective for resolving issues involving sexual harm. For some youth, this type of understanding was discussed as leading towards closure because of its potential to provide emotional validation and/or to restore social harmony amongst peers. For others, this ensured the prevention of further harm. Either way, youth perceived that a deeper understanding of the effects of the harm that was caused would improve the behavior of the youth who caused the harm.

While punitive punishment refers to consequences meted out by adults, Recchia et al. (2019) use the term "retributive urge" as a desire to retaliate when a young person is harmed by a peer. In the current study, retributive urges may have been reflected in

the punitive response choices of some study participants. However, the main concern communicated by youth respondents in this study was the safety and well-being of the harmed person and other members of the school community. As discussed, punitive responses to sexual harm that do not result in school expulsion appear to pose a threat to school safety due to the retributive urges of the harm doer and/or their friends, after a sexual harm accusation occurs. As study respondents illustrate, retribution for accusations of sexual harm which are denied often takes the form of gossip, social exclusion, and/or bullying.

Whether youth disclosures and accusations of sexual harm are more likely to occur when the youth who caused the harm goes to another school is unknown. It is possible that some youth perceive fewer repercussions for disclosing sexual harm when the peer who harmed them does not go to the same school. It is also unknown whether, and how often, false, or exaggerated accusations of sexual harm are made as acts of retribution. For example, in scenario one, Rebecca's friends start calling Liam a 'rapist' after he hurts her feelings by breaking up with her. In this scenario, it is unclear whether the bullying occurs in response to confusion about the definition of consent and sexual assault, confusion about personal boundaries and rights, retributive urges, or all three. According to Recchia et al. (2019), non-judgmental adult acknowledgment of retributive urges may prevent future acts of retribution because of the emotional validation it provides. In response to the situation depicted in scenario one, this kind of support would ideally be offered before Rebecca engages in RJ. This would give Rebecca a chance to reflect on her feelings and receive adult guidance in clarifying the issue. Clarifying the issue in this way would allow for the RJ circle to be focused on perspective taking and developing a solution that allows both parties to feel good about being at school.

The pervasive theme in participant written responses of a need for sexual harm doers to learn from past behavior suggests that high school students view a lack of understanding as a primary cause of sexually harmful behavior towards peers. This finding aligns with Canadian crime report data (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005), which shows that most youth sex offences occur in relation to peers who are the same age, and that these behaviors usually disappear by young adulthood. In response to sexual harm inflicted by a peer, young people in this study preferred that school staff deal with incidents in ways that facilitated understanding on the part of the person who caused the

harm. However, this tendency for a restorative response was mitigated by contextual elements. While it was originally hypothesized that the depiction of more severe forms of harm within scenarios would elicit more punitive responses on average, contextual factors such as clarity around what happened, and the relationship between the harmed person and harm doer appear to have had more influence on reasoning about the severity of the alleged harm in relation to response choice.

For example, scenario five and scenario one depict similar accusations of sexual assault. They also both involve elements of peer pressure. Despite the serious nature of the alleged sexual harm in these scenarios, neither elicited a preference for a punitive response. Instead, scenario five elicited a mixed response, and participant preferences in response to scenario one were strongly restorative. The situational elements that appear to have differentiated average participant response preference between these scenarios is Sahara's insistence from the beginning that the sexual activity was non-consensual. Although scenario five portrays confusion about what happened exactly due to the consumption of alcohol, Sahara maintains that she did not consent to the sexual activity that occurred. Considering she did not remember what happened, it is also unlikely that she was able to give informed consent at that time. Meanwhile Rebecca describes a situation where she did consent but later regretted the decision. Another differing situational element between these scenarios was that the harm in scenario one was mutual, and the result of a relationship breakup, whereas in scenario five the harm was one-sided. In scenario one, Rebecca felt tricked and manipulated, and Liam was bullied for being an alleged 'rapist.' In scenario five, many of Sahara and Chris's friends supported his side of the story and did not believe Sahara.

In general, scenarios where it was clear that sexual harm had occurred and was intentional elicited a preference for a more punitive versus restorative response in participants. This was the case in scenarios two, three, and four. These were the only scenarios that did not elicit a restorative or mixed/restorative response preference. Although scenario six also depicts clear harm that was caused intentionally, it is unique because Seth takes responsibility for the harm he caused and attempts to explain his actions. This may be why scenario six elicited a mixed/restorative response, rather than a mixed or punitive response.

Another reason for preferring a restorative response offered by a student in their written answer, is that scenario six depicts gender-based bullying. While the definition of sexual harm used in this study was quite broad, this respondent did not feel that gender-based bullying was a form of sexual harm, and therefore felt it was not as serious. While clarity and intention appear to be essential to young people's decision making about responding to sexual harm, occurrences of sexual harm are very often characterized by a lack of clarity about what happened and the intentions of those involved. In these ambiguous situations, it can be difficult to find a way to move forward because punitive measures fail to address the harm that occurred. The results of this study indicate that young people feel that RJ offers a means of resolving sexual harm issues that do not indicate a clear path towards criminal charges.

The situational element that differentiated a punitive response preference from a mixed response preference between scenarios two and three, appeared to be the depiction of a predatory relationship. Both scenarios two and three depict clear instances of sexual harm that were intentional. However, scenario two elicited a mixed response preference, and scenario three was the only scenario where a punitive response was preferred. In scenario three, a power imbalance was depicted between Daniel and Trevor. Trevor, whom Daniel looked up to as an older and more experienced soccer player, used this to manipulate Daniel into allowing him to take pictures of him that he did not willingly consent to.

Like scenario three, scenario four also depicts clear sexual harm that was intentional and portrays a predatory relationship. Scenario four depicts Aaron, as a much older student who is dating Shaelynn, a new grade eight. Aaron uses his influence over Shaelynn to convince her to send him intimate images, which he then shares with friends. Although this scenario is like scenario three, it elicited a mixed, rather than punitive response preference. The major difference between these scenarios, is that Shaelynn is dating the person who has manipulated her. She also wants to maintain a relationship with him and does not want to get him into trouble. While this may not have caused some students to overlook Aaron's actions, others seemed to relate to Shaelynn's desire to maintain the relationship.

This analysis shows how contextual elements within scenarios appear to have influenced participant reasoning about the sexual harm depicted in scenarios. Despite

an overall orientation among participants towards harm resolution that is restorative, and that uses moral domain justifications/reasoning, most participants preferred a punitive response to scenarios that depicted sexual harm, when it was intentional, predatory (involved a power imbalance), and/or lacking in consent. If a punitive response preference can be considered retributive (in that it reflects a desire for retribution against the harm doer in the form of adult punishment), this finding reflects the research of Ball et al. (2021), which shows that retributive acts are viewed as less problematic when they occur in response to aggression that was meaningless or unprovoked, or when the target of the retaliation is considered a 'bully' (Ball et al., 2021). The reasoning of participants of the Ball et al. (2021) study is also reflected in the most common justifications/reasoning used across scenarios where a punitive response was preferred by most participants. These were: "What X student did was illegal or against the rules, they could/should be punished, arrested, suspended" (Cp1), "Other students should know that (X student's) behavior is against the rules" (CAp2), and "(X student) should be suspended or expelled so they don't do this to other students" (Mp2).

