

Gender of Transgressors Committing Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Against LGBTQA+ College Students

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Abstract

Sexual and intimate partner violence (IPV) is more prevalent among sexual and gender minority college students than their heterosexual, cisgender peers, but few studies have specified the identities of transgressors for survivors across LGBTQA+ subgroups. This research gap limits understanding of the contexts of violence, and information on who is harming LGBTQA+ students is critical for presenting prevention efforts in ways that are inclusive of how LGBTQA+ students experience violence. To help address this gap, this study investigated variation in the gender of transgressors of sexual violence (SV) and IPV by survivors' sexual orientation and gender in a large, national sample of college students. The data come from the 2019 Campus Climate Survey by the Association of American Universities and include a sample of 23,607 SV survivors and 9,398 IPV survivors. Findings of the current study suggest that the previously identified pattern of men

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as the primary transgressors of SV against women and sexual minority men extends to disaggregated groups of bisexual women; asexual, queer, and questioning women; women who selected more than one identity; and every disaggregated sexual minority group of TGQN students. Among larger cell sizes than previous studies, bisexual women mostly experienced IPV from men while bisexual men mostly experienced IPV from women. Similarly, most asexual, queer, and questioning women experienced IPV from men, and most asexual, queer, and questioning men experienced IPV from women. These results could help inform programming that is inclusive of the different contexts in which LGBTQA+ college students experience SV and IPV.

Keywords

LGBTQA+, college/university, sexual assault, intimate partner violence/abuse, offenders/perpetrators

Introduction

Sexual and intimate partner violence (SIPV) on college campuses are pervasive, overlapping problems with negative impacts on survivors' physical and emotional health and academic success (Basile & Smith, 2011; Dworkin et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2020). Institutions of higher education (IHE) are federally obligated to protect students from SIPV (The 2022 Violence Against Women Act [VAWA] Reauthorization, 2023), yet multi-institution studies have found that campus prevalence rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) range from 3.36% to 21.10% of students (Moylan et al., 2019) and 6% to 14% of all students who had been in a partnered relationship since starting college (Cantor et al., 2020). For sexual violence (SV), an estimated 22% of all college students (Mellins et al., 2017), 20% of women (Fedina et al., 2018; Krebs et al., 2016; Muehlenhard et al., 2017), 12.5% of men, and 38% of gender nonconforming students, who identify outside of the binary gender identities of men and women, experience SV while in college (Bates et al., 2022; Mellins et al., 2017). Additional studies suggest that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and asexual (LGBTQA+) students experience SIPV at two to five times the rate of their heterosexual, cisgender counterparts (Edwards et al., 2015; Eisenberg et al., 2017; Kammer-Kerwick et al., 2021).

For the purposes of this study, SV refers to forced, coerced, or pressured unwanted sexual penetration or contact (Basile et al., 2014). IPV refers to

nonsexual violence among intimate or romantic partners, including controlling, threatening, or physically violent behaviors (Cantor et al., 2020). Gay refers to men sexually oriented toward other men, lesbian refers to women sexually oriented toward other women, whereas bisexual means sexually oriented toward both men and women or multiple genders (Bates et al., 2022). Transgender refers to someone whose current gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth, while queer is an umbrella term for LGBTQA+ identities or those sexually oriented toward people of more than one gender, and asexual indicates a lack of erotic attraction (Bates et al., 2022). Heterosexual refers to those sexually oriented toward people of a different, usually binary, gender, and cisgender indicates a person whose current gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth (Bates et al., 2022).

SIPV is harmful to LGBTQA+ students' academic outcomes, physical and mental health, and has an added, intensifying factor of the stigmatization of LGBTQA+ identities (Binion & Gray, 2020; Klein, Dawes, et al., 2023; Mengo & Black, 2016; Parr, 2020; Sugg, 2015; Wood et al., 2020). Despite the heightened vulnerabilities for LGBTQA+ students and SIPV's serious outcomes, research on this population is still emerging and nuanced analyses that recognize the fluid nature of these identities are lacking (van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). Prior research has suggested men commit most SV experienced by gay men and lesbian and bisexual women (Mellins et al., 2017). For bisexual men, asexual students, and transgender, genderqueer, and non-binary (gender identities outside the gender binary; TGQN) students, there is little to no research on who is committing SIPV against them, hindering preventionists' ability to provide inclusive programming that represents students' experiences (Bates et al., 2022; Hinds et al., 2025).

To tailor services to address students' needs, violence researchers have called for the disaggregation of LGBTQA+ identities in quantitative data analysis, and the analysis of TGQN students as their own group, while protecting participant identities (Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023; Scheer & Baams, 2021). Researchers have also called for more data on the identities of both transgressors and survivors involved in SIPV in order to better understand the role of cisheteronormativity (the system of social norms and beliefs that asserts hierarchical gender identities based on sex assigned at birth, and includes the expectation of heterosexuality) and patriarchy in SIPV across gender and sexual identity groups (Anderson et al., 2025; Blanco-Pardo et al., 2025; Butler, 1993; Hinds et al., 2025). The current study therefore investigated variation in the gender of transgressors who committed SIPV against LGBTQA+ women, men, and TGQN students by survivors' sexual orientation and gender in a large, national sample of college students with large enough cell sizes to contribute novel findings to the SIPV literature.

This information is urgently needed in order to develop tailored prevention and intervention programs that accurately address the nuanced contexts in which violence against LGBTQA+ students occurs.

College SIPV Victimization Among LGBTQA+ Students

The well-documented impacts of SIPV include negative mental health, physical health, and academic outcomes such as depression, insomnia, and lower GPA scores (Mengo & Black, 2016; Parr, 2020; Sugg, 2015; Wood et al., 2020). In addition to these impacts, minority stress theory asserts that individuals with marginalized identities experience cumulative, chronic stress because of the societal stigmatization of their identity (Frost & Meyer, 2023; Meyer, 1995). Research suggests that due to minority stress, LGBTQA+ survivors might experience additional or worse consequences of SIPV than cisgender heterosexual women survivors (Binion & Gray, 2020; Klein, Dawes, et al., 2023). These include internalized homonegativity (negative attitudes toward homosexuality, gay men, and lesbians), higher levels of depression, suicidality, PTSD, and academic disengagement than their cisgender, heterosexual peers (Kammer-Kerwick et al., 2021; Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023; Mayfield, 2001; Parr, 2020).

