

Survivor-Faculty: Making Meaning of Identity and Putting Identity into Action

Sarah Hurtado
University of Denver

Susan Marine
Merrimack College

Casey McCoy-Simmons
University of Denver

Abstract: *In this study, we use the concept of meaning-making, which is a process by which individuals make sense of an experience frequently associated with processing trauma to examine the experiences of those individuals who identify as both sexual violence survivors and faculty members. Our goal was to understand how these individuals make meaning of their survivor identity and how it influences their work as faculty members, specifically as it relates to engaging in actions to address campus sexual violence. We also sought to understand how engaging in this work influences their own process of healing and recovery. We found the way survivor-faculty make meaning of their survivor identity is complex and nuanced and not always aligned with survivor-identity discourse.*

Keywords: *identity, survivor, sexual violence, faculty*

Sarah Hurtado is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Higher Education at the University of Denver. **Susan Marine** is the Vice Provost for Graduate Education at Merrimack College. **Casey McCoy-Simmons** is a graduate assistant in the in the Department of Higher Education at the University of Denver.

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Introduction

Language and perceptions of those who have experienced sexual violence has changed over time, moving from victims to survivors. The idea behind this shift of being a survivor took on a more positive connotation (Dunn, 2005; Naples, 2003)—on the surface, survivors are strong and empowered. Although survivors are likely to experience challenges related to their trauma including feelings of shame and guilt (Herman, 2015; Kennedy & Prock, 2018) as well as mental health concerns (e.g., depression, PTSD; Ahrens et al., 2010), survivors are also viewed as agentic—having reclaimed a piece of themselves to be able to move past the trauma they experienced (Thompson, 2000).

On college campuses some of the most visible survivors are students who have taken up important activist efforts to push their institutions to do better (Lewis Marine, & Kenney, 2018). However, survivors exist throughout higher education institutions including within the faculty. Faculty are an integral part of the campus community, but are frequently expected to separate aspects of their personal identities from the work they do in the name of objectivity and neutrality in their teaching, research, and service (Price et al., 2017). Although all faculty can have an important role in addressing campus sexual violence (Hurtado, 2021; Marine & Lewis, 2020; Sharoni & Klocke, 2019), little attention has been paid to those faculty members who also identify as sexual violence survivors.

We sought to understand how faculty who identify as sexual violence survivors make meaning of their survivor identity and what that means for the work they do as faculty members to address campus sexual violence. In our recruitment, we allowed faculty to personally and broadly define survivor for themselves. Personally, we define survivor as someone who has had any experience with interpersonal (sexual, domestic) violence, either as a target or as a direct observer or witness. We approached this study from the following research questions:

1. How do faculty members make meaning of their identity as a sexual violence survivor?
2. How does survivor identity shape their identity as a faculty member?

Literature Review

In this literature review we first provide an overview of the discourse related to survivor identity. We then shift to thinking about action as a part of healing past harm and trauma. We end with a review of faculty involvement in efforts to address campus sexual violence.

Survivor, Surviving, and Survivorhood

An intentional feminist movement to reframe perceptions of those who experience sexual violence began to use the term survivor as an alternative to victim (Leisenring, 2006). Although many are familiar with “survivor,” many scholars also use surviving and survivorhood. Barry (1979) was one of the first to theorize survivor identity stating, “surviving is the other side of being a victim. It involves will, action, initiative on the victim’s part” (p. 39). The idea of survivorhood is less stigmatized than victimhood due to perceptions of survivors as strong, empowered, and more agentic (Dunn, 2005). Further, Naples (2003) articulated that survivors are those who have consciously “redefined their relationship to the experience from one of victim” (p. 167). This conscious decision to reframe their own identity to survivor was in an effort to remove themselves from the weakness associated with victim (Dunn, 2005).

