

Evaluation of the Define It! program for raising critical conscious bystander behaviors



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INTRO

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of a consciousness-raising intervention on bystander behavior among college students who have completed a bystander training program, the Green Dot Bystander Intervention Program.

The Define It! program is a consciousness-raising group that promotes reflection and critical action among college students.

METHODS

Participants

Study 1: 13 undergraduate students between the ages of 19-23 (*Mage* = 20.46, *SDage* = 1.34) at a small, private university in the northeastern United States. Gender-identities included women (84.6%), men (7.7%), and non-binary (7.7%). This gender distribution is representative of that of the university's student population.

Study 2 consisted of 38 undergraduate student participants 18-21 (*Mage* = 18.74, *SDage* = .69) randomly assigned to either control or intervention groups. Gender-identities included women (86.84%), men (10.53%), and non-binary (2.63%).

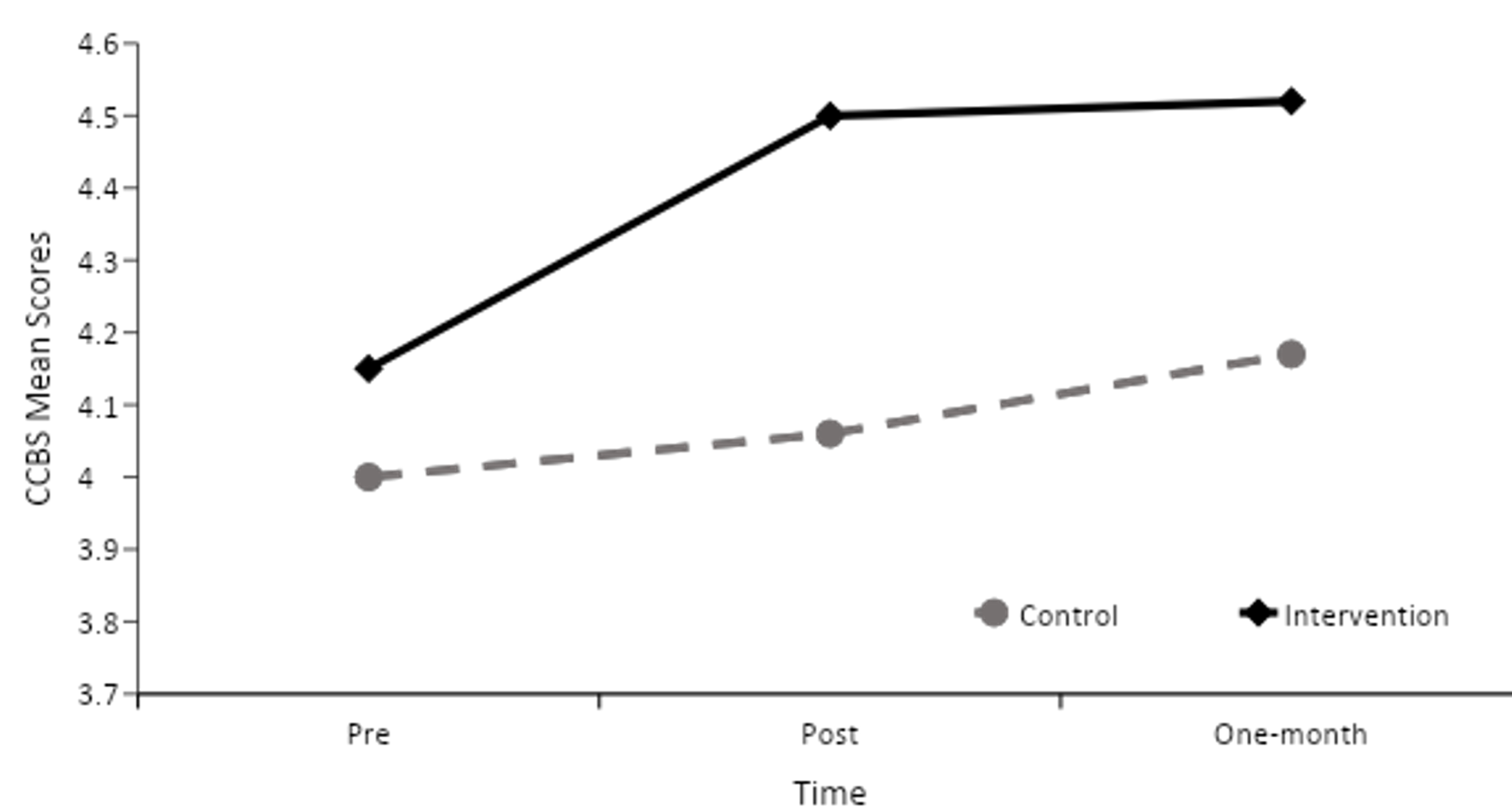
Data were collected pre, post, and one-month using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, Short Form (IRMAS-SF; Payne et al., 1999) and Critically Conscious Bystander Scale (CCBS; Johnson et al., 2019).