Many studies have found that as a group, LGBTQA+ students experience higher rates of SIPV than their heterosexual counterparts (Graham et al., 2019; Grocott et al., 2021; Shyrokoni et al., 2025) and transgender and non-binary students experience SIPV at higher rates than their cisgender counterparts (Coulter et al., 2017; Fedina, Bender, Royer, et al., 2023; Fedina, Bender, Tibbits, et al., 2023; Griner et al., 2020; Martin-Storey et al., 2018; Scheer & Baams, 2021), but fewer studies provide information about subgroups of LGBTQA+ students.

Given that LGBTQA+ college students are experiencing more violence and worse impacts from it, there is an urgent need to better understand the diversity of gender dynamics in LGBTQA+ students' experiences of SIPV in order to inform more inclusive prevention work. Among the research on SIPV among LGBTQA+ subpopulations, prevalence rates vary but are still alarming. Across studies, students who identify with multiple sexual identities and bisexual students of any gender report some of the highest rates of SIPV victimization (Bermea et al., 2018; Eisenberg et al., 2017; Fedina, Bender, Royer, et al., 2023; Fedina, Bender, Tibbits, et al., 2023; Kammer-Kerwick et al., 2021; Martin-Storey et al., 2018). Several studies indicate that gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual (oriented toward partners of any gender), or other sexual minority men students experience higher rates of SV and physical IPV with impact and injuries than heterosexual men (Bates et al., 2022;

Callan et al., 2021; Eisenberg et al., 2017). One study found that more than half of asexual students had experienced unwanted sexual contact (Mollet & Black, 2021). Within a sample of more than 2,000 asexual college students, transgender and nonbinary participants experienced higher rates of SV than their cisgender, asexual counterparts (Mollet & Black, 2021).

Transgressors' Gender

Although we expect gendered victimization trends in the adult LGBTQA+ population to reflect that of college students, several features of the college context might make experiences of SIPV among LGBTQA+ students unique and worth studying separately (DeKeseredy et al., 2017; Lamont & Roach, 2025). Emerging adulthood, marked by identity exploration, aligns with the traditional college age of 18 to 25 (Arnett, 2000; Willoughby et al., 2014). For many LGBTQA+ students, college is an opportunity to come out, explore same-sex romantic and sexual relationships, or find community with other LGBTQA+ students (DeKeseredy et al., 2017; Lamont & Roach, 2025). Students' social lives are often intricately intertwined with their academics, extracurriculars, and living situations, and prior research has found different contextual and risk factors associated with SV that occurs on- or off-campus (O'Neal et al., 2021). The fusion of academic, professional, and personal life means that for many survivors of SIPV, their social lives might be tangled with that of their transgressor, particularly if they experience SIPV within the LGBTQA+ community (Hirsch & Khan, 2021). We therefore first address the extant literature on transgressor gender among adult LGBTQA+ samples, before focusing on findings among college students.

Across the LGBTQA+ violence literature, few studies have captured the identities of both transgressor and survivor (Anderson et al., 2025; Hinds et al., 2025), leaving the context of the violence unclear. This lack of data limits preventionists' ability to make programming inclusive of LGBTQA+ students' experiences. Some research has found that a majority of SV experienced by LGBTQA+ women is committed by men (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2021; Hequembourg et al., 2013; Hinds et al., 2025; Walters et al., 2013). For example, among LGBTQA+ women, one study found that 76.5% identified their transgressor of SV as a man (Richardson et al., 2015). For IPV among LGBTQA+ adults, the existing literature has thoroughly documented the often dualistic nature of violence, with shared vulnerabilities like substance abuse due to minority stress, involving both parties in victimization and perpetration (Anderson et al., 2025; Moylan & Javorcka, 2020). However, for bisexual individuals and LGBTQA+ folks who might date across the gender spectrum, it is unclear whether they

experience IPV more often in same-sex or different-sex partnerships. Previous studies have suggested that bisexual men and women might be more likely to experience IPV from men than from women, but these studies had very small samples of LGBTQA+ participants (Bermea et al., 2018; Messinger, 2011; Walters et al., 2013).

In the college student literature, one study with a sample of college student survivors of SV found that for 97.1% of bisexual women, 75% of lesbian women, and 88.9% of other queer-identified women, the transgressor was a man (Mellins et al., 2017). Similarly, Martin-Storey et al. (2018) found that bisexual, queer, pansexual, and allosexual (non-asexual) cisgender women students were more likely than gay or lesbian cisgender women to report men transgressors of SV (Bates et al., 2022; Hille et al., 2020). Martin-Storey et al. (2018) also found that heterosexual, cisgender men reported a woman transgressor of SV more often than gay cisgender men. Similarly, in Mellins et al. (2017), none of the gay men who experienced SV said their transgressor was a woman, whereas 63% of the other LGBTQA+ men survivors of SV said their transgressor was a woman. Additionally, in their sample of just 23 LGBTQA+ student survivors, Richardson et al. (2015) found that 66.7% of LGBTQA+ men who experienced SV identified the transgressor as a man.

Mellins et al. (2017) is one of the few studies that reported on transgressor gender for gender nonconforming student survivors of SV. Although they could not split gender nonconforming students by sexual orientation due to small cell sizes, 77.8% of gender nonconforming student survivors of SV said the transgressor was a man. Additionally, in their sample of almost 10,000 students from two New York City IHE, nearly all (98.4%) cisgender, heterosexual women who experienced SV said that their transgressor was a man and 84.9% of heterosexual men who experienced SV said the transgressor was a woman (Mellins et al., 2017).

There are still gaps in the literature on transgressor gender and survivor sexual orientation and gender (Anderson et al., 2025; Hinds et al., 2025; Shyrokoni et al., 2025). Many studies still aggregate LGBTQA+ folks, masking the diversity of experiences within the population. More research among LGBTQA+ subpopulations is needed, particularly on the gender of transgressors committing SIPV against asexual and bisexual students, and TGQN students of different sexual orientations (Bermea et al., 2018; Blackburn et al., 2024). These data are critical for inclusive, affirming prevention work that accurately represents LGBTQA+ students' varied experiences in order to address their elevated prevalence rates and unique risk factors for SIPV (Bonar et al., 2022; Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023).