Action as Part of Healing and Recovery

An important part of a survivor’s experience is their healing and recovery process. Staub and Vollhardt (2006) looked at the relationship between altruism and trauma. They argued there are various experiences of healing that lead to altruism born of suffering (ABS). Although individuals experience harm and trauma differently, Staub and Vollhardt (2006) posit that “one’s own past suffering can become a source of intense empathy/sympathy for others in need, and of an increased prosocial orientation, a central aspect of which is a feeling of personal responsibility for others’ welfare” (p. 272). Further, they argued altruism has positive benefits for the survivor, but their primary motivation for altruistic action is helping. Key to Staub and Vollhardt’s (2006) articulation of ABS is the survivor’s experiences that promote this psychological change toward altruism. They name healing, support by others, actions by self, and the guiding role of others as these experiences

(Staub & Vollhardt, 2006). These experiences align with the work of Harvey (1996) on trauma recovery.

Harvey (1996) proposed an ecological model of recovery where an individual's recovery would be heavily influenced by a number of factors including interrelationships with others. Harvey (1996) used a multidimensional understanding of recovery which included: (a) control over recalling (or not) the traumatic experience; (b) the ability to identify emotions related to traumatic memories; (c) the ability to manage those emotions; (d) ability to manage symptoms related to emotions; (e) increase self-worth; (f) healthy attachment to others; (g) engaging in a meaning-making process. We highlight meaning-making in the recovery process, because this process often results in survivors pursuing creative or social action (Harvey, 1996). Harvey (1996) describes meaning-making as a movement from mourning the traumatic event to action that is "life-affirming and self-affirming" (p. 13). Together, the literature in this section demonstrates how harm and trauma can facilitate motivation for action amongst survivors. These actions may or may not directly benefit the survivors, but still contribute to their recovery.

Faculty Involvement in Campus Sexual Violence Work

Undoubtedly, faculty members play an integral role within institutions of higher education—serving as teachers, advisors, mentors, etc. (Hurtado, 2021). Their potential for influence in campus sexual violence prevention and education efforts has yet to be fully uncovered (Hurtado, 2021). Most faculty members' responsibility centers their frequent designation as responsible employees, which requires them to report any disclosures of sexual violence that fall under Title IX (Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). Most formal responsibility for institutional prevention and education efforts has fallen to those in student affairs or specific Title IX roles (Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). However, faculty members have engaged in various forms of activism to eliminate sexual violence including forming feminist-based task forces and groups of interdisciplinary faculty allies (Ricci & Bergeron, 2019) and using data to shape institutional policy and accountability (Atkinson & Standing, 2019). On a broader scale, the cross-institutional coalition, *Faculty Against Rape*, gathers faculty who are personally invested in opposing sexual violence by creating resources and tools for faculty who want to support survivors and be involved in institutional prevention, education, and policy efforts (Sharoni & Klocke, 2019). Faculty are engaging in these efforts across institutions; however,

what this means for those who also identify as survivors themselves has not been fully examined.

Conceptual Framework

Meaning-making is a framework used for both coping with trauma and processing identity (Park & Ai, 2006), which it was appropriate for this study. Early conceptualizations of this concept come from Frankl's (1969) work where meaning is a primary motivation for living and a commitment to living and surviving is necessary for processing trauma. Meaning-making is a process in which an individual comes to a new understanding of a situation (Park & Ai, 2006). This process involves intentional efforts to cope with the traumatic or stressful experience (Park & Ai, 2006; Tennan et al., 2000). This understanding of meaning-making frames this process as a purposeful and conscious one (Park & Ai, 2006). As stated in the literature review, meaning-making is noted as an element of recovery. As part of recovery, meaning-making informs actions among survivors that help them establish more agency in their experiences and identity (Cromer & Smyth, 2010).

As it relates to identity development, meaning-making is viewed as “increasingly complex” structures that are “sets of assumptions that determine how an individual perceives and organizes one’s life experiences” (Abes et al., 2007, p. 4). Reybold (2003) argued that an individual’s worldview shapes who they become as faculty members—more specifically, a meaning-making process informs their faculty identity. In a study on motherhood and faculty identity, Laney et al. (2013) offers evidence that faculty identity is shaped by other social identities. In particular, they point out that identity is shaped by “connectedness,” which in this manuscript we explored the context of survivorhood. This connection to others serves as the “impetus for an expansion and redefinition of their identities” (Laney et al., 2013, p. 21).