Analysis of the situational influences between scenarios shows that restorative responses and reasoning about scenarios were influenced by the depiction of 'grey area' or unclear sexual harm, sexual harm that was mutual or difficult to prove, and of situations where the harmed person wanted to maintain a relationship with the person who harmed them. A need to respond to these types of sexual harm occurrences in ways that truly resolve the issue was reiterated in the most common restorative justifications/reasoning used across scenarios: "Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful and detrimental, even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken" (Mr2), "Talking through the problem could help (X student/s) feel empowered, happier, healthier again" (Pr2), and "Student X should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and community (CSCr).

## 5.5. Implementing RJ informed by Youth Perspectives and Reasoning

The previous section first describes how student perspectives on using RJ in response to sexual harm reflect socio-moral development research findings on youth reasoning about harm, forgiveness, and retribution. The second half of the previous

section shows how youth preferences regarding RJ may be influenced by the context in which the sexual harm occurred. In combination, these findings may be used to inform how, and when, it is best to use RJ in response to sexual harm occurrences in schools. For example, RJ interventions should be implemented in a way that ensures that youth who cause harm acquire in-depth understanding of the effects of their actions through the RJ process, that they demonstrate this understanding through a means agreed upon within the RJ circle, and that they receive adult supervision in following through with this agreement. According to the findings of this study, RJ should be used when students disclose harm to school staff and it is unclear what happened, and/or whether the sexual acts were consensual, when both parties were harmed, when the harm is difficult to prove, and/or when the harmed person is in a relationship with the harm doer, a response that is informed by student perspectives.

When sexual harm occurs in schools, there may be retributive urges (Recchia et al., 2019) on the part of the harmed person and a desire for a restorative response. Retributive urges may materialize as a desire for punitive measures to be taken by the school. Gossip, rumors, and social exclusion may also be used to 'punish' the person who caused the harm. More often, retribution in the form of gossip, rumors, and social exclusion appears to affect the person who discloses sexual harm. Ideally, this would be identified when disclosures of sexual harm are made before RJ commences. As suggested by Recchia et al. (2019) acknowledging these urges in a way that validates any feelings of anger or confusion (without validating retributive actions) would give the youth who is accused of sexual harm a chance to reflect under the guidance of a supportive adult. The validation this provides would ideally mitigate retributive behavior towards the harmed person. This would also offer an opportunity to 'scaffold' youth understanding of their role in the harm that occurred and would be helpful in preparing youth who have caused harm to participate in RJ in a way that is productive and meaningful.

If it is discovered through the RJ process that sexual harm occurred which was intentional and predatory (e.g., involving a power imbalance and/or significant age difference), or that it involved clearly illegal acts, and/or sexual behavior that was lacking in consent, a school suspension may be necessary to separate a student who caused sexual harm from the student who was harmed. Depending on the severity of the harm that occurred, criminal charges may also be warranted. In situations where criminal

charges are pursued unsuccessfully, an RJ circle or circles could facilitate re-integration of the student who caused the harm back into the school community, and would ideally ensure that the harmed student has an acceptable level of closure and feels comfortable attending.

In these situations, involving members of the youth's social circle in the RJ process would be a means of addressing any gossip or bullying connected to the sexual harm incident. In schools that implement a whole school approach to RJ, this process could act to re-affirm or identify a need for revision in collective understandings and agreements about sexual conduct made at the second level of intervention. These previously formed agreements based on student discussions of the topic, would ideally act to scaffold understanding about the harm that occurred, especially if the harm does not break any official school rule or criminal law. As Recchia et al. (2022) point out, participation in RJ requires the person who caused harm to take responsibility for the harm that occurred, regardless of whether their actions were intentional. The findings of socio-moral research may be used to inform RJ practices meant to respond to the developmental needs and capacities of youth. This research also offers insight into developmental differences which may need to be considered if there are youth of different ages, or differing levels of experience, participating in the same RJ circle. However, age-related trends in socio-moral development may not always apply.

For example, even the ability of older high school youth to communicate their perspectives and understand the perspectives of others, to learn from previous behavior, and to understand that sexual harm may be caused accidentally through misunderstandings, may vary widely between individual students due to developmental and/or cognitive differences or disabilities. According to Allnock and Atkinson (2019), female, LGTBQ+, BIPOC, and youth with disabilities are the most likely to experience sexual harm. Meanwhile, male, Indigenous (Jackson, 2015), and youth with developmental and cognitive disabilities (Flannigan et al., 2018), make up a disproportionate percentage of youth involved in the criminal justice system. Considering these inequities in the frequency of adolescent victimization and the criminalization of adolescent behavior, the need for sexual harm interventions in schools which support the development of individual students may be accurately described as both an educational and social justice issue affecting school-aged youth.

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## 5.6. Social Domain Theory-Informed RJ

As discussed previously, socio-moral development theory and research may be used to inform RJ practice to ensure that RJ in schools supports the socio-moral developmental needs of youth who have experienced or caused sexual harm. While socio-moral development theory and research informs RJ according to age-related trends in development (Recchia et al., 2022), social domain theory can inform RJ practices according to specific contexts, while supporting the socio-moral development of individual students. Social domain theory can, for example, inform all three levels of the whole school RJ approach (Morrison, 2012). At the first level of intervention of the whole school approach, social domain theory can be used to guide educational interventions and restorative conversations around general issues pertaining to sexual harm in youth. At this level, social domain theory informed learning interventions could begin by asking students to produce topics pertaining to youth sexuality and/or sexual harm. Topics could also be brought forth by the classroom teacher or workshop facilitator. Alternatively, the teacher could use scenarios depicting common sexual harm issues affecting school-aged youth, or ask youth to write their own scenarios, or build upon existing ones to make them more relevant to the experiences of the participating youth.

Topics could include, for example, privacy matters pertaining to the disclosure of sexual harm in schools, consent issues around sexting, age differences in relationships, or media influences on students' perceptions of gender and sexuality. Ideally, these classes, groups, or workshops would include youth with a diverse range of identities and ages, so that younger and/or less experienced youth can hear the perspectives of those with more, or different experiences relating to sexuality, gender, and harm. General topics pertaining to specific populations such as females, males, younger, or 2SLGTBQ, BIPOC students, etc. could be first addressed within groups or classes consisting of that population of students to allow them space to explore their own perspectives among similar youth, and to make sure they feel comfortable sharing their perspectives with the larger group.