RESULTS

Study 1: CCBS, $F(2, 36) = 3.32, p = .047$, partial eta squared = .16

Study 2

Change in Critically Conscious Bystander Scale scores over time



CCBS (full scale), $F(5, 108) = 3.85, p = .003$, partial eta squared = .151

DISCUSSION

The described studies provide evidence for the intervention to serve as a supplement to traditional bystander programming and demonstrate initial evidence for the potential of a discussion-based program on sexual assault prevention for raising critical consciousness among college-age students.

As such, the present study offers a potential area of programming for adoption across college campuses concerned with furthering their existing sexual assault prevention programming.

The Define It! program was effective towards raising critically conscious bystander behaviors of sexual violence prevention among students who had previously completed a bystander program

Participant Action Steps and Barriers

Action Steps	Barrier
Implementing the lessons learned in Green Dot training (3 D's)	The task is daunting when you are just one person, rather than a large group
Participate in petitions, marches, and contacting local legislative officials	Associated risk with fear
Provide sex education earlier (e.g., middle school) and changing topics to be more inclusive, educational, and include topics like consent and boundaries	Systemic forces like religion, government, and school boards
Advocate for myself and others	There is always a chance that you are wrong or uncomfortable
Consider media presence (e.g., Instagram) and how information can be shared on social media platforms	Mental and physical health are important to consider
Be an active listener and provide safe spaces for open and honest conversations to make the topic of sexual violence less taboo and more inclusive	Presence of toxic masculinity, gender norms, and stigma