We used the concept of meaning-making to better understand the experiences of those who identify as both a survivor and faculty member. Through the lens of meaning-making we focused our analysis on how faculty members defined and spoke about their coming to understand their survivor identity and how this informed their actions as faculty members. We also focused on how their identity and actions related to their feelings of healing and recovery.

Research Design

We utilized a critical paradigm (Martinez-Aleman et al., 2015) and a qualitative interview methodology to examine how survivor-faculty make meaning of their survivor identity and how that contributes to their faculty and advocacy work. This paradigm and methodology emphasize the importance of not simply interpreting the data collected, but to also use this information to advocate for a more just society (Denzin, 2016; Martinez-Aleman et al., 2015). We also acknowledge the unique perspectives of each participant, who carry multiple identities, as they navigate academia. Therefore, this study centers participants' voices as they each share their own experiences and motivators for addressing campus sexual violence.

Participants

Participant criteria included faculty members from any rank, discipline, or higher education institution type who self-identified as a survivor. Recruitment of participants occurred by broadly distributing electronic flyers across relevant faculty listservs and on social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter. We also contacted practitioners serving in Women's Resource and Action centers. A Qualtrics survey was used to gather informed consent and contact information that was then used to schedule interviews.

A total of 15 faculty participated in the interview process, where all but one identified as a White, cisgender woman and eight identified on the LGBTQ+ spectrum. Most faculty members currently work in research universities (n=10), with the remaining working at regional (n=1), liberal arts (n=2), seminary (n=1), or community college (n=1) institutions. Fields of study represented included English, gender and women's studies, education leadership, sociology, theology and ethics, criminal justice, psychology, social work, and geography. There was also a wide range of experience among the 15 participants. Teaching experience and sexual assault advocacy varied from 3 to 35 years, while years at current institution ranged from 1 to 9.

Data Collection

Semi-structured phone interviews, lasting 60-90 minutes, were conducted with each participant in February and March 2020. The last

interview was completed shortly before colleges and universities responded to the COVID-19 health pandemic by closing campuses, so this was not a factor in the data collection process. The full recorded interview consisted of questions relating to the type of work participants engaged in and questions concerning their survivor identity, specifically their disclosure to students and colleagues and how it influenced how they engaged with their faculty work.

Each researcher completed transcriptions of the audio recordings while generating an analytic memo identifying the major themes and significant utterances of the participants (Birks et al., 2008). Identifiable data was removed from transcriptions and participant chosen pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality. Participants received a copy of their transcript in a member-checking process to further trustworthiness and to authenticate findings (Jones et al., 2013).

Data Analysis

Systematic data analysis began with conducting multi-level, line by line coding (Saldana, 2015). Two researchers began by coding a single transcript to develop a list of preliminary codes organized around the major themes of our question protocol (i.e., survivor identity, actions taken, reactions from others). Next, by independently reviewing a single shared transcript, we identified, and then cross-compared, 47 unique codes addressing all aspects of survivor-faculty experience with disclosure, examining also how these actions connected to healing, positive coping, and solidarity, as well as negative coping, isolation, judgment, and professional sanction. Following the initial round of code development, all three researchers coded one more transcript to ensure fidelity to our system and to establish a consistency of meaning (Madill et al., 2000). The remaining transcripts were divided amongst each researcher to continue independently analyzing with the established coding system. After all transcripts were coded, together we identified common themes and patterns across the participants.

Positionality

Two of the authors of this study identify as survivor-faculty, and acknowledge this dual identity has shaped their own experiences within the academy. Our personal reflections of our dual identity and conversations with others who hold both identities motivated us to

understand how other survivor-faculty navigate their roles. One of the authors is a graduate student and stated that in her six plus years as a college student, this is the first time she has heard faculty talk about sexual violence advocacy efforts. In her experience, faculty have not been as present in campus advocacy or visible as survivors compared to other students and staff. For all three researchers, engaging in listening and conversations with others who take part in these efforts was powerful and enlightening. It is our hope that through this work survivor-faculty feel more visible and validated in their work and this inspires future generations of scholars to continue to advocate for survivors in all levels of academia.