At the first level of the social domain theory informed whole school approach to RJ, students would be asked to draw upon moral domain reasoning by identifying why or how actions within the specific topic or scenario are, or have the potential to be, harmful.

This could be done as a written assignment, and/or a small group discussion leading to a larger discussion that includes the whole group. Here, students would be asked to take the perspective of the person who is affected by this issue, or the person in the scenario. For example, students could be asked to imagine what it is like to be bullied for coming out as gay or transgender, or to have their intimate images shared without their consent.

Next, students could identify personal domain considerations, such as the right of the students to construct their own gender identity, to not be harassed, and the right to privacy. Finally, any rules, laws, or societal conventions surrounding the issue could be identified and critiqued as harmful or positive. At the first level of the social domain theory informed whole school approach to RJ, informational assumptions about gender and sexuality could be addressed by providing students with opportunities to critically evaluate their own assumptions through dialogue in the classroom, and by providing them with information about gender and sexuality that is informed by research. At this level, sexuality and gender could be examined as socio-historical constructions, and gender essentialism could be critiqued. Here students would be encouraged to explore how societal conventions align, or do not align, with these ideas, and/or how they could be changed to address the issue.

At the first level of the social domain theory informed whole school approach to RJ, the language of social domain theory could be used to address contentious issues and to build critical thinking, empathy and perspective-taking skills among students who hold different beliefs and/or come from diverse backgrounds. For example, the sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) curriculum was introduced in Canadian schools as a means of ensuring inclusiveness in schools, reducing bullying, and systematically addressing harmful gender norms and stereotypes about sex and gender (James, 2019). The implementation of the SOGI curriculum is informed by research showing that 2SLGBTQ+ and gender nonconforming youth have increased risks of suicide and difficulty accessing healthcare than other youth. SOGI education in schools has also become a contentious issue due to a perception that it promotes an ideology which could cause youth to experience gender dysphoria and seek transgender medical treatment which may pose health risks (Jones & Kao, 2019).

Using the language of social domain theory, this issue could be addressed in the classroom first, by having students identify the moral domain considerations on both

sides of the argument. For example, a moral domain consideration is the harm that is caused by heteronormative assumptions about gender, and the bullying, prejudice, and increased risk of suicide that is experienced by gender nonconforming young people. On the other side of the argument, the moral domain consideration is the potential harm that could come from giving young people access to life-altering surgeries that can pose health risks. Next, personal domain considerations could be identified, such as the right to express oneself through their choice of clothing, and to choose whom to date.

While most youth would support the right to dress and date whom they please, they may be divided on the moral domain considerations posed by this issue (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). Here the educator could present research findings which illustrate the different 'lenses' through which gender and sexuality may be viewed. For example, students could be encouraged to discuss and evaluate research findings which suggest that gender is a social construction, rather than biologically determined. The research findings that inform policy around transgender health care could also be discussed, such as the steps that must be taken to access transgender health care. Students could also be encouraged to do their own research on the topic and incorporate what they find into the discussion. Students could 'argue' the issue from different perspectives, perhaps using a class presentation format. From here students could be asked to discuss their ideas about gender and sexuality in terms of conventional domain considerations. For example, they could discuss how the moral and personal domain considerations discussed previously align, or do not align, with societal conventions and/or school policy. They might also discuss, for example, how social conventions and policy may affect people in different ways. At the end of these sessions, the group could proceed with a restorative circle where everyone gets a chance to speak about the topic and can share impressions, feelings, perspectives, concerns, or questions about the activities. At this level, students would not be expected to speak about firsthand experiences but may decide to do so.

At the second level of intervention of the social domain theory informed whole school approach to RJ, social domain theory could be used in a comparable manner as the first level, but it would be used to respond to a specific problem or issue affecting the school. For example, if it is identified that the non-consensual sharing of images is occurring frequently at the school, this issue could be addressed at the second level of intervention. At this level, issues that are disclosed privately to school staff, or that come

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up in an RJ circle, could be addressed on a larger level within the school without breaching the confidentiality of the students who disclosed the matter. The second level of intervention offers an opportunity for youth to make suggestions about how to deal with an issue without having to say that it has affected them or how. At this level, encouraging responsive engagement (Laden, 2012) would offer youth the opportunity to understand the issue from different perspectives, and evaluate their own related experiences and assumptions on the issue, while incorporating new information into their understandings.

Addressing an issue at the first level of intervention would allow for a more informed discussion at the second level of intervention. Using the previous example, second level intervention relating to the implementation of the SOGI curriculum at the school level would be informed by the first level intervention, which examined the wider topic of gender and sexuality. At this level, youth discussion would be centered on how the school community has been affected and what should be done about it. For example, protests about the SOGI curriculum, and how this has affected the climate of the school, is an issue that could be discussed at the second level of intervention. Here, agreements, rules, or policies addressing a particular issue could be made with students' input, or the discussions could be led by older students. For example, a second level intervention which addresses the non-consensual sharing of intimate images could involve students developing a set of rules or guidelines to prevent harm from occurring from sharing intimate images. For younger students with little experience with relationships and sexual matters, such guidelines could act as a convention to guide behavior in this regard and could prevent sexual harm from occurring.

At the third level of intervention of the social domain theory informed whole school approach to RJ, RJ circles would be formed in response to a specific sexual harm incident. In this context, social domain theory could be used to facilitate understanding on the part of a young person who has caused harm and the person who was harmed. For example, when the RJ question, "How did this effect you?" is asked of participants, the harmed person might explain that the incident hurt their feelings, but also led to an invasion of their privacy, and hurt their personal image, due to the gossip that occurred about the incident. In regular RJ processes, the harmed person is asked how the harm doer can repair the harm. In social domain theory-informed RJ, the harm doer could also be asked to critically evaluate any social conventions which may have informed their

behavior, and to produce some behavioral conventions to act as guidelines to inform their future actions. Individual students' ability to engage in the third level of social domain theory-informed RJ would be supported by their participation in the first and second level of the whole school approach. Students who have participated in RJ at the third level may also be able to make unique contributions to discussions at the first and second level of intervention, based on this experience. For example, if a student causes or experiences sexual harm despite implementing the guidelines developed with their peers at the second level of intervention, they could use their experience to suggest improvements to these guidelines.

## 5.7. Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited by the time constraints of a master's thesis and the survey design that was used. Gaining ethics approval and access to study sites took almost a year. Once ethics approval and access to classrooms was gained, and data was collected, there was limited time to analyze the significant amount of mixed methods data that was obtained. The survey design required that each multiple-choice justification chosen by participants be identified according to their associated domain of reasoning, which was a time-consuming process. At the same time, further analyses of student written responses would have provided a more in-depth account of student reasoning withing the context of each scenario. If the survey were to be used for future research, a more sophisticated survey design would allow for improved efficiency in the data analysis process. The survey could also be improved by designing it so that analyses of the multiple-choice domain coordination data from individual students could be easily obtained.

