

**“Coaching Boys Into Men”: Exploring Implementation, Evaluation, and Content of a  
Gender-Transformative Violence Prevention Program**

by

**Alana Dionne Fields**

B.A., Washington University in Saint Louis, 2008

M.A., Washington University in Saint Louis, 2011

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2020

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This dissertation was presented

by

**Alana Dionne Fields**

It was defended on

August 5, 2020

and approved by

Elizabeth Miller, Professor and Division Director of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine,  
Pediatrics

Junia Howell, Assistant Professor, Sociology

Mark W.D. Paterson, Professor, Sociology

Gabby M.H. Yearwood, Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies

Dissertation Director: Lisa D. Brush, Professor, Sociology

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Alana Dionne Fields, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2020

This dissertation presents an analysis of a gender-transformative violence prevention program called “Coaching Boys Into Men” (CBIM) to examine whether implementation of this program reflects the overarching goals of “gender transformative” practices. CBIM mobilizes high school and middle school coaches to engage athletes in challenging individual attitudes and practices and systemic norms and expectations related to gender equity and sexual violence prevention. Coaches deliver CBIM in the context of sports, a setting that emphasizes hypermasculinity and reproduces heteronormativity, sexism, and racism. Critical Race/Systemic Race and Intersectionality theories offer critical lenses with which to view gender-transformative violence prevention program content, implementation practices, and evaluation strategies. Challenges with implementation may help explain mixed findings seen in CBIM evaluations about the extent of changes in athletes’ attitudes and behaviors.

The first manuscript investigates gaps among coaches’ retrospective reflections, audio recordings of CBIM sessions, and external observers’ assessments of coaches’ implementations. The primary question is what are coaches *actually* doing when coaching boys into men. Rather than engaging athletes in dialogs about respect and gender justice and modeling gender-transformative attitudes and behaviors as prompted by CBIM, some coaches go “off script,” contradicting program content, stifling athlete participation, and

subverting gender-transformative intent.

The second manuscript explores these implementation gaps further by assessing the extent to which both the CBIM program and coaches recognize, acknowledge, and support subordinated and racialized masculinities; critique complex structures of inequality; and support transformative social change. Coaches, influenced by their own identities and schools in which they are embedded, perpetuate benign or hostile sexism, white privilege, and harmful racist ideologies.

The final manuscript compares two evaluation strategies to identify how suitable these methods are for assessing fidelity and quality of CBIM implementation and how these methods could help inform refinements to program implementation. Taken together, these three manuscripts demonstrate how Critical Race/Systemic Race and Intersectionality frameworks can elucidate limitations with program content, implementation practices, and evaluation strategies and underscore how even a program that purports to be ‘gender transformative’ can reinforce white patriarchy. Findings may bolster program content, strengthen implementer training, and improve evaluation, towards the ultimate goal of gender transformation.

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## Preface

Just seventeen days after the murder of Michael Brown Jr. in Ferguson, MO, I attended my first graduate school class at the University of Pittsburgh. As I conclude my time here, in the midst of a global pandemic (COVID-19) and an epidemic (anti-Black racism in America), I demand justice for Breonna Taylor; the cops who murdered her must be held accountable. There are not words to express the pain of constant Black death, but I feel it is imperative for me to acknowledge first and foremost that Black Lives Matter. I hope that through this and my future work I honor your lives and the lives of my ancestors.

I have received invaluable support and guidance from my colleagues, administrators, and faculty members and for that, I thank you all. I am truly grateful to my advisor, my committee members, and lab team for your patience, advice, and encouragement throughout this process. Thank you, Dr. Brush, for challenging me from the moment you enthusiastically agreed to be my advisor. Thank you for believing in me. You have made me a better, more confident scholar. Thank you, Dr. Miller, for not only believing in my project, but providing space in your lab and support from your team to ensure its completion. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue this work with you. Dr. Yearwood, thank you for somehow managing to be both brutally honest and compassionate when sharing with me what it would take to finish what I started. Your presence and your purpose in academia is inspirational. Dr. Howell and Dr. Paterson, thank you both for so graciously agreeing to join my committee and provide your expertise wherever necessary to enhance this project. Dr. Hill, thank you for accepting the charge to support me in the lab in countless ways, and constantly encouraging me and reminding me to practice self-care. Lisa, thank

you for sharing your expertise of the data with me, for always being available, for believing in me, and for comforting me through my tears (both in-person and virtually).

Thank you to the friends I have gained during this process – you’ve made this journey bearable and made me a better person along the way. Basak, Sam, and Gabi, I believe we are forever bonded as fellow advisees and I love you all dearly. Danny and Caitlin, I have enjoyed commiserating with you about any and everything over our respective meals. Christina and Alannah, it was a distinct pleasure to share an office with the both of you. I am proud to call you both not only colleagues but friends. Alexa you have been a true joy. Thank you for consistently supporting me in every way despite my rejections.

Thank you to New Voices Pittsburgh for allowing me to join you in your work of reproductive justice and for being brilliant Black queer folks. Thank you to my Judah Fellowship family for nurturing me and loving me and always praying and manifesting this very moment. Jaharia, Tricia, and Coach Hutchinson, thank you for caring for and nursing me back to health post-injury and for loving me sincerely even without football.

To my chosen family, thank you for your support from afar. Thank you to my Sorors for checking in and loving on me. Thank you to my SLAM family for your support from the moment this journey began. Trecia, Coach Q, Papa, Toni, Robyn, Tay, Kay, Shakey, Pugh, Raven, Caitlin, Artis, Brittany thank you for being the chosen family I can always count on to send love, answer calls, affirm me, and show up. I love each and every one of you so big. Coach Fischer, you have believed in me since high school. Thank you for showing me what true white accompliceship looks like and for checking on me throughout this process. Thank you to the young Dr. Torrey for that last-minute pep talk. Darrell, thank you for welcoming me into your family. Thank you for always

wanting me there for your milestones and always being there for mine. Thank you for loving me, supporting me, and protecting me always.

To my family, I undoubtedly would not be here without you. To my little sister, CHUBBS, thank you for loving me unconditionally and being my best friend. It has been an absolute delight to grow and mature alongside you. Thank you for your ability to be the voice of reason and comfort me. Thank you for being my sounding board and making me feel a little less crazy than you. Jordan, thank you for your support and guidance on how to get through this program with grace and sanity intact. Daddy, being your daughter has absolutely prepared me to make it through this process. Thank you for just listening to my rants sometimes and challenging me on others, it was always what I needed at the time. Val, thank you for your love and support. Thank you for believing in me and motivating me and inspiring me to be passionate and persistent in my purpose. Mommy, thank you for being my biggest cheerleader. Thank you for the ways you have supported me during this process from check-ins to schedules to library visits during holiday breaks to alphabetizing my bibliography. Your unwavering support has inspired me to keep going on the days I didn't believe I could. Mom, thank you for calling just to tell me you are proud of me. Mother, I dedicate this work to you.