Limitations

The primary limitations for this study come from the representation of the participants. The majority of participants identified as white. We also have little gender diversity in our sample; most participants identified as cisgender women. We believe this is due in part to who is able to openly do sexual violence advocacy work and who is able to talk about this work in line with their own survivor identity. Additionally, there is limited disciplinary diversity in this study with most faculty coming from social sciences and humanities. Our focus on email listserv channels and social media may have missed participants who do not use these but who meet our study criteria; however, we did intentionally share the call for participants with groups that included a diversity of backgrounds and identities.

Findings

We begin the findings with an overview of the complex sentiments related to the participants' survivor identity. Next, we move into how the faculty members put their survivor identity into action. We end the findings with a section on why faculty members do this work including the benefits and healing nature of the work they do.

Complex Meaning-Making of Survivor Identity

All of the participants of the study responded to the call as a self-identified survivor; yet our conversations quickly demonstrated the complexities associated with their survivor identity. They did not necessarily identify with traditional survivor discourse about who could

be a survivor and what it means to be a survivor. This identity was one that required ongoing emotional labor on the participants' part. Being a survivor was difficult, but was something that was very much connected to how they made sense of themselves.

Taylor was the only one who found strength in this identity, in part, because this was an identity that took a lot of work:

I think that the identity is important to me because of how much work it took to accept my experience as reality as well. So part of identifying as a survivor for me, part of the significance of it has to do with like, each time I identify in that way, I am like resisting the cultural pressure for these kinds of experiences, not to be noticed, and to not be regarded as real.

Identifying as a survivor served as an action against the silencing of survivors of sexual violence. Taylor went on to add:

... it feels like an identity that is always with me, that sometimes feels heavy, and sometimes feels I will even say joyful because, like what comes to mind first is not the pain but sometimes what comes to mind first is the strength that I know that there is in myself as a result of doing all of that integrative work.

Taylor's identity served as a reminder of strength, and not necessarily the harm and trauma she had endured.

Others shared why survivor might not be the best word to describe them. Veronica noted that while this identity was something that provided her a connection to other survivors, she described it as layered:

I think it's an important identity for me and thinking about my work and contributions, but it's also it's layered. There are some aspects of survivorship I don't identify with, you know? I've never been attacked by a stranger ... like there are certain things that have never happened to me.

In some ways, Veronica felt survivor identity did not fully apply to her, because she had not experienced some of these more stereotypical forms of violence.

Natalie expressed similar sentiments about not feeling like her experience was fully encompassed by what others state about survivorhood:

I think part of why it's difficult for me to even describe my experience with survivor, because my experience with survivor is not articulated anywhere. I just never have felt that I've heard somebody talk about being a survivor and what they've said has really resonated with me.

Natalie felt her personal identities and experiences were not represented in broader survivor discourse, so she did not see herself within broader survivorhood. These two examples demonstrate the ways broader survivor discourse might limit how individuals feel about themselves being a part of survivorhood. If participants did not feel their other social identities or experiences are represented in mainstream conversations about survivors, they did not feel this identity applied to them in the same ways.

Jolene's explanation of what it means to be a survivor was more about the process of surviving and whether this was a process that was ever completed. She shared:

I don't begrudge anyone for understanding themselves as a survivor. It's just that for a long time survival didn't feel like what I had done. And I didn't feel like a survivor because I felt like it was still always that kind of monkey on my back that I couldn't get rid of ... And so survivor, for me, meant something temporal, it should be in the past ... I have survived in that sense, but I can really easily re-feel that pain for someone else, you know, that empathy.

Jolene's experience demonstrates the ongoing process of surviving, and how this identity is connected to others' surviving as well. Rebecca also emphasized the importance of time in her understanding of her survivor identity:

My understanding of myself as a survivor now is as someone who is pretty comfortable not just talking about it, but also turning it into a pedagogical opportunity. I'm that far removed

... close to 40 years out. So, I think that's helpful, but I can also still remember the emotions when someone tells me their stories. It's not like I'm so far removed that I can't understand the emotions of it.