In this study, there were six justifications/reasoning options that were selected most often. The justifications/reasoning that were chosen least often were those associated with ignoring the issue. Because justifications/reasoning that were based on the conventions of peer culture were associated with the ignore response in the survey developed for this study, it was impossible to know whether these were chosen infrequently because they were associated with ignoring the issue, or because the justifications did not accurately capture peer convention, or both. In a future study, participant written response, quotes and themes could be used to create wording and content for justification/reasoning choices, including those intended to reflect the

conventions of peer culture. Alternately, interviews or focus groups could be used to create questions and scenarios for a similar survey.

A study involving the implementation of the whole school RJ approach, with the social domain theory interventions described in the previous section, would be another avenue of future research. A more specific study might involve the development of a media literacy intervention that uses domain theory to address stereotypes and assumptions within sexual content on the internet and other types of media influences. This could take the form of the first or second level of intervention of the whole school approach where, for example, ending each class with a restorative circle could give student participants a chance to reflect on what they learned and to share their own perspectives and feelings about the topics that were discussed. This type of intervention could use scenarios to illustrate concepts and could involve students in the creation or modification of scenarios that reflect the issue in ways that are meaningful to them.

The survey that was created for this study was not intended to function as a tool for measuring socio-moral development or reasoning ability as a psychological construct. Because socio-moral reasoning is described by social domain theory as a process which differs between individuals, changes according to development, and that is context specific, it would be inappropriate to attempt to measure socio-moral reasoning or development in this way. At the same time, the results of the current survey show patterns in socio-moral reasoning about sexual harm within the context of BC high schools, such as a less coordinated reasoning among participants in response to scenarios that were morally complex. This variation in reasoning between scenarios suggests that it might be possible to develop and validate a survey tool which uses similar wording to frame responses in terms of different levels of social domain coordination within different contexts.

For example, while attachment style was traditionally measured categorically, the tool developed by Fraley and Shaver (2000) allows attachment security to be visualized on a spectrum where continuous, instead of categorical, scores are plotted on X and Y axes (labs.psychology.illinois.edu). The axes define four quadrants, each of which corresponds to an attachment style. Although attachment is an entirely different process from socio-moral reasoning, there are basic similarities that may allow for these processes to be measured and visualized in a similar way. Like moral development, the

construction of an internal working model of relational attachment is a developmental process that begins in infancy and progresses throughout childhood (and to a lesser degree, throughout adulthood). Like socio-moral development, individual development and experiences within social contexts are thought by socio-psychological attachment theorists to contribute to a process of individual identity construction.

A similar tool could be used to track moral development over time, and between contexts, if a corresponding survey (or surveys) measuring social-moral reasoning as drawing upon separate domains of reasoning were to be developed and validated. Domain coordination survey results could be visualized dimensionally by placing scores for each domain of reasoning on a separate quadrant of the X/Y axis. This would show the degree to which respondents drew upon the three separate domains of reasoning. While highly coordinated responses would be represented by scores in each domain/quadrant lining up in the middle of the X/Y axes, uncoordinated multidomain reasoning would be visualized as scores that are more spread out. Administering this survey to the same individual at two or more points in time could show how social-moral reasoning becomes more or less coordinated over time. Surveys which use similar reasoning/responses to address different issues could be compared visually to show how individual socio-moral reasoning differs between contexts/issues.

Measuring social-moral reasoning in this way could serve several educational purposes. It could be used, for example, to track development in social-moral reasoning before and after an educational intervention is implemented, such as the social domain theory informed whole school approach to RJ that was discussed in the previous section. Measuring socio-moral reasoning in individual students across contexts may also offer insight into contextual influences on reasoning. For example, a student who exhibits 'multidimensional uncontrolled' reasoning in a response to a moral dilemma involving sexual harm may exhibit a more coordinated response to a scenario that involves, for example, their favorite sport. This information could be used to support this student's socio-moral development by drawing comparisons or using metaphors from sport to facilitate understanding in different contexts.

## Conclusion

Peer-to-peer sexual harm is an issue complicated by young peoples' unprecedented access to digital technology and sexual content on the Internet. The aim of this study was to survey high school students' perspectives on using Restorative Justice (RJ) in response to peer-to-peer sexual harm in schools, and to examine the socio-moral reasoning behind these perspectives using social domain theory (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021). Contemporary research on adolescent socio-moral development has identified that children and youth are predisposed to identify actions which harm others as wrong. However, this is mitigated by age-related trends in development and contextual considerations (Recchia, Wainryb, & Pareja Conto, 2022). This study's findings provide additional evidence supporting the use of RJ in schools and initial evidence for considering its use in response to peer-to-peer sexual harm in schools.

In addition, the results of this study show how reasoning about sexual harm may be subject to developmental trends and contextual influences. These findings may be used to inform developmentally appropriate RJ implementation and practice in schools. When combined with a whole school RJ approach, social domain theory offers a means of responding to the needs and reasoning capacities of individual students who have experienced or caused sexual harm. Sexual harm interventions that use RJ and domain theory provide a way to discuss and respond to sexual harm in schools while promoting positive socio-moral development.

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# Appendix A.

# Survey: Restorative Justice as a Response to Sexual Harm

The first part of this survey uses scenarios to illustrate the complexity of real-life situations. They are complicated and there are no right or wrong answers. Please do your best to answer the questions pertaining to all six scenarios in a way that feels right to you. Because this survey is anonymous, your answers cannot be identified or retrieved once you press submit. This means you cannot withdraw from the study if you have already submitted your answers. Your school counsellor will be available during class and afterwards if you wish to speak to them about any thoughts or feelings that come up for you because of the content of the survey.

## Scenario #1

Rebecca and Liam are 17 and 18-year-old grade 12 students at your school who have been dating for a few months. They are half-way through the school year and looking forward to graduating together when Liam breaks up with Rebecca. Rebecca tells a friend that Liam pressured her into making pornographic videos with him. She says she never would have agreed to it if she knew he would break up with her a week later. She explains that she no longer trusts Liam and is worried he might share the videos. She feels that Liam took advantage of her. A rumor spreads and people start excluding Liam from their group chats. At school he is being ignored by his friends and called a "rapist." Liam doesn't understand what he has done wrong, he is worried that no one will ever want to date him again. Liam tells his mom that he wants to do online classes so he can avoid being harassed by his peers. His mother calls the school and asks to speak to the principal.

***What approach do you think the principal should take in dealing with this situation?***

**Choose One:**

1. The Punitive approach
2. The Restorative approach

3. A mix of the Restorative and Punitive approach
4. The issue should be ignored
5. I don't know

## *You chose the punitive approach, why do you think this approach would be best?*

**Please select 3 options.**

- Liam should be suspended or expelled from school to protect Rebecca from further harm.
- What Liam did was illegal, he could be arrested for creating child pornography, or for rape.
- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.
- Rebecca has a right to see that Liam is punished.
- Liam should be suspended or expelled because he is a threat to other students.
- Other students should know that Liam's behavior is against the rules.