## **1.0 What Are Coaches *Actually* Doing When “Coaching Boys Into Men”?: An Exploration of the Failure of Implementation**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Adolescent relationship abuse (ARA) and sexual violence (SV) are serious public health issues affecting a significant portion of the adolescent population. In the United States alone, an estimated seven percent of woman and four percent of men report experiencing physical violence, sexual violence, or stalking from an intimate partner before the age of 18 (Kann et al. 2018; Niolon, et al. 2017; Niolon et al. 2019). In the 2018 *Annual Review of Sociology*, sociologists Armstrong, Gleckman-Krut, and Johnson critique the paucity of research directly related to sexual violence in the field over the last forty-two years. The authors suggest it is imperative to incorporate an intersectional-informed study of sexual violence, “...into the heart of the discipline because of its central role in the (re)production of social inequality” (Armstrong et al. 2018, 114). This call for an intersectional approach to sexual violence extends to the development and evaluation of prevention programs in order to increase their effectiveness. Collins (2017) proposes developing increasingly more nuanced intersectional analyses for both “critical inquiry and praxis that resists violence” (Collins 2017, 1472), which can both provide more robust understandings of intersecting systems of power and provide insights toward more effective forms of resistance – including violence intervention initiatives.

An in-depth evaluation, infused with “complex analyses of intersectionality” (Collins 2017), of existing sexual violence prevention programs may augment positive outcomes of these programs. An intersectional analysis will provide innovative resistance strategies and more

comprehensive understandings of the social contexts in which individuals are embedded and that influence the social scripts. One of the growing areas of sexual violence prevention programs in the United States is the challenge to gender and social norms that condone sexual violence through programs that are called ‘gender-transformative’ programs. Brush and Miller (2019) have reviewed the global emergence of a gender-transformative paradigm of violence prevention programming. Brush and Miller assess gaps in the gender-transformative paradigm that may explain why findings report reductions in self-reported abuse perpetration but no observable changes gender-equitable attitudes. Brush and Miller evaluate what they characterize as “Trouble in the Paradigm” – the public health gender-transformative prevention paradigm – which “theorizes social norms as a key causal mechanism” (Brush and Miller 2019). Their critique of social norms theory includes: (1) the problematic presumption that program participants have perpetrated, witnessed, or experienced gendered violence; (2) the truncated emphasis on heteronormative gendered violence but not violence between men; and (3) the neglect of systemic factors that reward and normalize gendered violence. Brush and Miller suggest insights from trauma and violence exposure research, from strategies to counter homophobic teasing, and from the literature on the dramaturgical and performative nature of “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987) will enhance the social norms theory approach to gender-transformative prevention programming. Brush and Miller set aside issues of implementation as a plausible explanation for the mixed findings across international evaluations of gender-transformative prevention programming. That is, they mention but do not assess whether mixed program effects could be due to lack of fidelity in program implementation. My analysis of three types of implementation fidelity evaluation data from Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) addresses this previously neglected aspect of evaluation research on violence prevention programs.

‘Coaching Boys into Men’ is an evidence-based adolescent relationship abuse and sexual violence prevention program that trains athletic coaches as positive role models to deliver sexual and partner violence prevention messages weekly in brief scripted discussions throughout the sports season. The program has been found not only to increase positive bystander behaviors but also to reduce the use of sexual and partner violence by both middle and high school male athletes one year later (Jaime et al. 2014, 2018; Miller et al. 2013). Additionally, in these rigorous evaluations of the program, researchers found that the more training cards coaches delivered during the sports season, the greater the effectiveness of the program. These tantalizing findings underlie Brush and Miller (2019) proposing inconsistent implementation as a source of variation in the delivery, outcomes, and effectiveness of gender-transformative programming.

This paper contributes to evidence-based improvement of violence prevention programs with boys and young men by investigating the gaps between coaches’ self-reported implementation practices of CBIM, the recorded documentation of their implementation, and observers’ assessment of their implementation practices. This paper asks the questions, what are coaches *actually* doing when coaching boys into men? I evaluate the “failure of implementation” (Brush and Miller 2019), which can be linked to systemic violence reproduced and reinforced by institutional cultures that disparately police and sanction raced and gendered bodies to uphold white patriarchy.

## **1.2 Methods**

### **1.2.1 Participants and Procedures**

#### **1.2.1.1 Supporting Agencies**

As an evidence-based program, CBIM has been disseminated and implemented widely in southwestern Pennsylvania over the last five years with support from the United Way. The data presented here were collected as part of the evaluation of this dissemination and implementation effort, which included 40 coaches from nine different sports teams across 24 high schools between Spring 2016 and Fall 2018. Six domestic violence and victim services agencies coordinated the recruitment of coaches, with two local agencies providing the bulk of advocate support to coaches during CBIM delivery. Agency advocates were supported by the United Way as well as members of the evaluation team with experience in implementing CBIM on how to conduct CBIM training with coaches and to provide technical assistance with program delivery throughout a sports season.

#### **1.2.1.2 Coaches as Implementers**

All 40 coaches were informed by agency advocates they might be observed during an implementation session and contacted by research team members for post-season interviews. All coaches were allowed to refuse observation and/or interview. Some coaches were neither observed nor recorded due to agency advocates' inability to schedule these follow-ups. For this study, a total of 13 coaches who implemented CBIM as part of the United Way evaluation agreed to in-person observations and a post-season interview. With coaches' consent, at least one CBIM

implementation session was audio recorded by a trained research team member, who simultaneously conducted an observation (described in greater detail below). These coaches also voluntarily completed a post-season interview. Observations of coaches' implementation were conducted by domestic violence agency representatives in concert with the CBIM evaluation team. Post-season coach interviews were conducted within one month of the conclusion of the sports season, with consideration of post-season schedules to ensure maximum coach participation.

## **1.2.2 Instruments**

### **1.2.2.1 Fidelity Observations and Recordings**

Implementation fidelity assessed the extent to which coaches adhered to the CBIM curriculum and overall message of the program (Cutbush et al. 2017; Durlak and DuPre 2008; Durlak 2015; Jaime et al. 2018; Meyers, Durlak, and Wandersman 2012). The evaluation team created a fidelity observation tracking tool that contained specific items for evaluating coaches' delivery of CBIM. The fidelity observation tracking tool included four sections to evaluate CBIM sessions. Each section evaluated elements of coaches' delivery and the overall implementation fidelity of coaches. Section 1 rated the observers' perception of the coaches' delivery of CBIM card objectives on a 5-point Likert scale from poorly (1) to exceptionally (5). An exceptionally implemented evaluation rating is applied when the observer expects a substantial positive impact based on the implementer's success in delivering content, noting that this rating should be a rare occurrence. Section 2 evaluated how precisely the implementer adhered to and delivered each component of the CBIM training card for that session. Section 3 documented any changes coaches made in the delivery and/or messaging of CBIM cards. Adaptations to delivery included altered

questions or changes to card sequence. Adaptations to messaging included promoting norms that clearly differed from CBIM intent and/or discussing concepts not intended for the CBIM training card session. Section 4 evaluated the overall atmosphere and quality of program presentation fostered by the coach by assessing: (1) athlete engagement; (2) discussion management; (3) athlete-coach relationship; (4) quality of delivering the card activity and discussion; (5) each coach's understanding of program concepts; and (6) estimated effectiveness (CBIM Research Team 2016). All sessions evaluated for fidelity were recorded and transcribed verbatim by research staff and each session ranged from eight to twenty-two minutes.