The Current Study

Given the limited existing research, this study investigated exploratory hypotheses about the variation in gender of transgressors of SIPV against subgroups of LGBTQA+ college students, by survivor's sexual orientation and gender. The current study used a large, national dataset with cell sizes for bisexual and TGQN students large enough to contribute novel findings to the literature. Prior research has called for more data on the identity of SIPV transgressors for survivors of different genders and sexual orientations to better understand the context of SIPV among LGBTQA+ folks (Binion & Gray, 2020). This information could help inform affirming prevention efforts that present examples of LGBTQA+ students' SIPV experiences and the specific risk and protective factors they face (Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023). This study examined both SV and IPV because IHE have a federal obligation to address both forms of violence on their campuses (VAWA Reauthorization, 2023).

Method

Procedure & Analysis

This study used secondary data analysis with two subsamples of the Association of American Universities' (AAU) 2019 Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct. It was a census-style, cross-sectional study administered online to all students at 33 IHE across the country. The response rate was 21.9% with a sample of 181,752 students. The survey consisted of 54 core questions across topics such as sexual harassment, IPV, and bystander behaviors. The current analysis focused on questions about SV and IPV. This was a descriptive study; the analyses consisted of cross-tabulations using Stata 18.

Missing Data & Analytic Samples

This study used two subsamples from the 2019 AAU survey: one sample of students who had experienced SV since starting college and one sample of students who had experienced IPV since starting college. The AAU survey measured them with two separate modules within the same survey, although they are overlapping phenomena (Cantor et al., 2020). The original, full dataset contained 181,752 students who spent at least 5 min completing the survey and responded to the victimization sections, the inclusion criteria for AAU's completion variable (Cantor et al., 2020). For the current study, the full 2019 AAU sample was then reduced and split into two samples, including only participants who indicated experiencing SV or IPV since starting

college. For the IPV sample, only participants who reported having been in a romantic or intimate partnership received the IPV module questions. From the complete dataset, this excluded $n=61,487$ (33.83%) participants from receiving the IPV survey questions. The analysis used two samples: one of SV survivors ($n=31,534$) and one of IPV survivors ($n=11,210$). Because transgressor gender was asked differently for participants who reported on more than one transgressor in both samples (i.e., “were any of the people who did this to you . . . a man”), the samples for this study only included participants who answered the survey about one transgressor to avoid muddying the results. This brought the SV sample to 25,373 survivors and the IPV sample to 10,124 survivors.

The SV sample had 6.96% missing data across all variables of interest, with no more than 5% missing on one variable. The IPV sample had 7.17% missing across all variables of interest, with no more than 5% missing on one variable. Given the low proportion of missing data in both samples, listwise deletion was deemed acceptable. Listwise deletion brought the SV sample to 23,607 participants and the IPV sample to 9,398 participants. The samples of survivors were majority heterosexual/straight, White women, but the large sample size enabled the examination of substantial cell sizes of men, TGQN, and LGBQA+ survivors.

Measures

For detailed measurement information, see the original AAU report (Cantor et al., 2020).

Gender was measured with one question, “Which best describes your gender identity?” modified from Freyd et al. (2014), a campus climate survey at the University of Oregon (Cantor et al., 2020). For the current study analysis, gender was coded before the full dataset was reduced to the SV and IPV samples. Trans women, trans men, nonbinary or genderqueer, and questioning participants were combined into a category labeled TGQN, while those who selected *decline to state* were excluded from analysis ($n=1,130$, 0.62% of the complete dataset), for a three-category variable for analysis: (1) woman, (2) man, and (3) TGQN. Although prior literature has found that many transgender individuals wish to be recognized as men or women (Puckett et al., 2020), the current study was interested in TGQN students’ experiences, so they were analyzed as a third category.

Sexual orientation was measured with one question, “Do you consider yourself to be . . .,” which came from the Williams Institute (2009) report on best practices for measuring sexual orientation on surveys (Cantor et al., 2020). The AAU survey research team determined the categorizations of the

final variable and grouped students who identified as *asexual* with those who selected *queer*, *questioning*, or *not listed*. For the current study, those who selected *decline to state* were excluded from analysis from the full dataset before reducing to the analytic subsamples ($n=3,027$, 1.67% of the complete dataset). The final sexual orientation variable for analysis contained five categories: (1) heterosexual or straight; (2) gay or lesbian; (3) bisexual; (4) asexual, queer, questioning, and not listed; and (5) two or more categories.

Sexual violence victimization was asked through a series of nine behaviorally specific questions developed for the AAU survey, based on existing measures (Krebs et al., 2009), addressing several types of unwanted sexual contact (sexual touching, attempted penetration, or completed penetration) in combination with multiple tactics (physical force, threats of physical force, incapacitation, or coercion; Cantor et al., 2020). The survey's combination of sexual contact and tactic questions allowed for different formulations of victimization variables within the dataset. For the current study, victimization was defined as having experienced penetration or sexual touching with any type of tactic or attempted penetration involving physical force or threats of physical force since entering college. This combination of sexual contact and tactics was dictated by the inclusion criteria skip logic for the incident follow-up section on the AAU survey (Cantor et al., 2020).

IPV victimization was measured first by asking participants if "they had been in a partnered relationship since entering the school," defined as "marriage or civil union, domestic partnership or cohabitation, steady or serious relationship, or other ongoing relationship involving physical or sexual contact" (Cantor et al., 2020, p. 51). Participants who had been in a partnership were asked three questions, based on a combination of existing measures, including the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (Black et al., 2010) and the University of New Hampshire 2012 survey, cited in the White House Task Force report (White House Task Force, 2014), that covered nine behaviors relating to control, threats, and physical violence they might have experienced since starting college (Cantor et al., 2020).

Gender of transgressor was asked with one question: "Was the person that did this to you . . ." with response options *man*, *woman*, *other gender identity*, or *don't know*. In the dataset, *other gender identity* and *don't know* were combined.

Results

Within the SV sample, 82.4% of participants identified as women, 14.8% as men, and 2.8% as TGQN (Table 1). The IPV sample was made up of 30.3% men, 66.8% women, and 2.9% TGQN. Whereas 16.9% of the SV survivor

Table 1. SV and IPV Survivor Sample Demographics.