Like Jolene, Rebecca articulated the way others' stories could bring back the emotions associated with her own trauma. Rebecca's understanding of her identity also begins to demonstrate the connection between survivor identity and faculty identity, which is expanded on another section.

Ellen and Mia shared strong feelings about why survivor identity was not something they found positive or empowering. Ellen felt like the term survivor implied something about those individuals who do not survive. She shared a personal story about her cousin:

To be honest, of the terminology available, I guess survivor is the one I would identify with most, but I don't like the word. A lot of it has to do with a cousin who was a victim of domestic, intimate partner homicide. And I think, I'm a survivor, and she's you know ... it's kind of similar to cancer survivor. It's not like the other person didn't try.... so I have not always fully embraced that term.

When asked why she uses the term survivor if she feels it does not fully represent her, Ellen shared:

I think there is some pressure, because there's not a different word. Those experiences do shape why I do some of the work that I do. I think people appreciate knowing that I'm doing this because I've lived through it. But at the same time, the word victim has a lot of baggage. I don't think victim is powerless, I think it means you had something happen to you. But it has such a negative connotation ... I think there's a lot of celebrating in survivorhood ... that makes it hard not to at least use that word, even if I find it a little problematic.

Mia distinguished between feelings of determination and empowerment as it relates to this identity:

I find it a sort of identity that definitely motivates me in a way of wanting to sort of do this work, you know, but it's not an identity that I find in any way like positive if that makes sense ... It's an identity that brings me determination, but it's definitely not one that I find in and of itself like empowering.

The weight of claiming the identity was present for Mia, who went on to add:

I definitely do not find it empowering at all ... Because like it's a marginalized and stigmatized identity ... And I know like it can feel great to be able to connect with others, you know, like doing Take Back the Night, you know what I mean? Doing those kinds of things, but it doesn't have the same feeling as like [LGBTQ] pride does.

Like others, Mia demonstrates the nuance making-meaning around this identity. Although it brings her connections to others and motivates her work, she still feels this is an identity associated with stigma and trauma. She does not necessarily find it an identity to be celebrated in the same way she might celebrate other social identities.

Survivor Identity in Action

Despite the complex meaning-making of their survivor identities, the survivor-faculty were clear this identity informs the work they do as faculty to address campus sexual violence on campus. What this looked like varied significantly and ranged from teaching, research, service, advocacy, and activism. Some, like Margaret, Ellen, and Jolene, served on Title IX advisory committees or task forces at their institution. Delphine was part of the committee that plans and implements the university's annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month programming. In this committee, Delphine worked closely with the University Chancellor and Title IX Coordinator. Natalie informally advised a Title IX search committee. Rebecca worked on campus to try to keep the center for victim advocacy open. Veronica partnered with athletics and the Dean of Students office on programming. Mia made connections with different individuals on campus in the Women's Center, Title IX office, the LGBTQIA+ Resource Center, and residence life to provide them with different data related to campus sexual violence. Andalucia advocated for

students who reported faculty within her department as perpetrating sexual harassment and violence.

The faculty members in this study named their survivor identity as connected to the work they do as faculty. There were two clear relationships between their identity and their work. One related to the way they empathize with other survivors. For others, engaging in this work was about not wanting others to experience what they had experienced.

Related to empathizing with survivors, Andalucia simply stated, “I’m inclined to identify with them [survivors] rather than the people in power.” For Jolene, this deep empathy was something she wanted her students to learn as well:

I think what that [identity] does for me in the classroom, and even in the interactions with people who have experienced violence is it makes me deeply empathetic ... I have survived it in that sense, but I can easily re-feel that pain for someone else. I think that’s really important. I know maybe that’s important work to me as a humanist too, but that’s all I want my students to do is empathize with whatever stories we’re reading, even if they’re still really far away from our own experiences.

Because of her own experiences, Jolene felt a deep empathy for survivors, which shaped her approach to their work.