#### **1.2.2.2 Post-Season Coach Interviews**

Coaches were also invited to complete an interview after the season via phone to ascertain coaches' perceptions of the following themes: (1) program acceptability and deliverability (e.g., how easy the program was to deliver), (2) their athletes' reception of CBIM, and (3) the overall effectiveness of CBIM as a gender transformative violence prevention program. Interview questions were developed using an Implementation Science Framework that contends that, "accurate interpretation of outcomes depends on knowing what aspects of the intervention were delivered and how well they were conducted" (Durlak & DuPre 2008, 328). Interviewers asked several background questions regarding duration and levels of experience coaching, team demographics, and how much of the CBIM Card Series was completed (Table 1). Interviews interrogated implementation practices and adaptations by coaches during CBIM sessions to understand *how* coaches characterized their practices delivering CBIM. Finally, interviews investigated coaches' comfort when delivering Coaching Boys Into Men including: when and why shifts were made to the order of card delivery; coaches' experiences with athletes' receptiveness

to and engagement in discussions generated by card topics; and coaches' observations of shifts in athletes' attitudes and behaviors toward women and girls and bystander intervention upon completion of CBIM.

### **1.2.3 Data Analysis**

Recorded sessions and post-season interviews were uploaded to Dedoose qualitative analysis software (Version 8.3.17) and fidelity observations were uploaded to the REDCap online database (Version 9.7.1). Three qualitative sources of data (recorded sessions, fidelity observations, and semi-structured post-season coach interviews) were analyzed to develop descriptive case studies for each of the thirteen coach implementers who agreed to this in-depth evaluation (Hartley 2004). Recorded sessions, fidelity observations, and post-season coach interviews were first reviewed as complete texts and evaluated using conventional content analysis. Initial codes for CBIM United Way evaluation were adapted from the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research constructs (CFIR). CFIR provides a “practical guide for systematically assessing potential barriers and facilitators in preparation for implementing an innovation” (CFIR Research Team 2020).

Research team members then systematically analyzed data to identify themes related to coaches' reported and observed implementation practices using a directed content analysis approach (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Team members identified systemic, institutional, and interpersonal factors affecting coaches' implementation practices. The macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors identified loosely follow the multi-tier analytic framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Systemic Racism Theory (SRT) in which “...the larger context of racism in American society and the broader educational system, including organized school sport, and its pervasiveness

and cultural significance” must be considered to affect positive and meaningful reform (Singer, Weems, and Garner 2017). Systemic factors were assessed based on indications from coaches concerning external influences in their beliefs on race, gender, and relationship abuse. Institutional factors were determined from how coaches expressed the culture of both their school and their sport. Interpersonal factors were evaluated both through observed efficacy of coach delivery as well as coaches’ level of engagement with their student-athletes.

While using the initial codes from CBIM United Way evaluation, team coders noted several emergent themes across cases and added them to the codebook. Two primary themes emerged from evaluation: (1) Implementers Inflate Perceived Quality of Delivery and (2) Coaches Minimize the Importance of CBIM Through Delivery. Using a directed content analysis approach, this paper investigates the discordance between coaches’ self-reported implementation practices, their recorded implementation, and observer assessments of their implementation.

### **1.3 Results**

Twelve coaches with an average of 16 years of coaching experience and one athletic director with six years of administrative experience participated in an interview, recorded session, and fidelity observation. All but one coach reported this as their first experience delivering CBIM with their athletes. The coaches represented ten different schools and six different sports, reaching an estimated 225 athletes. Reported below are the overarching themes – institutional culture, minimizing responsibility, and sport culture – that evaluate discordance between coaches’ self-reported attitudes and behaviors when implementing CBIM and actual observed practice of coaches as implementers.

Sports primarily included football or basketball, 62% in total (n=4 coaches for each sport). Other coaches included volleyball (15%), wrestling (15%), soccer (8%), and swimming (8%). Most coaches (77%) were the head coach of their athletic team with two indicating they were assistant coaches and one an athletic director.

### **1.3.1 Coaches Inflate Quality of Delivery**

Although some coaches felt under-trained on the CBIM or fearful of sanctions from administrators and athletes' guardians, all coaches reported a high level of confidence entering CBIM sessions with their teams. Most of the coaches' confidence was perceived as a manifestation of the relationship coaches developed with their athletes through the seasons and the familial environment coaches believed they had established. Some coaches likened CBIM to "*another team bonding exercise*" and understood their role as coaches to be one that transcends sports competition. For instance, while challenging athletes to engage in discussion on Card 4 - "Disrespectful Behavior Towards Women and Girls" - one coach expressed a sentiment that was shared among all thirteen coaches regarding CBIM materials:

*I want you guys to feel comfortable when you have these conversations too. Whether you have it with your dad, your granddad, or your uncle...you should have these conversations...with me and any responsible man that would want to sit down and pass down that information.* (audio-recorded session, Black male assistant coach)

However, fidelity observations demonstrated that most coaches' confidence did not translate into competently delivering concepts to athletes. During each recorded session observers rated the level of athlete engagement, the quality of athlete-implementer relationships, and the

dissemination of card objectives. The comparison between intended delivery and coaches' actual delivery revealed stark disparities between the self-perceived and observed quality of coaches' CBIM training card delivery.

Observers rated two of the thirteen coaches as "highly effective" in both the quality/fidelity of implementation and the likelihood of athletes' shifting attitudes and behaviors. Instructions described that high ratings were supposed to be "rare" and were not generally expected to be observed. Observers rated three of the thirteen coaches as "highly effective" in their overall quality of delivery. The majority of coaches received "moderate" to "mediocre" ratings from observers on the quality of card delivery. Coaches uniformly over-estimated the time they spent delivering CBIM training cards, a factor measured by comparing coaches' self-reported time spent delivering each card with the actually observed duration of a recorded session during fidelity observations. Coaches also tended to overestimate their abilities to inspire and manage discussions. In post-season interviews, coaches reported high levels of athlete engagement in discussion. However, observers documented no attempts by the coaches to engage in the scripted CBIM discussion questions. They also documented that the "discussion" questions were both asked and subsequently answered by coaches themselves. Observers and the recordings uncovered extended periods of silence where questions were posed and unanswered by athletes. The coaches' belief in their strong athlete-coach bonds inflated their perception of the quality of their delivery, impeding their accurately assessing the quality of their delivery of the program and fidelity to program processes and goals.