Characteristic	SV survivors (<i>n</i> = 23,607)		IPV survivors (<i>n</i> = 9,398)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Women	19,454	82.4	6,276	66.8
Men	3,504	14.8	2,845	30.3
Trans, Genderqueer, Nonbinary	649	2.8	277	3
Sexual Orientation				
Straight	16,688	70.7	6,852	72.9
Gay/lesbian	918	3.9	337	3.6
Bisexual	2,885	12.2	1,104	11.8
Asexual, queer, questioning	1,035	4.4	358	3.8
2+ identities	2,081	8.8	747	8
Race				
White	16,813	71.5	6,613	70.7
Black	1,086	4.6	347	3.7
Asian	2,847	12.1	1,129	12.1
Multi-racial/other	2,770	11.8	1,264	13.5
Hispanic/Latinx	2,499	10.6	1,140	12.1
College Level				
Undergraduate student	18,379	77.9	6,492	69.1
Graduate student	5,228	22.1	2,906	30.9
Disability Status				
Have a disability	10,480	44.4	4,352	46.3
No disability	13,127	55.6	5,046	53.7
Experienced both SV and IPV since entering college	3,996	16.9	4,600	49.0

Note. Sexual violence survivors were on average 21 years old ($SD = 2.1$), and intimate partner violence survivors were on average 22 years old ($SD = 2.3$). SV = Sexual Violence; IPV = Intimate Partner Violence.

sample also experienced IPV since entering college, nearly half of the IPV survivor sample also experienced SV since entering college.

In the SV sample, among all women survivors ($n = 19,454$), a majority reported experiencing SV from men (97.8%), though 23% of gay/lesbian women ($n = 258$) reported experiencing SV from women (Figure 1). In the IPV sample, among women survivors, nearly all heterosexual/straight women ($n = 4,510$) reported men transgressors (99.3%), while most gay/lesbian

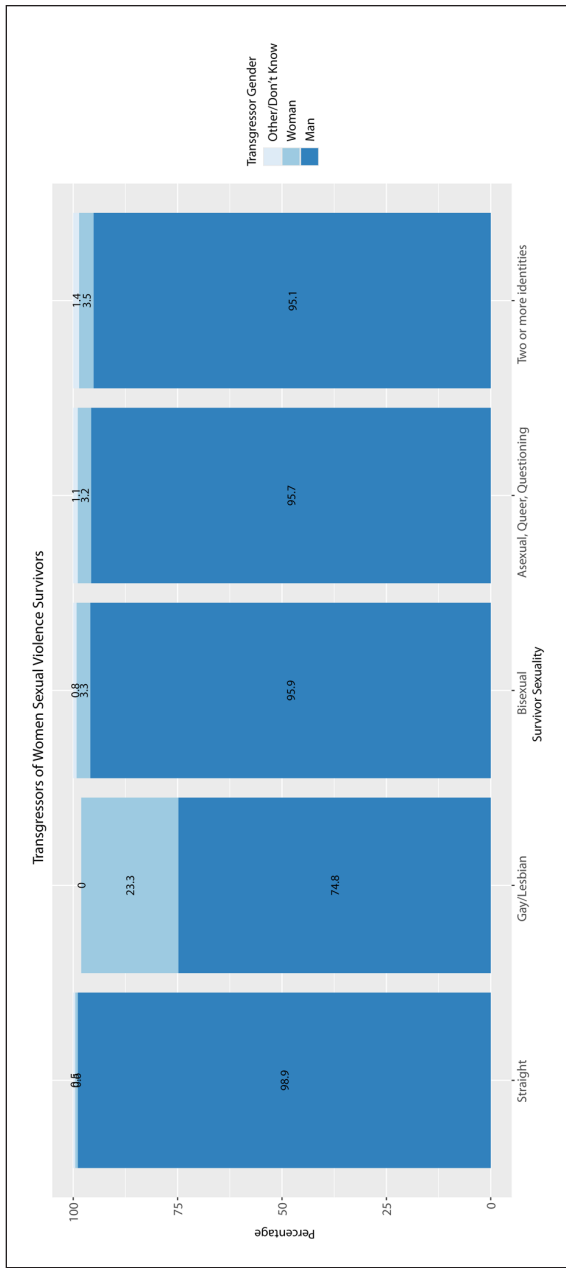


Figure 1. Transgressors of women sexual violence survivors.

women ($n=116$; 76.7%) reported women transgressors of IPV (Figure 2). Men as transgressors of IPV were reported as the majority for bisexual women ($n=904$; 89.6%); asexual, queer, and questioning women ($n=232$; 85.8%); and women who selected more than one identity ($n=514$; 83.7%).

Among men SV survivors, heterosexual/straight men ($n=2,299$) mostly experienced SV from women (82.5%), gay men ($n=602$) mostly experienced SV from men (93.5%), and a majority of men transgressors committed SV against bisexual men ($n=275$; 55.3%), asexual, queer, and questioning men ($n=74$; 62.2%), and men who selected more than one identity ($n=254$; 61.8%), though more than a third of these men reported women transgressors of SV (Figure 3). Among men IPV survivors, most heterosexual/straight men ($n=2,328$; 98.1%) experienced IPV from women, while most gay men ($n=197$; 97.5%) experienced IPV from men (Figure 4). A majority of bisexual ($n=156$; 75.0%); asexual, queer, and questioning men ($n=31$; 64.5%); and men who selected more than one identity ($n=133$; 60.2%) reported women transgressors of IPV.

Among TGQN survivors of SV, those who identified as heterosexual/straight reported nearly an even split between men (54.6%) and women (45.5%) transgressors and none who were *other/don't know*, though this sample was quite small ($n=11$; Figure 5). The other sexual orientation identity groups reported mostly men transgressors, especially bisexual TGQN students ($n=100$; 82.0% men as transgressors of SV). Among TGQN survivors of IPV, 50% of heterosexual/straight survivors experienced IPV from a woman, though this sample size was quite small ($n=14$; Figure 6). Gay/lesbian TGQN survivors ($n=24$) reported transgressors who were men (33.3%), women (37.5%), and *other/don't know* (29.2%) at similar rates. Over half of bisexual ($n=44$; 54.6%); asexual, queer, and questioning ($n=95$; 52.6%); and TGQN survivors who selected more than one identity ($n=100$; 55.0%) experienced IPV from a man, with almost a third each experiencing IPV from a woman.