Chloe spoke about the emotion related to her survivor identity and how that influenced her advocacy for other survivors:

I probably bordered on some unprofessional moments in my advocacy. Because it was raw. I could feel it—like I knew what this woman had gone through and did not want other people to feel hurt. I had very naive sort of aspirations about changing the system. So, the good news and bad news is I’ve learned that you can’t just put policy in place which then probably led me to want to study policies and continue to kind of grapple around that. But it’s still connected to retaining an awareness of the lived experience of the harm.

Rebecca succinctly stated, “I find it very much that the reason I’m doing this work is because I don’t want others to experience what I experienced.” Having personally experienced victim-blaming, she works to counter victim-blaming in her work. She is currently part of a committee putting on a small conference on sexual violence at her institution. During planning, whether or not to believe survivors became a topic of conversation amongst colleagues:

Some of my colleagues are more academic on this topic than I am, and wanted it to be a question and a conversation. This idea of #MeToo being problematized and I’m like, no, we fucking believe survivors. And I realized in that moment that this was not an academic issue for me ... And I think as my identity and my experience of not believed made me even more hardlined than I had been before.

Similarly, Mia shared that her work has been inspired by wanting survivors to have a better experience when going through the investigation process at their institution, noting that “seeing survivors going through the system ... seeing how people interacting with those systems like it was not good. And so I was like, something needs to change here ... “ She continued:

I have found with my work that I’ve been able to sort of feel that in terms of talking to policymakers, and I’ve served as an expert witness in Title IX litigation for the past two years. And just being able to see how that research that we do can actually be used to assist survivors in different ways, even though it’s not direct service delivery it is helping them in other ways.

Ruth spoke about coming to the realization that what happened to her was part of a larger societal issue:

I definitely think it [survivor identity] threw me into the topic to begin with. I had really just not processed a lot of [my assault] until I took a gender violence course as an undergrad. I don’t know, something about realizing that an experience that I had thought of as personal, was actually systematic and political and institutional.

She went on to share her personal experience and stated she is compelled to do the work she does, because situations like hers are not taken as seriously by media and society. This includes teaching others to think about experiences not always recognized as violence: “Thinking through these much more common experiences that’s something that... they need to do and as someone who has had that experience...it gives me some additional insight into my work, what victims experience when they go through that.”

Conversely, Wellie did not think she could necessarily prevent others from experiencing violence like she did, but at least she could be a resource for those who did. She expressed, “I wanted to be the person that wasn’t there for me. Because I was never foolish enough to hope that it wouldn’t happen to anyone else.”

Although their survivor identity was a factor in their work, they did not always feel supported or acknowledged in that identity. Saiorse shared she responded to participate in this study immediately, because this acknowledgement of her survivor identity had been something that was a point of tension throughout her career. She was coached to not “disclose you’re a survivor and how that shapes your work.” She shared her identity was “one of the reasons why I do what I do, but I’ve never been able to say that...” Still, the survivor-faculty remained motivated by the idea of helping survivors and ensuring they did not have similar experiences spurred their actions as faculty members. Although they had ambivalent feelings about the actual naming of their identity as survivor, they were focused on action and change.

Rewarding and Healing Nature of Work

Based on their stories and experiences, there is a clear relationship between the faculty members’ survivor identity and faculty identity, which informs the work they do to address campus sexual violence. The work done by these faculty members is clearly linked to their survivor identity. They do this work despite the fact the majority of them do not feel positive or empowered by the word survivor. So, why do they continue? Many of the faculty members spoke about, in some capacity, the rewarding and, at times, the healing nature to the work they do. Engaging in these efforts allowed them to process and make-meaning of their survivor-identity.

Margaret spoke about her work being a positive experience. When asked if her work was rewarding, she shared: “I mean, of course, yes. Like the narrative is really clear. It’s really satisfying to be part of developing a much healthier process than the one I went through.” Margaret’s experience points to ways of helping others, or even just the potential of helping others, made doing this work rewarding. Yet, not all faculty members felt as though they had witnessed much progress or change at their institutions.