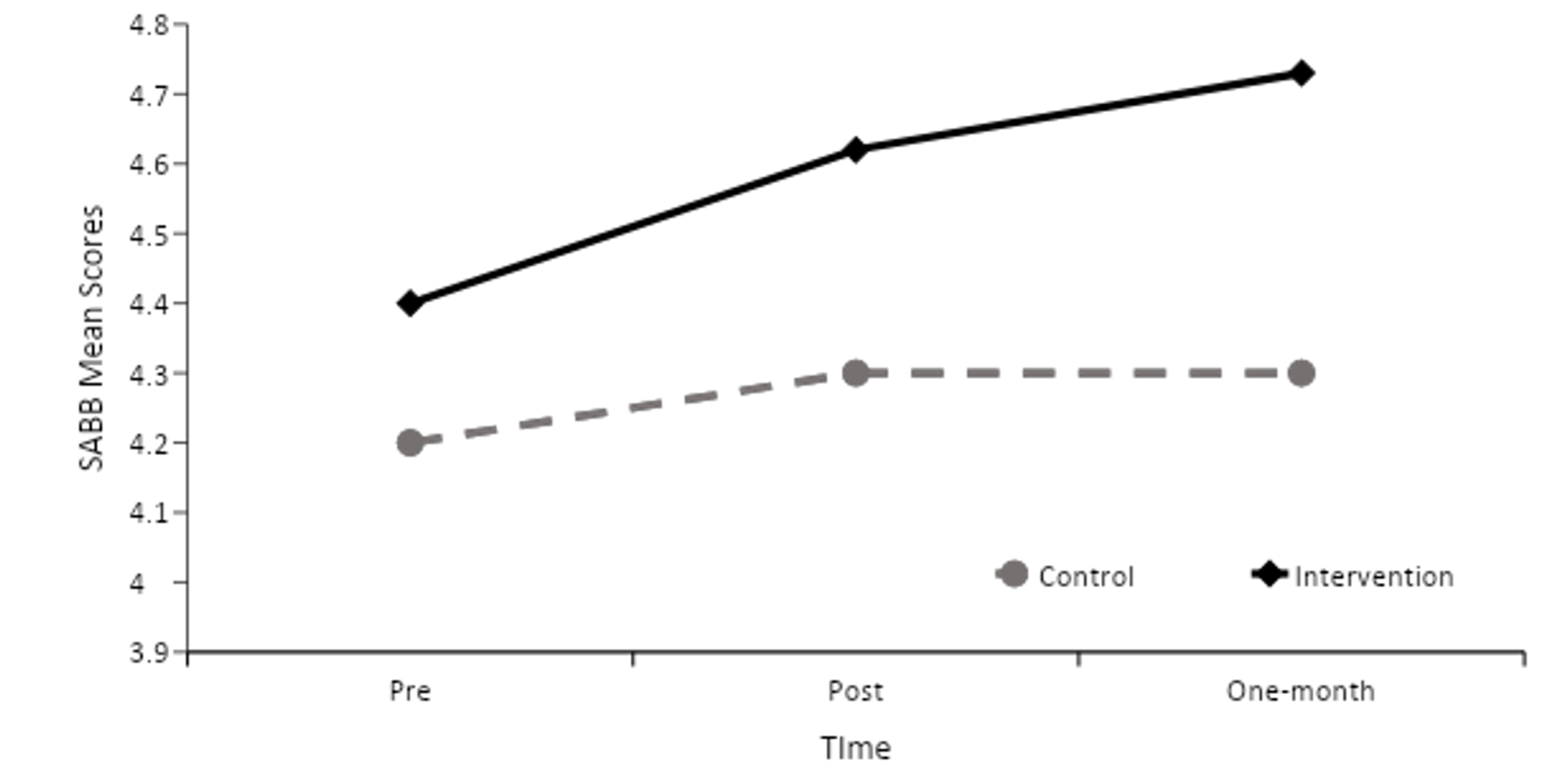
Confusion around consent: "Relationships give the assumption of consent, that if you gave it in the past, you will continually give consent to the same act. Consent needs to be checked every time, every step, without making assumptions."

Lack of accountability: "We don't talk about sex or rape culture all that much. People aren't being held accountable. The lack of communication about it allows it to continue."