## *You chose the Restorative approach, why do you think this approach would be best?*

**Please select 3 options:**

- Responding punitively does not address the underlying issue, which is that someone was harmed.
- Talking through the problem could help both Rebecca and Liam feel empowered,
- happier and healthier again.
- When you harm another person, you are supposed to apologize.
- Sexual harm should be taken seriously because it can be emotionally and physically painful and detrimental, even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- Both Rebecca and Liam should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and community.

***You said the issue should be ignored by adults, why do you think this is best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- This is normal teenage behavior; it can be worked out between Rebecca and Liam.
- This is no one's fault, they were just copying what they saw others do, or saw on internet/TV.
- Participating in Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Rebecca and/or Liam, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- Rebecca and/or Liams participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, they might just apologize just to get out of trouble.
- Adult intervention could make the situation worse because Liam and/or Rebecca could retaliate.
- Rebecca and Liam should be able to make their own choices and deal with the consequences without adults interfering.

***You said a mixed approach should be used, or that you don't know. Why do you think this is best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- Liam and/or Rebecca should be suspended or expelled to protect other students.
- Other students should know that Liam's behavior is against the rules.
- Sexual harm should be taken seriously because it can be emotionally and physically painful and detrimental, even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- This is normal teenage behavior, it can be worked out between Rebecca and Liam
- Talking through the problem could help both Rebecca and Liam feel empowered,
- happier, and healthier again.
-  Both Rebecca and Liam should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning of the community.
- Responding punitively does not address the underlying issue, which is that someone was harmed.
- Rebecca has a right to see that Liam is punished.
- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.

- When you harm another person, you are supposed to apologize
- Rebecca and/or Liams participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, they might just apologize just to get out of trouble.
- Participating in Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Rebecca and/or Liam, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- This is no one's fault, they were just copying what they saw others do, or saw on the tv/internet.
- Adult intervention could make the situation worse as Liam and/or Rebecca could retaliate.
- Rebecca and Liam should be able to make their own choices and deal with the consequences without adults interfering.'
- What Liam did was illegal, he could be arrested for creating child pornography, or for rape.

***Please comment here on any additional thoughts you have about this scenario:***

# Scenario #2

Casey is a 16-year-old at your school who is a bit shy and tends to keep to herself. People are surprised when she shows up to a party at 17-year-old Jake's house. A couple of hours later Jake starts joking around and flirting with Casey. He even grabs her and leans in for a kiss, but Casey pushes him away. The next day Jake and his friends start sending Casey messages on snapchat. At first, they seem to be joking around but their joking turns mean. They critique her clothes, call her a "prude," and say she must be a lesbian. At school they embarrass Casey by making jokes and "flirting" with her in the halls. Casey starts to dread going to school even though she really likes a couple of her teachers. She wonders if she should tell one of these teachers what is going on.

***What approach do you think Casey's teacher should suggest in dealing with this situation?***

***Choose One:***

1. The Punitive approach.
2. The Restorative approach.

3. A mix of the Restorative and Punitive approach.
4. The issue should be ignored.
5. I don't know.

### *You chose the punitive approach, why do you think this approach would be best?*

**Please select 3 options:**

- What Jake and his friends are doing is illegal, they could be charged with sexual harassment.
- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.
- Other students should know that sexual harassment and bullying are against school rules.
- Jake and his friends should be suspended or expelled to protect Casey from further harm.
- Jake and his friends should be suspended or expelled so they don't do this to other students.
- Casey has a right to see that Jake and his friends get punished.

### *You chose the Restorative approach, why do you think this approach would be best?*

**Please select 3 options:**

- Sexual harm should be taken seriously because it can be emotionally and physically painful and detrimental, even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- Jake and his friends should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning of the community.
- Responding punitively does not address the underlying issue, which is that someone was harmed.
- Talking through the problem could help Casey feel empowered, happier, and healthier again.

***You said the issue should be ignored by adults, why do you think this is best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- Participating in Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Casey and/or Jake, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- This is no one's fault, Jake and his friends were just copying what they saw others do or saw on the internet.
- Adult intervention could make the situation worse as Jake and his friends could retaliate. Jake and his friend's participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, they might just apologize just to get out of trouble.
- This is normal teenage behavior, it can be worked out between Casey, Jake, and Jake's friends.
- Casey, Jake, and Jake's friends should be able to make their own choices and deal with the consequences without adults interfering.

**You said a mixed approach should be used, or that you don't know. Why do you think this is best?**

**Please select 3 options:**

- What Jake and his friends are doing is illegal, they could be charged with sexual harassment.
- Talking through the problem will help Casey feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.
- This is no one's fault, Jake and his friends were just copying what they saw others do or saw on the internet.
- Adult intervention could make it worse; Jake and his friends might retaliate against Casey for telling on them.
- Other students should know that sexual harassment and bullying are against school rules.
- Jake and his friends should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning.
- Jakes and his friend's participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, they might apologize just to get out of trouble.

- Jake and his friends should be suspended or expelled so they don't do this to other students.
- Casey has a right to see that Jake and his friends get punished.
- Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their own.
- This is normal teenage behavior, it can be worked out by Casey, Jake, and his friends.
- Jake and his friends should be suspended or expelled to protect Casey from further harm.
- Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Casey and/or Jake, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem, which is that someone was harmed.
- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.

***Please comment here on any additional thoughts you have about this scenario:***

# Scenario #3

Daniel is a 14-year-old grade nine student at your school. At the beginning of the year, he joined the soccer team and became friends with Trevor, an 18-year-old in grade 12. One day after practice, Trevor started taking pictures of Daniel while he was changing his clothes. At first Daniel assumed that Trevor was joking around but a couple of weeks later Daniel had to ask him to stop taking pictures of him. Since then, Trevor has been trying to make Daniel look bad in front of their teammates, and points out every mistake that he makes, which implies that he is a bad player. Daniel doesn't want to give Trevor any more reason to exclude him from the team but he is concerned about the pictures

Trevor took and is wondering if he may have been posting them online somewhere. He is thinking about talking to the soccer coach.

### *What approach do you think Daniel's soccer coach should suggest in dealing with this situation?*

**Choose One:**

- The Punitive approach.
- The Restorative approach.
- A mix of the Restorative and Punitive approach.
- The issue should be ignored.
- I don't know.

### *You chose the punitive approach, why do you think this approach would be best?*

**Please select 3 options:**

- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.
- Trevor should be suspended or expelled to protect Daniel from further harm.
- Other students should know that what Trevor was doing is against school rules.
- Trevor should be suspended or expelled so he doesn't do this to other students.
- What Trevor was doing was illegal, he could be charged with sexual harassment or for making child pornography.
- Daniel has a right to see that Trevor gets punished.