By comparing coaches' time estimates with the corresponding recorded sessions and fidelity observations, we found that few coaches complied with the prescribed fifteen-minute session minimum. Non-compliance with the content and structure of CBIM cards occurred when

coaches reported a strong athlete-coach bond. Coaches who believed and reported strong athlete-coach bonds consistently diverged from verbatim program delivery. Not surprisingly, given that coaches treated discussion prompts as rhetorical or empirical questions they answered themselves, most coaches failed to engage their athletes in discussion. Failure to engage their athletes was a result either of coaches' inability to facilitate and sustain discussion or of insufficient delivery of card material, namely the "Ask the Players" discussion and engagement prompts.

### **1.3.2 Coaches Cast *Their* Schools and Athletes as Exceptional**

During recorded sessions and post-season interviews, coaches tended to report low or no need for violence prevention or gender-transformative interventions with their athletes. Despite most acknowledging the importance of such a program in high school settings, coaches at predominantly white schools overwhelmingly conveyed a low perceived need to implement CBIM with *their* teams. They cited adherence to administrative directives as their rationale for delivering CBIM. Coaches attributed this low need for CBIM to their athletes' morality and positive institutional culture. Notably, in these same interviews, coaches also often acknowledged incidents of violence and problematic interpersonal interactions at their institutions. Coaches appeared unaware of the contradiction, or of the ways, racist and sexist assumptions and institutional pressures shaped their delivery of program content and ability to achieve program goals.

#### **1.3.2.1 Institutional Culture**

Institutional culture was identified by subcategories that evaluate the socio-cultural structure in which CBIM was being implemented. Coaches were asked to rate their perceived need

to deliver CBIM as high or low. Coaches were asked how CBIM did and/or did not align with their individual coaching approach. Finally, coaches were asked what support and/or opposition from administrators and athletes' guardians they experienced when delivering CBIM.

Coaches agreed with providing violence prevention programming overall but had less concern about the culture of violence in *their* schools or among *their* athletes.

*well a need in the sense of yes, there's always a need, but a need in the sense that we have had concerns, issues, or problems with our kids on campus, no.* (post-season interview, Black female AD)

This belief – that *their* athletes would never be perpetrators of ARA/SV, and so didn't actually need a prevention program – was often stated in concert with the notion that *their* athletes were “*pretty good kids*” whose attitudes and behaviors demonstrated the “*family culture and values*” coaches reported fostering with their teams.

Coaches explained their philosophies aligned with CBIM principles in that,

*...there is fairness involved in every aspect of life and even in athletics...respect is a key component in every aspect of sport and is one of the primary components of the program.* (post-season interview, white male head coach )

Contrary to the rationale coaches at predominately white institutions promoted, coaches at predominately Black institutions cited a need to improve perceived cultural deficiencies of their Black student-athletes as justifying CBIM delivery, occasionally citing an institutional culture in which programs addressing these perceived cultural deficiencies were already in place. Coaches at institutions with predominately Black students consistently reported a higher perceived need for CBIM. Most coaches, when asked if they saw a need for CBIM at their institution responded simply, yes. However, one coach elaborated,

*...do I think it [school] does need it? Yes. Do I think every sport needs it? Yes. You know, I think all of our schools' sports teams need to implement it.* (post-season interview, white male head coach)

Several coaches explained that their students came from “*difficult situations*” and their behavior was a product of,

*how certain people are brought up, that they're brought up in a [not so] decent household, okay?* (audio-recorded session, Black male head coach)

Two of the five coaches from majority-Black institutions reported that CBIM was an addition to pre-existing programs aimed at the social development of their student population. One shared, “*We always have all these different groups and mentors come in and talk to the kids*”, and the other explained CBIM:

*“really aligns perfectly with what we were doing around the team, anyway, with our [mentoring program]...What we would do in the past was every other week have a group discussion on things like relationship building, drugs, and alcohol, current events, community balance.* (post-season interview, Black male head coach)

### **1.3.3 Coaches Deflect Responsibility**

#### **1.3.3.1 Minimizing Responsibility**

Coaches minimized the responsibility of their athletes in three overarching ways: (i) coaches minimized the severity of violent incidents they discussed; (ii) coaches expressed concern about the impact of harmful behavior on institutional reputation; or (iii) coaches critiqued girls' behavior involved in the incidents.

#### 1.3.3.1.1 Coaches Minimize the Severity of Violent Incidents

In post-season interviews and recorded sessions, most coaches either mentioned their student-athletes' previous incidents of violence and/or coaches reported sexual and physical abuse by athletes in the media. When recalling incidents involving their athletes, coaches tended to minimize this violent behavior and the severity of these incidents. In post-season interviews, coaches typically characterized these behaviors as "*questionable interactions*." One coach characterized an incident involving their athlete as:

*One student who is not with us anymore and a young girl who is with us had a questionable interaction with one another... (post-season interview, Black female AD)*

Coaches also noted their athletes' harmful behaviors were not severe because they did not rise to the level of actionable concern. Essentially, coaches suggested that while their athletes may be involved in undesirable behaviors, coaches minimized the impact of those behaviors because they did not raise concerns that required any intervention. One coach reported:

*Our players have, they have shown a great deal of respect towards the female that I know, no situations when there have been conflictual relationships to the level to which it would draw anyone's attention. (post-season interview, white male head coach)*

When coaches acknowledged violent incidents involving their athletes, coaches employed language that trivialized the harm caused by their athletes' behavior and focused on the potential ramifications to their athletes' future. One coach explained a "*situation*," in which one of his players "*kind of hit*" a young woman, rationalizing that she struck first. The coach went on to

minimize the incident and express his primary concern regarding this violent interaction in the context of the athlete's reputation and future:

*... she turned out to be pregnant...And he, he hit her stomach. They had to take her to the hospital, which could've been a disaster if she would've lost the baby. ...One second and his whole life could've been ruined...Just that quick, for making a, not very intelligent decision.* (post-season interview, white male head coach)

Coaches' concern for their athletes' reputation was often coupled with concern for the reputation of coach, team, and institution. In post-season interviews, when asked how CBIM aligned with their coaching philosophy, coaches consistently shared the position that the program was important for their athletes because,

*no matter where you're at or what you're doing, you're always representing the school and team and yourself.* (post-season interview, white male head coach)

#### 1.3.3.1.2 Coaches Expressed Concern about the Impact of Harmful Behavior on Institutional Reputation

Typically, when discussing Card 8, "When Aggression Crosses the Line", coaches emphasized personal responsibility rather than cultural or institutional factors.