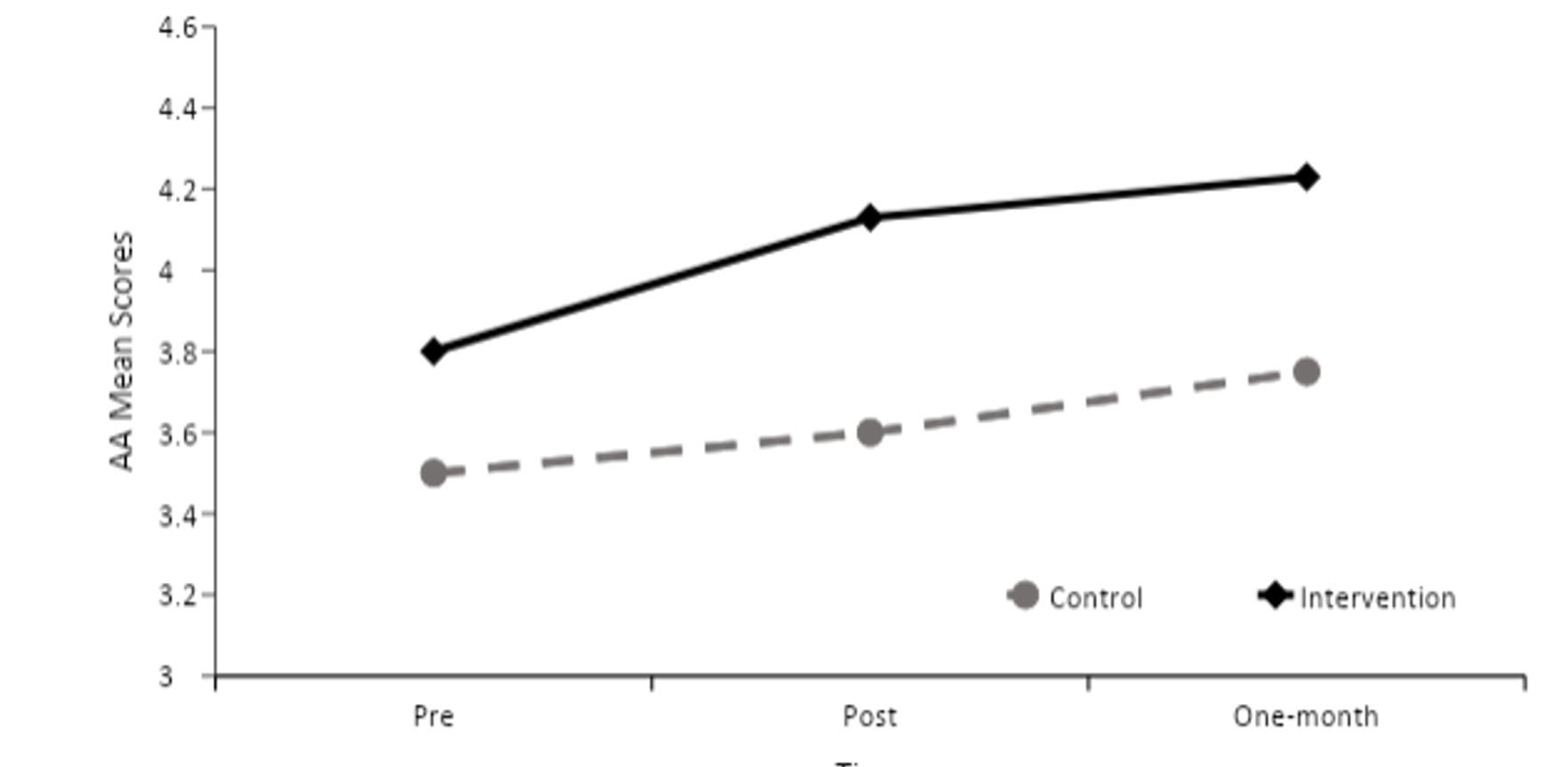
Inadequate sex education: "Schools are slowly cutting health and sex-ed classes. If only they taught us more about consent than anatomy [and] more birth control education."

Study 2 results continued...