### *You chose the Restorative approach, why do you think this approach would be best?*

**Please select 3 options:**

- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem which is that someone was harmed.
- Trevor should be given a chance to learn from his actions and improve his behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning.

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- Talking through the problem (or whatever the restorative action is) will help Daniel feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.

### *You said the issue should be ignored by adults, why do you think this is best?*

**Please select 3 options:**

- This is no one's fault, Trevor was just copying what he saw other kids doing or saw on the internet.
- Participating in Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Daniel and/or Trevor, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- Adult intervention could make the situation worse for Daniel as Trevor could retaliate.
- Trevor's participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, he might just apologize just to get out of trouble.
- This is normal teenage behavior, it can be worked out between Casey, Trevor, and Daniel.
- Trevor and Daniel should be able to make their own choices and deal with the consequences without adults interfering.

### *You said a mixed approach should be used, or that you don't know. Why do you think this is best?*

**Please select 3 options:**

- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their own.
- Trevor should be suspended or expelled so he doesn't do this to other students.
- Adult intervention could make it worse; Trevor might retaliate against Daniel for telling on him.
- This is no one's fault, Trevor was just copying what he saw others do, or saw on the internet.
- Other students should know that what Trevor was doing is against school rules.
- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem which is that someone was harmed.

- Trevor should be given a chance to learn from his actions and improve his behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning.
- Talking through the problem will help Daniel feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.
- Trevor should be suspended or expelled to protect Daniel from further harm.
- Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Daniel and/or Trevor, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- What Trevor was doing was illegal, he could be charged with sexual harassment or for
- making child pornography.
- Daniel has a right to see that Trevor gets punished.
- This is normal teenage behavior; it can be worked out by Daniel and Trevor.
- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.
- Trevor's participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, he might apologize just to get out of trouble.

***Please comment here on any additional thoughts you have about this scenario:***

# Scenario #4

13-year-old Shealyn is a new grade eight student at your school. Recently she started dating a 17-year-old grade 12 student named Aaron, who has dated a lot of girls over the last few years. Aaron has been asking Shealyn to take intimate pictures of herself on her phone and send them to him. Shealyn agrees because she feels pressured knowing that other girls do it all the time. Later that week Shealyn hears that Aaron has shown the pictures to some of his friends. She is not sure if it is true, but she doesn't feel good about it. She doesn't know if she should confront Aaron because it seems like this happens all the time and is maybe just normal. She is thinking about talking to the school counsellor, but she doesn't want Aaron to break up with her.

### What approach do you think the school principal should take in dealing with this situation?

**Choose One:**

1. The Punitive approach'
2. The Restorative approach.
3. A mix of both the restorative and punitive approach.
4. The issue should be ignored.
5. I don't know.

### You chose the punitive approach, why do you think this approach would be best?

**Please select 3 options:**

- Aaron should be suspended or expelled to protect Shaelyn from further harm.
- Aaron should be suspended or expelled so he doesn't do this to other students.
- It is only fair that anyone who causes harm gets punished.
- What Aaron did was illegal, he could be charged with making child pornography, or statutory rape.
- Other students should know that what Aaron was doing is against school rules.
- Shaelyn has a right to see that Aaron gets punished.

### You chose the Restorative approach, why do you think this approach would be best?

**Please select 3 options:**

- Talking through the problem (or whatever the restorative action is) will help Shaelyn feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.
- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- Aaron should be given a chance to learn from his actions and improve his behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning.
- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem which is that someone was harmed.

***You said the issue should be ignored by adults, why do you think this is best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their own.

- Participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, Aaron might apologize just to get out of trouble.

- Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Shaelyn and/or Aaron, they have a right to keep their lives private.

- This is no one's fault, Aaron was just copying what he saw others do, or saw on tv/internet.

- This is normal teenage behavior; it can be worked out by Aaron and Shaelyn.

- Adult intervention could make it worse; Aaron might retaliate against the Shaelynn for telling on him.

***You said a mixed approach should be used, or that you don't know. Why do you think this is best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem which is that someone was harmed.

- Aaron should be suspended or expelled so he doesn't do this to other students.

- Aaron should be suspended or expelled to protect Shaelyn from further harm.

- Aaron's participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, he might apologize just to get out of trouble.

- Adult intervention could make it worse; Aaron might retaliate against Shaelyn for telling on him.

- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.

- This is normal teenage behavior, it can be worked out by Shaelyn and Aaron

- Talking through the problem will help Shaelyn feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.

- Other students should know that what Aaron was doing is against school rules.

- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.

- This is no one's fault, Aaron was just copying what he saw others do, or saw on the internet.
- Aaron should be given a chance to learn from his actions and improve his behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning.
- Shaelyn has a right to see that Aaron gets punished.
- Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their own.
- What Aaron was doing was illegal, he could be charged with making child pornography,
-  or statutory rape.
- Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Shaelyn and/or Aaron, they have a right to keep their lives private.

***Please comment here on any additional thoughts you have about this scenario:***

# Scenario #5

Chris is a seventeen-year-old grade 12 student at your school, last weekend he was invited to Jaden's house with a friend named Kyle, and Jaden's girlfriend Sahara. Jaden's parents were away, and they ended up smoking marijuana and drinking quite a bit of alcohol. The next day an explicit video of Chris and Sahara gets circulated at school. Sahara tells the school counsellor that she doesn't remember much about the night and feels that Chris assaulted her. Chris says he doesn't understand why he has been singled out as this type of thing happens all the time at Jaden's house. Jaden and Kyle say they didn't realize that Sahara did not consent to her interactions with Chris. The teenagers' wider group of friends are divided on whether they think Chris did anything wrong. The police investigate, but they do not have enough evidence to press sexual assault charges. In one week, Chris's suspension will be over, and he will return to school. The principal needs to decide how to respond to the situation at the school.

***What approach do you think the principal should take in dealing with this situation?***

**Choose One:**

6. The Punitive approach.

7. The Restorative approach.

8. A mix of both the restorative and punitive approach.

9. The issue should be ignored.

10. I don't know.

## You chose the punitive approach, why do you think this approach would be best?

**Please select 3 options:**

- Other students should know that what Chris did is against school rules.

- Sahara has a right to see that Chris gets punished.

- It is only fair that anyone who causes harm gets punished.

- Chris should be suspended or expelled to protect Sahara from further harm.

- Chris should be suspended or expelled so he doesn't do this to other students.

- What Chris did was illegal, he could be charged with making child pornography, or
  rape.

## You chose the Restorative approach, why do you think this approach would be best?

**Please select 3 options:**

- Talking through the problem (or whatever the restorative action is) will help Sahara
  feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.

- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed
  even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.

- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem
  which is that someone was harmed.

- Aaron should be given a chance to learn from his actions and improve his behavior,
  this will improve the school culture and functioning.