*You are in control and responsible for all your actions and emotions on and off the field. That make sense? Not on any of us, you guys are responsible for yourselves.*

(audio-recorded session, Black male assistant coach)

Another coach shared his concern for the reputation of team and institution over individuals during delivery of card 4, “Disrespectful Behavior Towards Women and Girls” when he explained to his athletes:

*One thing you guys don't want to ever, um, have to face or deal with is when you're in a situation where the young lady feels, or even woman feels as if they're being disrespected by you. Because that could lead to a bigger situation, and it also involves family and even more you gotta think about your family's name that goes along with that too.* (audio recorded session, Black male assistant coach)

#### 1.3.3.1.3 Coaches Blame Victims

At some point during all post-season interviews, coaches addressed either their own or their athletes' frustration with what they saw as negligible attention to young women's accountability in CBIM programming. This was a sentiment generally shared when interviewers asked coaches about the positive and negatives effects of delivering CBIM in the context of sports. One female head coach at a predominately white institution's reaction represents the typical response of all coaches, regardless of school demographics or coach identity. She explained:

*...some of them [her athletes] got offended and felt that girls should be having the same conversation that the guys are. They said girls are just as irresponsible or mean about blabbing about what's going on behind closed doors as guys are. Women got them fired up for sure. (post-season interview, white female head coach)*

Coaches shared a similar belief that girls should be held equally accountable, especially when delivering Cards 4 “Disrespectful Behavior Towards Women & Girls,” 5 “Digital Disrespect,” and 8 “When Aggression Crosses the Line”. One coach, shared in his post-season interview, his athletes' fervent pleas to hold girls culpable for behavior his athletes felt inspired potentially harmful interactions:

*Well just talking about approaching women, touching them, grabbing them, things like that, the kids would share some stuff and, and a lot of times if they're, if there was anything that was difficult was the fact that a lot of the boys came back and would say 'but coach, you don't know the things that people say to us, provoke us, '. They seem to a lot of times to have rebuttals of, the girls sometimes would instigate and lead them into these things and that, that wasn't fair to the boys, to them that they would act on it. (post-season interview, white male head coach)*

Or these young women were insecure as when another coach cautioned,

*“So, the reality is not every woman, not every little girl feels the same way about themselves as I do and they willing to do a lot of things just to be liked and be accepted.”*(audio recorded session, Black female AD)

In employing this rationale when delivering CBIM to athletes, coaches essentially pardoned their athletes for their behavior and blamed the victim. Coaches described their motivation to implement CBIM as a directive from their athletic directors to deliver the program. Those coaches also contended that harmful behaviors in which their athletes may be involved were either insignificant, a by-product of student-athletes’ cultural deficiencies, or a consequence of athletes’ status in their institution.

#### **1.3.4 Coaches Reproduce Racist and Sexist Assumptions of Sport Culture**

Sports culture was a code employed when any references to “culture” were made, whether coaches were challenging norms of sports culture (i.e., acknowledging spaces like the locker room as toxic) or referring to the culture of sport to rationalize and normalize athlete behavior. Coaches used language such as “*serious consequences*” for the individuals, including “*criminal charges*” or being “*liable*,” to deter athletes from engaging in harmful behavior.

Most coaches highlighted the culture of sport as the major influence that results in raising the status of athletes at their institutions. Coaches reported that their athletes are held in high regard. However, both coaches and athletes say status adds unfair scrutiny and responsibility to their lives. Coaches admitted that this increased responsibility seemed especially difficult to

navigate when calling upon athletes to control their aggression. When discussing card 8 “When Aggression Crosses the Line,” coaches at predominately Black schools especially emphasized their athletes’ high status is precarious. One coach instructed,

*...you gotta take that stuff serious whether you are in high school or college you are an athlete. Girls are gonna throw themselves on ya. They are because you are an athlete and you are gonna put yourself in a situation because you wanna think you are a big man on campus. You wanna walk around. You do this, you do that. Do it to the wrong girl and watch what happens. Your life is done.* (audio-recorded session, white male head coach)

This coach insisted that the status of athletes makes them highly desirable and that people expect athletes to behave aggressively. One coach at a predominately Black school considered it a triumph that his athletes were not well known by his institution’s administration, and explained to his athletes during a recorded session that,

*...a lot of administrators, people like that, they only know the kids who get in trouble all the time. So, what we have here is a good group of kids, some people don’t even know you guys.* (audio-recorded session, white male head coach )

This statement acknowledges the hyper-surveillance of Black students at educational institutions. During the recorded session in which this coach delivered card 8 “When Aggression Cross the Line,” a Black coach at a predominately-Black institution acknowledged the biased hyper-surveillance he and his Black male athletes would inevitably endure. He posed the hypothetical scenario of being pulled over by law enforcement and urged his athletes to recognize the need to remain composed despite the unjust cause,

*...automatically you like, 'Why you pullin me over? I'm Black, I'm da da da da da.'*  
*You know, you know, he could go through the whole spiel, racism this ... that...*  
*right? But if you lose your cool, right, it can necessarily land you in a bad spot.*  
*Right?... but we have to know what, what will it cost me if I act out. Right?* (audio-  
recorded session, Black male head coach)

This coach went on to caution his athletes that could be criminalized by law enforcement and further make them easy targets to blame for bad behavior. The condemnation of young women and young Black women, in particular, was a shared practice among Black coaches and coaches at predominately Black institutions. Coaches characterized these young women's behavior as predatory, as when one coach warned,

*Be careful. 'Cause all it takes is for ya'll to think it's a joke, but she knows it's serious, and all she gotta do is one thing: go and tell the right person, and you gone get jailed up, 'cause they have to take her word for it. They have to at least take her word and investigate.* (audio-recorded session, Black male head coach)

Coaches inferred that the culture of sport which bestows a higher status to athletes at institutions leaves athletes vulnerable to predatory practices from their coed counterparts.

## **1.4 Discussion**

Findings suggest that while coaches understood their value as coaches being strategically employed to deliver violence prevention program to their athletes, they inflated the quality of their delivery and underestimated the need to implement CBIM with their teams. In the process, they

reinforced gender norms and expectations that promote racialized antagonism of some athletes and blamed victims while rationalizing and minimizing the violent behavior of others. Coaches' "failure of implementation fidelity" took four main forms. First, coaches were overconfident about their ability to deliver CBIM as intended. Second, coaches showed little or no awareness of how their social location influences their experiences and consequently their delivery of the program. Third, coaches demonstrated little understanding of the purpose of engaging athletes in the material and were generally unable to use CBIM cards as discussion prompts. Fourth, coaches displayed racially-biased assessments of the need for CBIM at their institutions, which reduced coaches' buy-in and truncated their implementation practices.