Discussion

While many of our findings align with prior literature, particularly in terms of transgressor gender among straight/heterosexual and gay/lesbian students, the current study's cell sizes for bisexual and TGQN students are large enough to contribute novel findings to the SIPV literature that could inform inclusive prevention programming. SV and IPV are urgent social problems for college students, with particular vulnerabilities for LGBTQA+ individuals. Though research and practice are evolving to better recognize the needs of this population, they are often treated as a monolithic, umbrella category of identities.

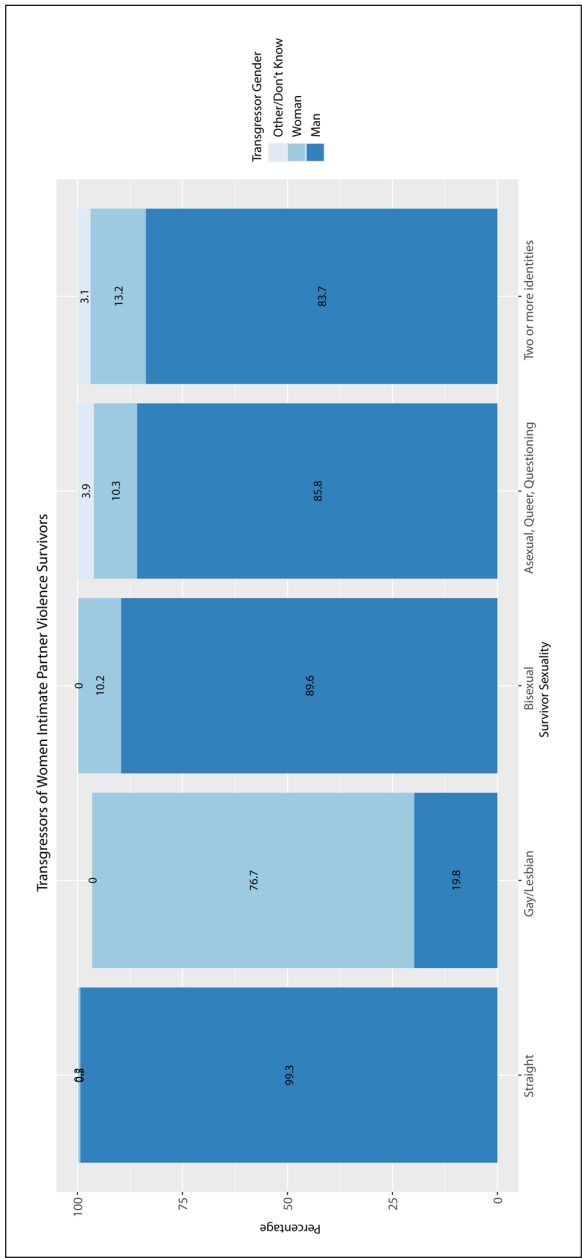


Figure 2. Transgressors of women intimate partner violence survivors.

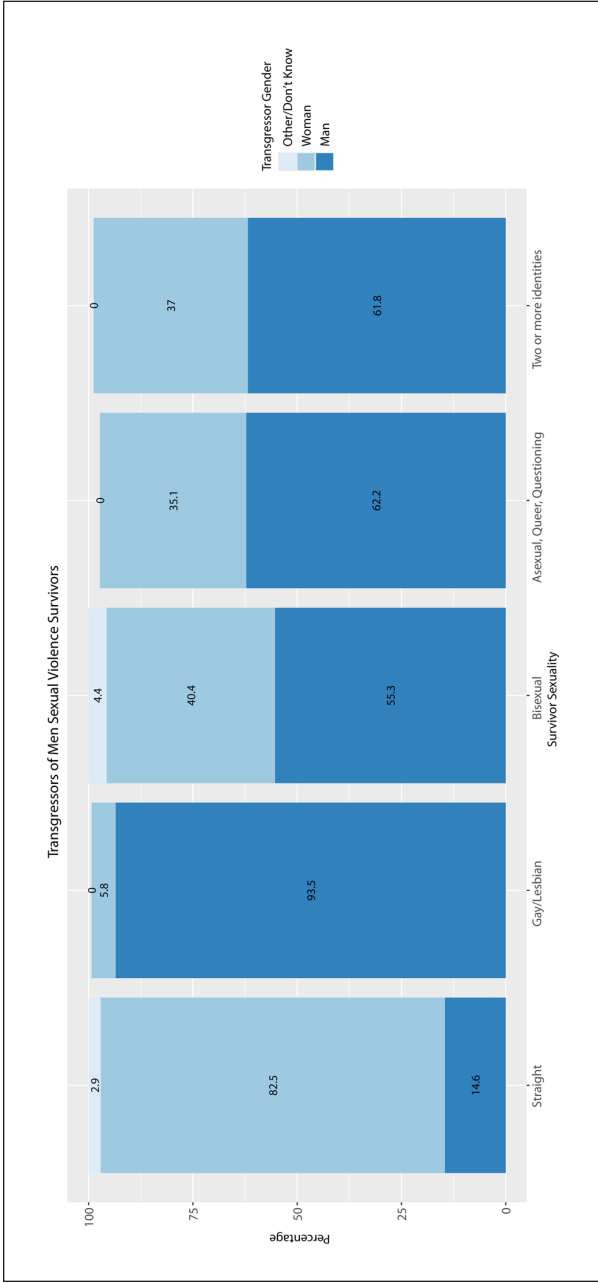


Figure 3. Transgressors of men sexual violence survivors.