## You said the issue should be ignored by adults, why do you think this is best?

**Please select 3 options:**

- Chris's participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, he might apologize
  just to get out of trouble.

- Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Sahara and/or Chris, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their own.
- This is no one's fault, Chris was just copying what he saw others do, or saw on the internet.
- This is normal teenage behavior; it can be worked out by Chris and Sahara.
- Adult intervention could make it worse; Chris might retaliate against the Sahara for telling on him.

### *You said a mixed approach should be used, or that you don't know. Why do you think this is best?*

**Please select 3 options:**

- Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Sahara and/or Chris, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- This is no one's fault, Chris was just copying what he saw others do, or saw on the internet.
- Talking through the problem will help the Sahara feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.
- Other students should know that what Chris did is against school rules.
- Chris should be suspended or expelled to protect Sahara from further harm.
- What Chris did was illegal, he could be charged with making child pornography, or rape.
- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.
- This is normal teenage behavior; it can be worked out between Chris and Sahara.
- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- Chris's participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, he might apologize just to get out of trouble.
- Sahara has a right to see that Chris gets punished.
- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem which is that someone was harmed.
- Chris should be suspended or expelled so he doesn't do this to other students.

- Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their own.
- Adult intervention could make it worse; Chris might retaliate against Sahara for telling on him.
-  Chris should be given a chance to learn from his actions and improve his behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning.
- 

*Please comment here on any additional thoughts you have about this scenario:*

# Scenario #6

James is a 16-year-old grade 11 student at your school. James has been having a hard time at school because he is being bullied by Seth. Seth gives James a hard time about his non-binary appearance and mannerisms, he purposely bumps into him in the halls and calls him a "fag" then acts like it was joke. Last week James was about to walk into the bathroom when Seth came out and blocked the door, stopping James from going in. James finally had enough, and an argument breaks out. A teacher intervenes and James tells her that Seth's behavior is making want to change schools. When the teacher talks Seth, he says his mother has been ill lately and he hasn't been able to attend soccer practice. He admits that he has probably been taking this out on James because He seems to have it easy.

*What approach do you think the teacher should suggest in dealing with this situation?*

**Choose One:**

1. The Punitive approach.
2. The Restorative approach.
3. A mix of both the restorative and punitive approach.
4. The issue should be ignored.
5. I don't know.

***You chose the punitive approach, why do you think this approach would be best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- What Seth is doing is illegal, he could be charged with harassment.
- Other students should know that what James is doing is against school rules.
- James should be suspended or expelled to protect Seth from further harm.
- James should be suspended or expelled so he doesn't do this to other students.
- It is only fair that anyone who causes harm gets punished.
- Seth as a right to see that James gets punished.

***You chose the Restorative approach, why do you think this approach would be best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- James should be given a chance to learn from his actions and improve his behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning.
- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.
- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem which is that someone was harmed.
- Talking through the problem will help Seth feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.

***You said the issue should be ignored by adults, why do you think this is best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- Adult intervention could make it worse; James might retaliate against Seth for telling on him.
- This is no one's fault, James as just copying what he saw others do, or saw on the internet.
- James' participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, he might apologize just to get out of trouble.
- This is normal teenage behavior, it can be worked out by James and Seth

- Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their    own.
- Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Seth and/or James, they have a right to keep their lives private.

***You said a mixed approach should be used, or that you don't know. Why do you think this is best?***

**Please select 3 options:**

- Talking through the problem will help Seth feel empowered, healthy, and happy again.
- James should be given a chance to learn from his actions and improve his behavior, this will improve the school culture and functioning.
- This is no one's fault, James was just copying what he saw others do, or saw on the internet.
- Adult intervention could make it worse; James might retaliate against Seth for telling on him.
- James' participation in restorative justice may not be genuine, he might apologize just to get out of trouble.
- Seth has a right to see that James gets punished.
- What Seth is doing is illegal, he could be charged with harassment.
- James should be suspended or expelled so he doesn't do this to other students.
- The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem which is that someone was harmed.
- It is only fair that anyone who does something bad gets punished.
- Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their own.
- Restorative Justice will be embarrassing for Seth and/or James, they have a right to keep their lives private.
- James should be suspended or expelled to protect Seth from further harm.
- Other students should know that what James has been doing is against school rules.
- This is normal teenage behavior; it can be worked out between James and Seth.
- Sexual harm can be emotionally and physically painful, it needs to be addressed even when there is no specific law or rule that has been broken.

*Please comment here on any additional thoughts you have about this scenario:*

## School Climate and Response to Sexual Harm in Schools Survey Part 2: Your School

The second part of this survey asks you questions about your school. Please respond in a way that reflects your experience of your school. There are no right or wrong answers. Remember this survey is anonymous. Your school counsellor will be available during class and afterwards if you wish to speak to them about any thoughts or feelings that come up for you because of the content of the survey.

*Do you think there are students who experience sexual harm at your school?*

Yes

No

*If you or someone you knew at school experienced sexual harm, how likely is it that you would tell a school staff member such as a counsellor or teacher?*

1. Very likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Not very likely
4. Very unlikely

*Why would you or someone you know want to tell a school staff member?*

**Choose as many answers as you think apply:**

- So it doesn't happen again.
- To get support.
- So that the person is punished.
- So, it doesn't happen to anyone else.
- So the person who caused harm knows it is wrong.

*Why might you be reluctant to discuss the situation with a school staff person?*

**Choose as many answers as you think apply:**

- I/they wouldn't want to get in trouble.
- They might invade my/their privacy.
- I/they wouldn't want them to involve parents.
- It could make the situation worse.
- I/they might not be believed or might not get the right support.

*How does the staff at your school usually respond if/when they hear about a student's experience of sexual harm?*