Coaches tended to over-estimate the quality of their delivery during sessions and the need for CBIM was dependent on the demographics of their athletes. This over-estimation manifested in their inflating the time they believed they spent delivering each card and misrepresenting their actual adherence to the content and format when delivering each card. Previous evaluations of CBIM implementation and the impact on coaches have noted that coaches have moderate levels of confidence about delivering the program which increases after they have completed the program at least once. Coaches' self-perceptions about how well they are doing with the material may also limit opportunities for reflective exercises that challenge their preconceived notions related to ARA/SV and gender norms. This is likely to remain a fundamental challenge with CBIM unless the training for coaches takes a more explicit anti-racist, anti-sexist approach. Coaches' must also understand CBIM curriculum is intended to be discussion-based and utilize "Ask the Players" questions as discussion prompts rather than rhetorical – often asked and answered by coaches themselves – or empirical – assuming there is a "right" answer.

Delivering CBIM with a skewed perception of their respective institutions' need, coaches made racialized choices about delivering specific CBIM cards and about fully implementing or completing the program. Three of the five coaches at predominately Black institutions delivered the entire twelve-card program – at one of those five institutions, the coach did not deliver the program and was unaware how much of the program his athletes completed. The drive to complete the program with their athletes correlates to coaches' perceived need to deliver CBIM within their predominately Black institutions. Only two of the eight coaches at predominately white institutions completed the entire twelve-card program – at one of those eight institutions the coach did not deliver the program and the remaining five coaches were unsure how much of the program their athletes completed. Coaches perceived low need for this program for their athletes resulted in incomplete delivery of CBIM programming. Whereas coaches at predominately white institutions tended to minimize the responsibility of athletes involved in violent incidents and/or minimize the severity of those incidents, coaches at predominately Black institutions tended to minimize the culpability of the head coaches and administrators at institutions where violent incidents occurred. All coaches tended to raise concerns that CBIM failed to address the accountability of young women involved in these violent incidents.

In post-season interviews and when delivering Cards 4 “Disrespectful Behavior Towards Women & Girls,” 5 “Digital Disrespect,” and 8 “When Aggression Crosses the Line,” coaches used language to minimize the responsibility of an individual or institutional representatives. Coaches' compulsion to minimize the responsibility of *any* individual directly and the language coaches used to address violent incidents were in direct conflict and contradictory to the messages conveyed in the content of CBIM cards. While delivering any training card, all coaches, regardless of their institutional demographics, reiterated to their athletes that their position in their

institutions' social hierarchy as "athlete" marked them as targets for both adulation and victimization by young women. Coaches at predominately Black institutions took this a step further and explicitly criminalized the behavior of their athletes' Black female counterparts as vindictive and retaliatory. This undermining of the core messages of a program such as CBIM that is grounded in gender and racial equity is particularly troubling. Considerations in coaches' training to implement CBIM may require strategies to integrate more explicit and intensive anti-racist, feminist education.

One coach at predominately Black school considered it a triumph that his athletes were not well known by his institution's administration. Yearwood (2018, 19) contends that, for Black men in particular, the category of student-athlete "is often associated with misbehaving, laziness, drug abuse, violence, and other racialized 'issues' tied to negative stereotypes about Black masculinity." Black male athletes hold a paradoxical status wherein they are always already suspected, or at least assumed to be capable, of harming while also holding a status of high esteem within the institution as an athlete. Because of the high status conferred by affiliation with men's sports, coaches focused on their beliefs that their athletes were strategically targeted by their female counterparts. Rather than challenge a culture of sport in which women are expected to desire and offer themselves to male athletes because of status, coaches instead warned athletes to protect themselves from the rogue co-ed determined to ruin athletes' reputation and career (Carrington 2010; Hill Collins 2005; hooks 2004).

Coaches' message to athletes was "do no harm or your sporting career, your life, is over." Coaches' concern for the maintenance of their athletes' eligibility and attractiveness for recruiting is rooted in a highly racialized belief in the "redemptive" power of sport to save and humanize the Black athlete. Organized sport, as a reflection of the broader social structure, operates as a space

of gender socialization in which every team produces the constellation of practices that constitute white hegemonic masculinity. In this complex structure, there is both a demand for “socially-acceptable violence” and aggression on the field and a default expectation of violence and aggression off the field that renders Black males both desired athletes and hyper-surveilled student-athletes (Carrington 2010; Connell 2005; Gage 2008; Messner 1990, 2002; Yearwood 2018). Coaches tended to caution their athletes with the implication that they are highly-surveilled targets and more explicitly voice concerns for their athletes’ future athletic prospects.

The very particular space of sport – a presumed apolitical arena – is also believed to be “transformative” in that, “it is removed from everyday concerns of power, inequality, struggle and ideology that has, paradoxically, allowed it to be filled with a range of contradictory assumptions that have inevitably spilled back over and into wider society” (Carrington 2010). That is, in contradiction to the common sense view of sports as an apolitical arena, athletic training and institutions reproduce the prevailing social order through the disparate treatment of raced and gendered athletes, and institutionalize a racialized hierarchy with white men as head coaches and Black men as subordinates – assistants and athletes.

### **1.5 Limitation**

These findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, this study represents a relatively small sample. All coaches who participated in CBIM did not agree to participate in interviews, possibly generating social desirability bias. Only thirteen case-studies existed in which all three data sources (post-season interview, fidelity observation, and recorded

session) were available to triangulate self-reported data with observed data. Second, these data were limited regionally to high schools in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Variance in things such as sports culture or institutional structure may exist across regions and sports teams. Finally, all fidelity observations were conducted by different members of the United Way evaluation research team with different trainers and as such there was variability in the levels of detail documented across those fidelity observations.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

These limitations notwithstanding, there is enough consistency across these case studies to suggest that there are additional individual and institutional factors that should be considered to enhance the quality of implementation (and therefore effectiveness) of Coaching Boys Into Men in the future. The role that coaches play in athletes' lives is certainly influential, and undoubtedly, coaches who are "coaching boys into men" decrease violence perpetration by athletes in schools with CBIM compared to schools with standard health programs, just by encouraging athletes to consider these topics. By giving athletes reasonably realistic advice about the experiences they may have, CBIM might be preventive although not "gender transformative". Augmenting the rigor of coaches' training before implementation (a factor that could discourage coaches from participating in the program) with more explicit discussion of the feminist and anti-racist foundations of the program improve implementation fidelity. Incorporating language or concepts that challenge norms and expectations into each card may also guide coaches to address misogyny, homophobia, and systemic racism, even when they choose to skip cards that acknowledge these

issues exclusively or explicitly. Strategies to equip coaches with tools and encourage greater buy-in are needed to make these monumental shifts within themselves and their institutions so that greater structural changes and promotion of gender equity can be enacted in the course of interacting with their athletes.