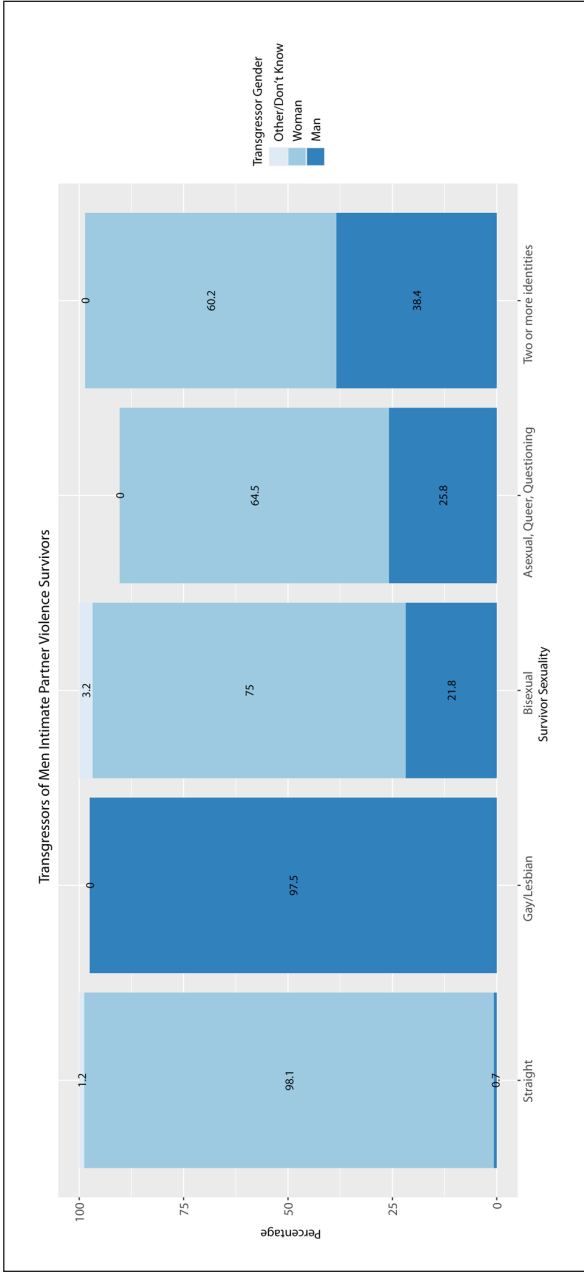


Figure 4. Transgressors of men intimate partner violence survivors.

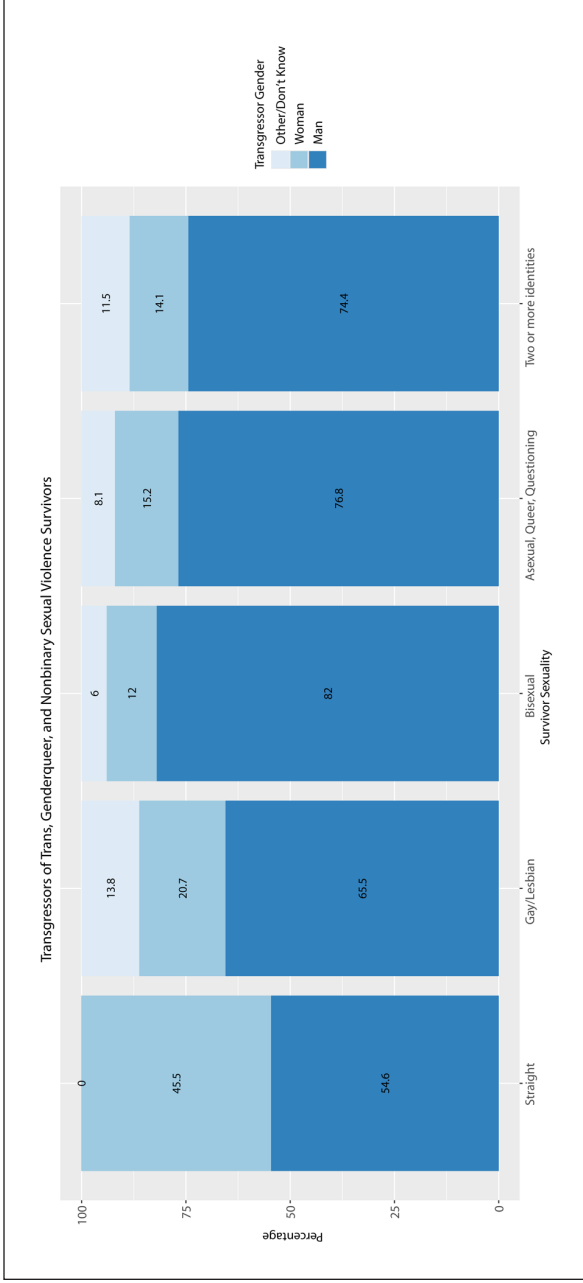


Figure 5. Transgressors of trans, genderqueer, and nonbinary sexual violence survivors.

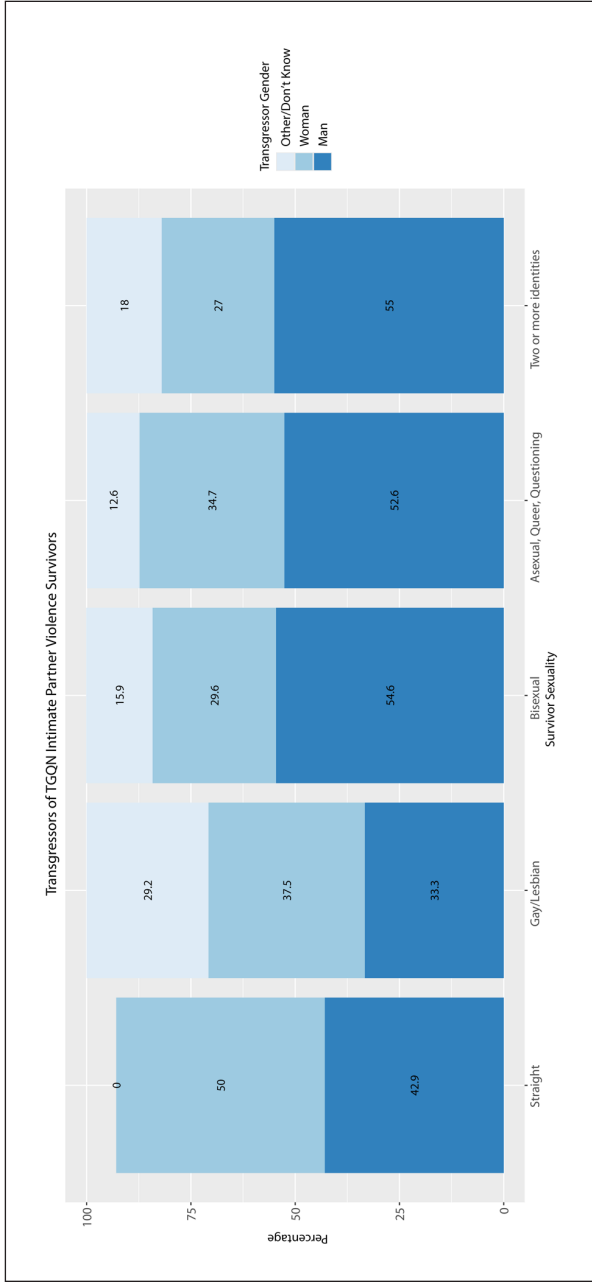


Figure 6. Transgressors of TGQN intimate partner violence survivors.