- They usually respond punitively.
- They usually respond restoratively.
- They usually ignore the problem.
- They either ignore the problem or respond punitively.
- They either ignore the problem or respond restoratively.
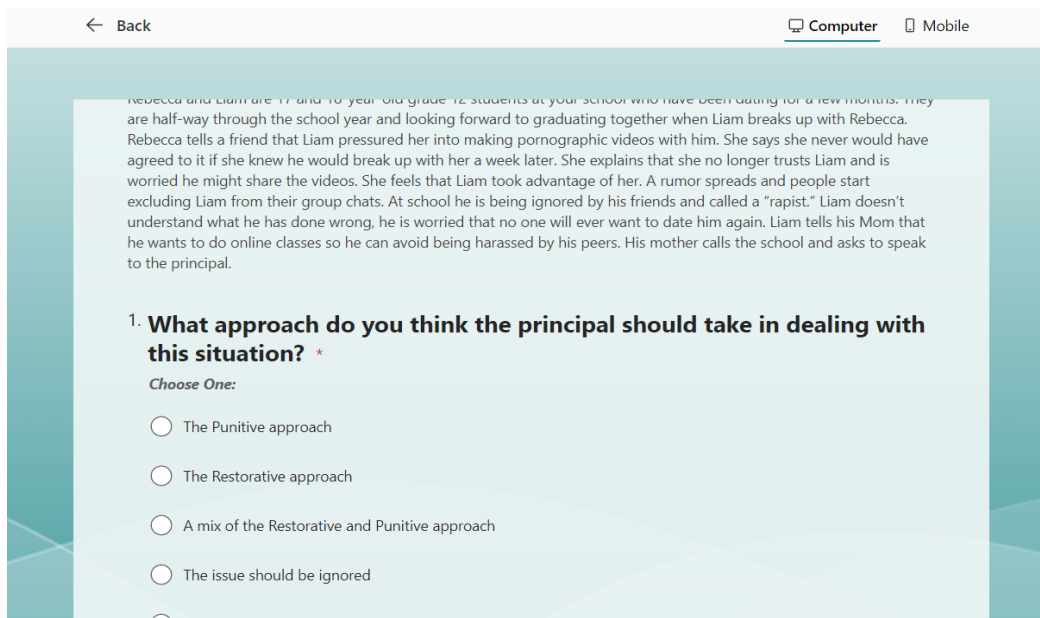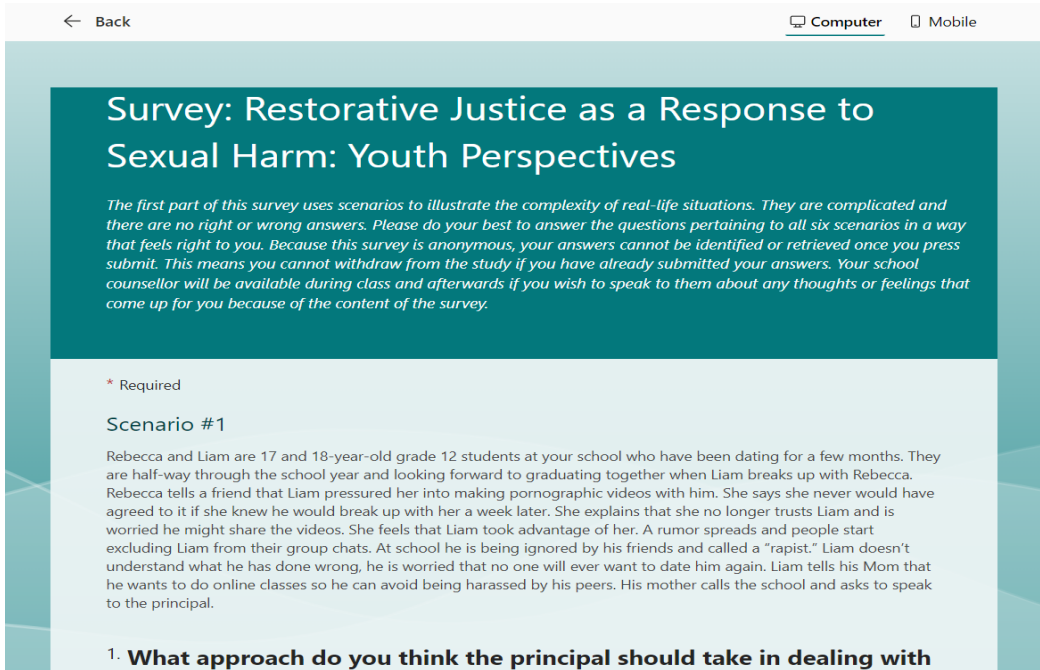- This doesn't happen at my school.

*If you or someone you know from school experienced sexual harm, would you be more likely to tell an adult at your school if you knew they would respond in a way that was restorative, punitive, or both?*

- Restorative
- Punitive
- Both Restorative and Punitive

*Please share any additional thoughts or comments you have about disclosing sexual harm.*

# Appendix B.

# Digital Survey Images

## Survey: Restorative Justice as a Response to Sexual Harm: Youth Perspectives

*The first part of this survey uses scenarios to illustrate the complexity of real-life situations. They are complicated and there are no right or wrong answers. Please do your best to answer the questions pertaining to all six scenarios in a way that feels right to you. Because this survey is anonymous, your answers cannot be identified or retrieved once you press submit. This means you cannot withdraw from the study if you have already submitted your answers. Your school counsellor will be available during class and afterwards if you wish to speak to them about any thoughts or feelings that come up for you because of the content of the survey.*

\* Required

### Scenario #1

Rebecca and Liam are 17 and 18-year-old grade 12 students at your school who have been dating for a few months. They are half-way through the school year and looking forward to graduating together when Liam breaks up with Rebecca. Rebecca tells a friend that Liam pressured her into making pornographic videos with him. She says she never would have agreed to it if she knew he would break up with her a week later. She explains that she no longer trusts Liam and is worried he might share the videos. She feels that Liam took advantage of her. A rumor spreads and people start excluding Liam from their group chats. At school he is being ignored by his friends and called a "rapist." Liam doesn't understand what he has done wrong, he is worried that no one will ever want to date him again. Liam tells his Mom that he wants to do online classes so he can avoid being harassed by his peers. His mother calls the school and asks to speak to the principal.

1. **What approach do you think the principal should take in dealing with**

1. **What approach do you think the principal should take in dealing with this situation?** \*
*Choose One:*

○ The Punitive approach

○ The Restorative approach

○ A mix of the Restorative and Punitive approach

○ The issue should be ignored

○ I don't know

5. **You said a mixed approach should be used, or that you don't know. Why do you think this is best?** *

Please select 3 options.

- ☐ Jake and his friends should be given a chance to learn from their actions and improve their behaviour, this will improve the school culture and functioning
- ☐ Casey has a right to see that Jake and his friends get punished
- ☑ The punitive response or no response does not address the underlying problem which is that someone was harmed
- ☐ This is normal teenage behaviour, it can be worked out by Casey, Jake, and his friends
- ☐ Kids have the right to make their own choices and learn from/deal with the consequences on their own
- ☑ When you harm another person, you are supposed to apologize
- ☐ Talking through the problem will help the Casey feel empowered, healthy, and happy again
- ☐ Jake and his friends should be suspended or expelled so they don't do this to other students
- ☑ What Jake and his friends are doing is illegal, they could be charged with sexual harassment

* Required

# School Climate and Response to Sexual Harm in Schools

**Survey Part 2: Your School**

The second part of this survey asks you questions about your school. Please respond in a way that reflects your experience of your school. There are no right or wrong answers. Remember this survey is anonymous. Your school counsellor will be available during class and afterwards if you wish to speak to them about any thoughts or feelings that come up for you because of the content of the survey.

19. **Do you think there are students who experience sexual harm at your school?** *

○ Yes

○ No

20. **If you or someone you knew at school experienced sexual harm, how likely is it that you would tell a school staff member such as a counsellor or teacher?** *

○ Very likely

○ Somewhat likely

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