## **2.0 Do Coaches Believe in “Coaching Boys Into Men”? How Coaches’ Implementation Practices Erase Intersectionality and Undermine Gender-Transformative Violence Prevention**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Recognition of gender-based violence as a global health crisis has prompted rapid development and evaluation of violence prevention programs. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a “gender-transformative” approach to violence prevention programs that directly engage boys and men. Gender-transformative programs “address[] the causes of gender-based health inequities [by] challeng[ing] and redress[ing] harmful and unequal gender norms, roles, and power relations that privilege men over women” (Ruane-McAteer et al. 2019). The first-ever systematic review of evidence and gaps in the efficacy of gender-transformative approaches calls for program evaluations that bolster violence prevention efforts by clarifying the “logic of intervention” in these programs, encouraging “robust experimental designs and measures” in the service of “...promoting a gender-transformative approach” (Ruane-McAteer et al. 2019).

We focus on one evidence-based gender transformative violence prevention program, Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) (Miller, Tancredi, et al. 2012; Miller et al. 2013, 2020). CBIM is a program intended to “alter norms that foster Adolescent Relationship Abuse/Sexual Violence (ARA/SV) perpetration by engaging athletic coaches as positive role models to deliver violence prevention messages to adolescent male athletes” (Jaime et al. 2014). This program is ideal for a detailed examination of both content and implementation. The effects of the program have been rigorously evaluated in randomized controlled trials, showing that the program substantially

reduces dating abuse perpetration among male athletes (i.e., the desired outcome). Most importantly for purposes of assessing gaps between gender-transformative program content and actual implementation, the program has undergone extensive evaluation in the context of dissemination to schools and communities across the country, including an in-depth qualitative evaluation of implementation, as recommended by Ruane-McAteer and colleagues (2019). Data from this implementation fidelity evaluation are the empirical heart of this manuscript.

To assess the degree to which CBIM delivers on its aspirations to gender transformation, this research analyzes three sources of evaluation data on coaches' implementation practices and describes how those practices accurately convey or actually undermine the gender-transformative content and spirit of the program. Ruane-McAteer and colleagues (2019) argue a gender-transformative approach to violence prevention programming is guided by two core elements, transforming harmful gender norms or practices or gender-based inequalities at 1) individual or local social network level and 2) cultural, institutional, or structural level by targeting underlying causes, social norms, and physical or regulatory environments in institutions, communities, and policy.

We attend with particular care to what the developers of CBIM, Futures Without Violence, call the “intersectionally-guided<sup>1</sup>” features of program content. The characteristics of gender-transformative programs Ruane-McAteer and colleagues highlight in their systematic review do not include a key concept in the critical literature on gender and violence prevention:

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<sup>1</sup> “Intersectionally-guided” was a phrase used during a Futures Without Violence Zoom meeting to indicate that CBIM card content was developed using an intersectional lens and introduces concepts and conversations in which implementers can address the complexity of embodied experiences related to card content (B. O'Connor, personal communication, June 17, 2020).

intersectionality, which Black Feminist Theorist and sociologist Patricia Hill Collins characterizes as an approach that addresses, “how colonialism, patriarchy, racism, nationalism, and neoliberal capitalism, either singularly or in combination inform their realities” (Collins 2019). In their assessment of strategies to strengthen gender-transformative violence prevention programs, Dworkin and Baker (2019, p. 1659) argue that,

gender-transformative interventions privilege conception frames that draw specifically on certain second-wave feminist notions of gender and men (men as hegemonic, homogenous, and ‘powerful’/women as heterosexual, homogenous, and ‘vulnerable’), often leaving out how race, gender, class, sexualities, and other inequalities intersect with masculinities and violence.

Dworkin and Barker (2019) call for a move toward more intersectionally framed gender-transformative interventions that go beyond gender as a single issue or dimension of social power to promote intersectional understandings of power imbalances in race, class, gender, and sexuality. Racialized gender is a tool of critical analysis that speaks to the simultaneity of experiencing a raced and gendered body (Collins 2009, 2019; hooks 2014). This paper seeks to extend Dworkin and Barker’s point empirically by using the work of Black feminist and critical race scholars to explore the extent to which coaches’ implementation practices fulfill or contradict the gender-transformative aspirations of CBIM, especially in intersectional terms not included in Ruane-McAteer and colleagues’ (2019) analysis. By adding intersectionality to the criteria for evaluating gender-transformative violence prevention programs, this research contributes to improving program implementation and design.

Given that gender-transformative programs aspire to mobilize intersectional insight as a key pathway towards gender equity and a core means of reducing gender-based violence, closer

examination of the implementation of gender transformative programming may reveal the extent to which this goal of integrating intersectionality into prevention programming is being operationalized and actualized. Specifically, both the content of a program as well as how implementers of the program interpret the goals of a “gender transformative” program may influence the extent to which programs recognize, acknowledge, and support specifically subordinated and racialized masculinities; perpetuate benign or hostile sexism, white privilege, and harmful racist ideologies; critique complex structures of inequality; and support transformative social change. After a brief assessment of the extent to which these elements appear in the content of CBIM program itself, this paper examines observations and recordings of coaches actually implementing CBIM to assess the extent to which they acknowledge, discuss, and navigate discussions of race and gender, if at all. The paper concludes with implications for augmenting violence prevention programs by filling the specifically intersectional gaps between CBIM’s gender-transformative intentions and actual implementation.

## **2.2 Methods**

### **2.2.1 Participants and Procedures**

#### **2.2.1.1 Supporting Agencies**

The FISA Foundation (a local philanthropic foundation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania focused on support for women and girls), The Heinz Endowments, and United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania developed Southwest PA Says No More in 2012 to “showcase the important prevention-focused work happening to keep our communities safer.” This initiative

highlights and supports the work of violence prevention programs through shared learning as well as efforts to disseminate best practices in violence prevention. CBIM is among the programs supported by this initiative. Coalition members funded the implementation and evaluation of CBIM and coordinated recruitment of 40 coaches across 24 high schools between the Spring 2016 and Fall 2018 sport seasons.

#### **2.2.1.2 Coaches**

Between the Spring 2016 and Fall 2018 seasons, forty coaches were trained by agency advocates (Jaime et al. 2014). During those trainings, all coaches were informed by agency advocates that they would be contacted and allowed to participate in a recorded observation of their athletic practices as well as a post-season interview. Most coaches (77%, n=10) were the head coach of their athletic team, with two indicating they were assistant coaches and one an athletic director. The athletic teams represented were primarily football and basketball (62%). Other athletics teams represented included volleyball (15%), wrestling (15%), soccer (8%), and swimming (8%). Agency advocates were provided with protocols and procedures on how to train coaches to deliver CBIM. Detailed descriptions of the recruitment and training process are available elsewhere (Jaime et al. 2014). Twenty-nine coaches were either never contacted by agency advocates or declined to participate. Thirteen consenting coaches agreed to be observed, audio recorded, and interviewed. Trained observers conducted implementation fidelity evaluations with a checklist to assess adherence to card content and structure and to rate implementation quality during at least one CBIM delivery session. Observers also audio recorded the entire card delivery session. Agency advocates scheduled post-season interviews within one month of the end of each season, which were subsequently completed with trained research team members.