Wellie shared an example of advocating for students who led a protest on campus. “Even though it didn’t change anything,” she shared it was “empowering to see us having a space that we took for ourselves, and really I mean the students that took that space and they welcomed us into it.” She also shared: “...there are so many rewards for being this person for folks. Being trusted, being a role model in a way that I really never expected to have the opportunity to be.” Along these lines, Delphine, who had been working at her institution to make policies and procedures more survivor-oriented and trauma informed. She shared progress in these areas “still feels limited,” but ultimately the reward is “knowing that I’m doing something that’s bigger than myself.” Wellie and Delphine’s examples summarized a sentiment that was felt by several of the participants--doing the work came with rewards, even when doing the work did not necessarily yield any direct change. Ruth shared this work was not just rewarding, but actually healing for her:

The number of students I’ve had who have trusted me enough to disclose, who come back to me again and again and talk to me about this stuff, that actually feels very healing. Because I feel like I’m doing something else about this systemic issue that’s more than about me. That feeling is really good.

This idea of contributing to something bigger than one’s self was a thread within the participants’ experiences. Ruth recognized the issue of sexual violence was a systemic one, not an individual issue; yet, working to resolve the systemic issue did not have individual and personal effect on her.

Still, some of the survivor-faculty had more mixed feelings about this work being healing in nature. Ray indicated that different experiences had different effects when it came to healing:

I would say things like student activism definitely is part of that [healing]. It definitely has a positive effect. And I would say like my own teaching now, if anything, it's slowing the process down because I feel like I have to be prepared for someone else. Whereas, mentoring students, like the grad students who I've had to help figure out the process, I'm not sure. Like, I don't think that that's hurt, but I don't think it's really helped either.

Chloe acknowledged that taking care of others is not necessarily the best way to take care of oneself, even if it does feel positive:

But, you know, other people's needs are gonna supersede my own....how do I prioritize me? So I think that's going to be a lifelong challenge. And I think just providing service to others is still not taking care of myself, but maybe sort of the best way that I have sort of both step aside from my work but then feel like I'm also giving or making a contribution?

Ellen had mixed feelings. When asked about this work contributing to her own healing she shared:

I think it bends towards being more healing, and that's why I keep doing it, because the overall -- it's not a 50/50 split (being healing and being not). It's more like 70/30 or something like that. So it's more healing than it is not.

She went on to share how the passage of time plays a role, and coming to this work from a more healed place makes it easier and more rewarding to continue:

When I started doing this at my previous employer, but hadn't really healed yet, or gotten to a point where it was easier for me to do. It was harder to do this work. Even though my role was certainly not counseling students who had been victims, that was not my role at all. But because I did this work, a lot of times students that I'd had in class would come to me. And it was hard to hear their stories and not identify or over identify. Now I don't have that problem as much. I have maybe healthier boundaries because I got in a healthier place. But I think overall, coming from where I'm at now, it is more an aspect of continued

healing. Honestly, in some ways, an aspect of gratitude, if that makes sense. I've gotten to where I'm at, because there were people who helped. Who said the things I needed to hear. Or who pointed me in the direction of a particular book or something like that. So I want to be that for somebody else who is in the thick of it.

Ultimately, Ellen's story centers a common thread among the survivors--doing this work is about others. They continue doing the work because of what it means for other people.

Discussion

As the findings demonstrate, the meaning-making process for the participants was complicated, but very much connected to their actions as faculty members. Their faculty identity and survivor identity were very much interrelated. Their survivor identity informed who they are and what they do as faculty members. They engaged in actions as faculty informed by their experiences as survivors. Each of them was moved to action such as engaging in their campus' sexual violence task force or engaging in sexual violence education programming, because of their survivor identity, which aligns with previous research (Kaiser, 2003). How they engaged in this work varied significantly, but each of them spoke about how the work tied back to their survivor identity in some fashion.

At the same time, engaging in those actions assisted the survivor-faculty in coming to new understandings of their survivor identity (Park & Ai, 2006). Interestingly, their understanding of their identity was to push back on traditional survivor discourse of strength and empowerment. Although, one could argue that engaging in the work they were doing was an enactment of strength and empowerment even if they did not feel that in their reflections of their survivor identity.