This method fails to recognize important differences within the population and stalls the development of tailored and effective prevention efforts. Few studies in the victimization and perpetration literature have provided data on the identity of both survivors and transgressors (Anderson et al., 2025; Hinds et al., 2025), and though some have identified the gender of survivors and transgressors in the general adult LGBTQA+ population, several features of the college context make experiences of SIPV among LGBTQA+ students unique and necessary to study separately (DeKeseredy et al., 2017; Lamont & Roach, 2025). Deeper understanding of the unique contexts in which LGBTQA+ students experience violence is crucial for affirming, impactful prevention work. This study helps fill this gap by investigating variation in transgressor gender among survivors of various gender and sexual identities in two large samples of students who experienced SV or IPV.

Among women, as prior research has found, gay/lesbian women experienced SV mostly from men but IPV mostly from women (Mellins et al., 2017). The rest of the women in the sample, regardless of sexual orientation, experienced both SV and IPV mostly from men. The finding that bisexual women IPV survivors mostly experienced IPV from men bolsters findings from smaller study samples (Bermea et al., 2018; Messinger, 2011; Walters et al., 2013). Similarly, most asexual, queer, and questioning women indicated a man had transgressed IPV against them, contributing to the dearth of literature on this subset of the LGBTQA+ population.

Among men, our findings align with prior literature indicating that gay men experienced the majority of both SV and IPV from other men, while heterosexual/straight men experienced most of both SV and IPV from women (Martin-Storey et al., 2018; Mellins et al., 2017). Our findings add clarity to conflicting prior studies on the IPV transgressors of bisexual men and provide novel data on the SV transgressors of bisexual men (Messinger, 2011; Walters et al., 2013). Just over half of bisexual men reported SV from men in our sample, but three quarters of bisexual men survivors of IPV reported a woman transgressor. The current study also contributes the novel findings that mostly men committed SV against asexual, queer, and questioning men and men who selected more than one identity, but mostly women committed IPV against asexual, queer, and questioning men and men who selected more than one identity.

Finally, heterosexual/straight TGQN survivors were roughly split for both SV and IPV committed by men and women. Gay/lesbian TGQN survivors reported more men transgressors of SV, but even thirds of IPV transgressors across the three gender categories. Bisexual; asexual, queer, and questioning TGQN survivors; and those who selected more than one identity mostly reported men transgressors of SV and a slight majority of men transgressors

of IPV. It is notable that a majority of TGQN survivors in every sexual identity group except straight/heterosexual reported men transgressors of SV. These findings bolster the limited prior literature, suggesting that most SV experienced by TGQN students is transgressed by men (Mellins et al., 2017) and shed light on the variation in IPV experiences of TGQN students, which seems to be transgressed by both men and women, regardless of survivor's sexual orientation. The interpretability of these results is limited, however, because this group of survivors was a combination of trans men, trans women, and nonbinary/gender nonconforming students, so more specific detail and disaggregation among TGQN survivors is still needed.

In sum, the findings suggest that the pattern of men committing most SV against women and sexual minority men extends to bisexual women; asexual, queer, and questioning women; women who selected more than one identity; and every disaggregated sexual minority group of TGQN students. The findings also suggest that bisexual women mostly experienced IPV from men and bisexual men mostly experienced IPV from women, with larger cell sizes than previous studies. Similarly, most asexual, queer, and questioning women experienced IPV from men, and most asexual, queer, and questioning men experienced IPV from women.

Limitations

The results of this study should be interpreted in the context of its limitations, including those related to measurement in the AAU survey (Bartlett, 2014), particularly for gender and sexual orientation. As best practices have evolved, recommendations for gender suggest a two-step question (Puckett et al., 2020), and the AAU survey question used outdated wording for transgender response options. Furthermore, collapsing the available gender categories into TGQN obscured the results for that group. Unfortunately, the sample had only 11 heterosexual/straight TGQN survivors of SV, so cells needed to be combined. Future research should use targeted sampling methods with TGQN students to avoid replicating previous research limitations by aggregating them into one group.

The sexual orientation measure also differed from recent recommendations, consistent with most studies of college SV from the past 25 years (Shyrokonis et al., 2025). The AAU survey collapsed *gay* and *lesbian* into one response category, and the other response options did not include identities such as pansexual, demisexual, or 2-spirit (Williams Institute, 2024). The restricted AAU dataset provided by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research also collapsed response categories to account for small cell sizes and confidentiality, limiting the categorizations available for secondary analysis

(Cantor et al., 2020). Ideally, asexual students would be their own category, but the data did not provide that option. Future studies should use the most recent guidance on gender and sexual orientation measurement, or risk replicating the limitations of previous research (Bates et al., 2022).

The AAU victimization measures were behaviorally specific, per best practice guidance (Muehlenhard et al., 2017; Wilson & Miller, 2016), but the measures were not validated, even though validated scales of violence victimization are available (Swartout et al., 2019; Tilley et al., 2020). Additionally, some survivors in the SV sample could have responded about SV from their intimate partner. The IPV measure, on the other hand, did not include questions about SV from a partner, contrary to most validated measures of IPV (Tarrío-Concejero et al., 2023). Given that almost half of the IPV sample also experienced SV, future research is needed on the co-occurrence of SV and IPV within the LGBTQA+ community.