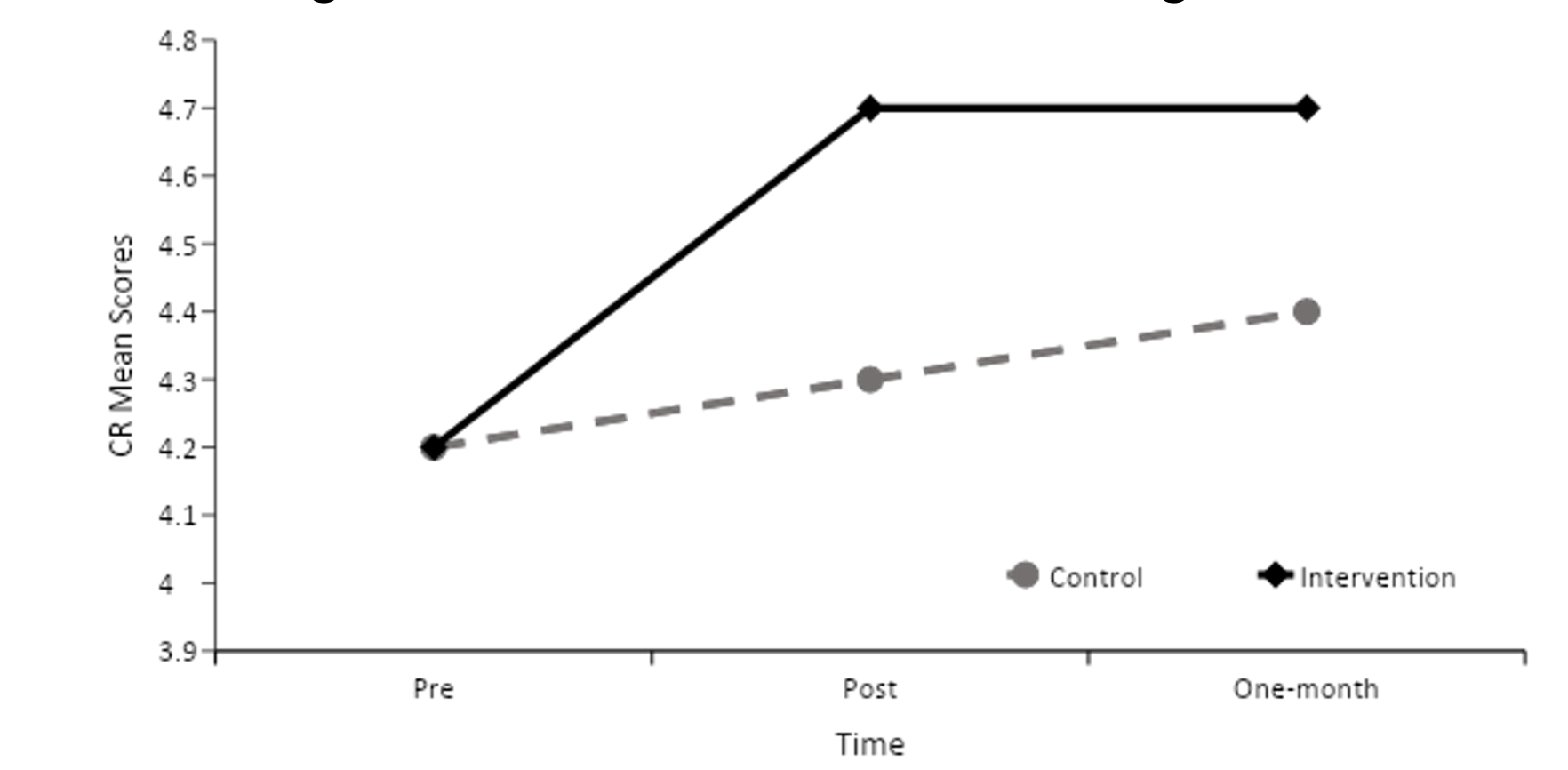
Change in Sexual Assault Bystander Behavior scores over time



Changes in Activism/Advocacy scores over time



Changes in Consciousness Raising scores over time



Emergent Themes from "Define It!" Facilitations

Category	Description
Inadequate sex education	Sex education occurred in high school, though mostly consisted of abstinence-based teachings, and did not include information on sexual violence or consent
Victim blaming	Rape culture is normalized and further perpetuated by victim blaming and a lack of conversation around the topic
Gender power imbalances	Rape culture relies on gendered imbalances in power
Confusion around consent	Verbal consent is not often discussed or understood
Sexual relationship expectations	Sex is often an expectation in relationships
Lack of accountability	Perpetrators of sexual violence often believe they will not be held accountable for their actions

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