The survivor faculty also experienced healing, because of the actions they took as faculty members. The survivor-faculty participants clearly engaged in a conscious and intentional process to understand their survivor identity (Park & Ai, 2006; Tennan et al., 2000). Their experiences also aligned with the more active and ongoing connotation of *surviving* (Barry, 1979). Their experiences indicate an iterative

relationship between their survivor and faculty identities. The work they do as faculty is shaped by their survivor identity, and doing the work allows them to continue processing their survivor identity.

Still, they did not necessarily agree with the discourse that associates survivor identity with strength and empowerment (Dunn, 2005). Rather, the survivor-faculty discussed how part of processing their survivor identity was related to their care of others. Staub and Vollhardt (2006) argued those processing harm and trauma frequently put this energy into altruism and care for others. Participants frequently spoke about the work they did as being fueled by deep empathy for other survivors--wanting to ensure others did not experience what they had experienced and wanting to be the person they did not have. Although the survivor-faculty did speak to the rewards and personal healing they received for their efforts, their primary focus and motivation was centered on others (Staub & Vollhardt, 2006).

The survivor-faculty demonstrate that meaning-making as it relates to survivor identity is a complicated, ongoing process. Their survivor identity was something they were continuously making sense of. Their faculty identity facilitated opportunities to make-meaning of their survivor identity and engage in healing, which, in turn, shaped their identity as faculty. One thing is clear—the faculty members in this study carry the weight of their survivor identity with them everywhere including, if not especially, within their faculty role.

Implications

Faculty members are encouraged to be neutral and objective and are not necessarily given space to bring their identities into their work (Price et al., 2017). However, these survivor-faculty are evidence that their professional work is deeply personal and informed by their socio-cultural identities. We recommend those who mentor early faculty or work in faculty development consider how faculty's identities shape the work that they do. Recognizing faculty members are people with full identities and experiences is important to challenge neoliberal systems that only care about individuals for their productivity (Hurtado, 2021).

We also urge institution leaders to consider how they reward and encourage faculty to engage in efforts to address campus sexual violence.

Frequently, work deemed personal or individual activism is not valued within merit or promotion systems (Hurtado, 2021). However, the efforts by these faculty members can lead to important changes and needed support for student-survivors. Further, efforts to address campus sexual violence should not fall only to survivor-faculty. Although all of the faculty members were compelled to do this important work at their institutions, doing so was challenging for them in different ways. Relying on only those who have been personally affected by sexual violence to communicate does not demonstrate a full priority of the institution. This approach also places the burden on those who have experienced violence and marginalization.

Additionally, the stories of these faculty members highlight that there are survivors all around us, always. Survivors are students, faculty, and staff, and are present, even when institutional leaders do not realize this. Institutional leaders should keep in mind how they may or may not be promoting harmful language or prevention and education efforts, as well as creating a campus culture that is supportive for all survivors.

Future Directions

This study does not investigate the teaching strategies or experiences of survivor-faculty. However, examining how they teach about of sexual violence and how that is influenced by their survivor identity may provide important insights into how all faculty can incorporate teaching about these issues into their course content. Expanding on our discussion of the impacts of trauma on survivor-faculty is another important topic to further explore. Particularly we recommend studying how the move to online learning amidst a global health pandemic has shaped the research and advocacy work of survivor-faculty. This is especially important in understanding how compounding traumas or challenges may further impact survivor-faculty, their identity, and their work. In addition to exploring colleagues' actions, more research is needed on how institutions support faculty as whole people. Faculty bring multiple identities and experiences to their work. Studying how these identities, specifically those of survivor-faculty, are supported by both colleagues and institutions can inform the creation of policies and practices that fully support faculty for more than their job title.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that being a survivor and faculty member is complex, and that these two identities are not separate for these individuals. Their identity as a survivor, while full of mixed feelings, is intimately connected to who they are as faculty members. As faculty make meaning of their survivor identity, they are called to action with a particular focus on caring for others. In turn, faculty members experienced their own intrinsic rewards that contributed to their own process of recovery. We hope this study serves as an important reminder that survivors exist within faculty, and this identity should be something they are able to explicitly share and demonstrate as important to their faculty work.

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