All variables in the current study relied on self-reported responses. This could introduce inaccuracy particularly because participants were reporting on the presumed identities of their transgressors. Relatedly, the survey did not ask participants to report the transgressor's sexual orientation, though that information could be helpfully informative for prevention programming as well. The wording of the survey questions about transgressor gender made it necessary to exclude participants who reported on more than one transgressor in order to keep the results precise. This might have, however, introduced bias into the results. Future research should also use model-based estimates to investigate contextual factors and include control variables that could be pertinent to tailored prevention efforts, but were beyond the scope of the current study, such as survivor and transgressor race and ethnicity, and on- or off-campus location of the incidents (Coulter et al., 2017; O'Neal et al., 2021).

With research on a sensitive topic like SIPV, topic salience bias could skew the prevalence rates, leading to those most affected by the issue to participate at higher rates than those not impacted by SIPV (Berzofsky et al., 2019). The debate about prevalence rate accuracy is ongoing in the SV literature (Freyd, 2017; Giroux et al., 2020; Rosenthal & Freyd, 2018), but nonresponse bias analysis conducted on the full AAU sample found a small negative relation between IHE response rate and SV prevalence rate. Meaning, among the 33 IHE, as IHE response rates increased, SV prevalence rates decreased slightly (Cantor et al., 2020). In addition, the survey's overall response rate was 21.9%, with school response rates between 6% and 68% (Cantor et al., 2020; Krause et al., 2019; Moylan et al., 2018). Relatedly, although most of the missing data came from the disability question, which was not a focus of the analysis, the use of listwise deletion might have

introduced bias into the results, particularly among survivors with marginalized identities who might have apprehension related to self-disclosure.

Implications

Our findings clarify and extend previous research on transgressor gender of SIPV, contributing novel findings among certain subgroups of LGBTQA+ student survivors. Importantly, our analysis revealed several nuances that should be considered for future research, prevention work, and practice with LGBTQA+ students. Whereas common current approaches to LGBTQA+ student inclusion in SIPV prevention work involve providing disclaimers about the possibility of LGBTQA+ people experiencing SIPV or using gender-neutral language, this study contributes to the evolving literature endorsing an LGBTQA+-affirming approach that acknowledges the role of cisheteronormativity and patriarchy in SIPV and includes all genders as part of the solution (Casey et al., 2018; Gambir et al., 2024; Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023).

In alignment with other studies, the current study found that men are transgressors in the majority of college SV, for all groups except heterosexual/straight men (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2021; Hequembourg et al., 2013; Hinds et al., 2025; Walters et al., 2013). Although prior research has found this pattern among gay, lesbian, and bisexual folks, this study is among the first to find that this pattern extends to asexual, queer, and questioning students, as well as TGQN students with queer sexual identities. This reinforces the need for research and prevention work to challenge the patriarchal domination driving the social problem of SV (DeKeseredy et al., 2023). Our findings also underscore the call to engage boys and men in SV prevention that challenges social norms about masculinity and sexual behavior among peers (Orchowski et al., 2020). More work is needed, for example, to understand and reflect what bystander intervention might look like for gay men, or in situations where men are involved with TGQN individuals.

This study aligns with previous research findings that women also perpetrate SV and IPV (Anderson et al., 2025). In particular, women were the majority transgressors of SV against straight/heterosexual men and IPV against straight/heterosexual men; gay/lesbian women; asexual, queer, and questioning men; men who selected more than one sexual identity; and straight/heterosexual TGQN students. Therefore, programmatic interventions should not position women solely as potential victims of violence, but rather present various gender combinations in examples of violence, particularly for education on IPV, and engage everyone in bystander intervention, regardless of gender. Varying portrayals of the gender dynamics in IPV could also affirm the experiences of LGBTQA+ students and acknowledge that even in mixed-gender couples, IPV can take many forms (Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023). Future

research could investigate the connection between women transgressing SIPV and the patriarchal underpinnings of SIPV.

This study found greater variation in transgressor gender for IPV than for SV, perhaps because of the fluid nature of sexual identity and because LGBTQA+ students might date across the gender spectrum (DeKeseredy et al., 2017). Many LGBTQA+ students experience their first same-sex relationship in college, associated with particular risk factors for IPV (DeKeseredy et al., 2017). Minority stress combined with this developmental stage can complicate experiences of IPV for LGBTQA+ students, especially if survivors do not have a supportive LGBTQA+ community where they can safely voice concerns or see examples of healthy queer relationships (DeKeseredy et al., 2017). Prior research has documented complex power dynamics for LGBTQA+ folks in both same-sex and straight-presenting relationships, and the unique risk factor of rejection from both heterosexual and gay communities for bisexual people (Corey et al., 2023; Messinger, 2011). Prevention work for IPV should include various relationship pairs so LGBTQA+ students can see themselves represented in examples of healthy and unhealthy relationship dynamics (Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023). Edwards and Sylaska (2013) also emphasize the importance of infusing minority stress tenets when addressing IPV perpetration and victimization among LGBTQA+ college students.

Given these findings, more nuanced approaches to LGBTQA+-inclusive healthy relationship education are needed to reflect the diversity of students' experiences. Klein, Dawes, et al. (2023) call for collaboration with the LGBTQA+ community to "infuse specific LGBTQA+ student experiences into curricula . . . both for programs specifically for LGBTQA+ students and the broader student population" to avoid treating LGBTQA+ students as a homogenous group (p. 2203). They suggest that programs include examples of LGBTQA+ situations/scenarios in bystander training, and in social norms marketing (Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023). LGBTQA+ students often feel that they are ignored in campus prevention and consent programming (Edwards et al., 2016; Klein, Doyle, et al., 2023; Nightingale, 2021), but this study provides nuance that could help preventionists address myths, biphobia, and more accurately represent LGBTQA+ students' experiences of SIPV in order to combat barriers to help-seeking and provide inclusive, accessible resources to support all survivors.

Conclusion

This study provides new insight into who is committing SIPV against larger samples of bisexual; gay/lesbian; asexual, queer, and questioning; and TGQN

college students of various sexual orientations. These results could help inform SIPV prevention programming that challenges cisheteronormativity and gender norms and provides inclusive, tailored examples of the different ways intimate relationships might look for LGBTQA+ college students.

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Ethical Considerations

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Data Availability Statement

The data are publicly available with application and approval from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at University of Michigan.

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