## **2.2.2 Data Sources**

### **2.2.2.1 Coaching Boys Into Men Training Cards**

The Coaching Boys Into Men curriculum is composed of six different card types: three “Prep Cards” to aid coaches in preparing for the season; twelve “Training Cards” that provide key topics to discuss with athletes weekly for a recommended minimum of 15 minutes; two “Time Out Cards” that provide additional information to coaches including resources to better understanding key topics; one “Halftime Card” and one “Overtime card” to reinforce teams’ commitment to CBIM; five “Teachable Moment Cards” that provide examples on how to address real-world scenarios of harmful language and behavior; and one “Resource Card” that provides support services for coaches and athletes. Coaches logged card completion and session duration using a training card tracking tool that summarized card content. These cards provide the content that we initially assess in two dimensions. We assess the card set using Ruane-McAteer and colleagues’ two core elements for gender transformative programing and Collins’s sensitizing categories for power imbalances at the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality that shape ARA/SV and prevention efforts.

### **2.2.2.2 Fidelity Observations and Recordings**

Trained observers assessed the extent to which coaches adhered to the content and directives of CBIM training cards (Cutbush et al. 2017; Durlak and DuPre 2008; Durlak 2015; Jaime et al. 2018; Meyers et al. 2012). These implementation fidelity assessments were documented using a fidelity observation tracking tool developed by the evaluation team with input from the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The fidelity observation tracking tool had four sections, each assessing factors of coaches’ implementation that impact the overall fidelity of

coaches' delivery. Section one assessed observers' overall impression of a coaches' delivery during a session on a scale of poorly to exceptionally executed. The fidelity observation tracking tool guided observers to apply an exceptional rating "when a substantial positive impact is expected because athletes clearly understand and believe the message, such that the program will have a clear and significant positive effect on beliefs, attitudes, motivations, or skills," noting this will be a rare occurrence (CBIM Research Team 2016). Section two assessed whether coaches covered every objective, discussion point, and question detailed on their CBIM training card. Section three documented any modifications coaches made to the CBIM training card materials and/or changes in the order of delivering those materials. The modifications documented included discussion points, personal anecdotes, and concepts that countered or reinforced the CBIM training card challenges to gender norms and expectations. Finally, section four assessed six factors believed to affect the overall quality of delivery: (1) athlete engagement; (2) discussion management; (3) athlete-implementer relationship; (4) quality of delivering the card activity and discussion; (5) implementer's understanding of program concepts; and (6) estimated effectiveness (CBIM Research Team 2016). All thirteen observations were also digitally recorded by the observer; recordings cover the entire session and lasted between eight and 22 minutes. Comparing the audio recordings (transcribed verbatim) with the observers' documentation yields additional insight into the evaluation process and the gap between the gender-transformative and intersectional ambitions of CBIM and the messages coaches conveyed through their implementation practices.

### **2.2.2.3 Post-Season Coach Interviews**

Thirteen coaches consented to being observed and audio recorded to evaluate CBIM, and also agreed to participate in a post-season interview. Coach interviews were conducted by trained

research team members via phone and digitally recorded. The post-season interview guide consisted of several open-ended questions gauging coaches' perceptions of program deliverability, athletes' reception of CBIM, and the overall effectiveness of CBIM as a gender-transformative violence prevention program. An implementation science framework was applied when developing the post-season interview guide to ascertain, "what aspects of the intervention were delivered and how well they were conducted" (Joseph A Durlak and DuPre 2008). First, background information on coaching experience and team demographics were gathered. Coaches were then asked to report retrospectively on how many CBIM training cards they delivered during their season and any modifications they made when delivering those completed cards. Similar to the fidelity observation tracking tool, coaches were asked reflect retrospectively on their perceptions of athlete engagement, discussion management, athlete-implementer relationships, quality of delivery, and program effectiveness.

### **2.2.3 Analytic Strategies**

Recorded sessions and post-season interviews were uploaded to Dedoose qualitative analysis software (Version 8.3.17) and fidelity observations were uploaded to the REDCap online database (Version 9.7.1). Fidelity observations, recorded sessions, and post-season coach interviews were analyzed to create a detailed descriptive case study for each of the thirteen coaches in this study (Hartley 2004). Original codes for CBIM United Way evaluation were adapted from the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research constructs (CFIR). CFIR provides a "practical guide for systematically assessing potential barriers and facilitators in preparation for implementing an innovation" (CFIR Research Team 2020). Using the original codes, trained research team members evaluated all available recorded observations to develop additional codes

and themes. We identified several systemic, institutional, and interpersonal factors that structured coaches' implementation practices. These factors generally relate to the multi-tiered analytic frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Systemic Racism Theory (SRT), which contend that understanding and engaging with "...the larger context of racism in American society and the broader educational system, including organized school sport, and its pervasiveness and cultural significance" is intrinsic to any meaningful reform (Singer et al. 2017).

This analytic approach combined both content analysis and thematic analysis. The content analysis focused specifically on describing how race, gender, sexuality emerged in the discussions. This approach was also applied to the training cards themselves. The qualitative data were first evaluated as a complete text using conventional content analysis (King et al. 2020; Kohlbacher 2006) guided by thematic research team codes. Using a directed content analysis approach (Hsieh and Shannon 2005) with an intersectional/CRT lens, coders recognized and coded additional themes bearing on racialized-gender norms and expectations. A thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) then allowed for the application of an intersectional/Critical Race Theory lens to identify specific examples (both presence and absence) of discussions related to racialized gender norms and expectations. This included attending to places where coaches ignored or avoided topics of race, gender, sexuality, and social location. An additional layer of analysis also took into consideration the coaches' own self-reported identities as well as their reflections on their athletes' identities. This analysis uncovered instances where coaches ignored or avoided discussing topics of race, gender, sexuality, and social location as it related to their identities, identities of their athletes, and card content.

## **2.3 Results**

### **2.3.1 CBIM Curriculum**

The CBIM curriculum begins with three preparatory cards to acclimate coaches to the purpose and content of CBIM. These cards address individual and group level damaging language and behaviors, including “singling out a person’s race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, or other personal traits/characteristics” (Futures Without violence 2017). The preparatory cards also provide coaches with a complex definition of abuse and note institutional and structural policies of which coaches should be aware. The thread tying the twelve “Training Cards” together is explicitly outlined in the Training Card 1 “CBIM program trainings focus[] on building healthy relationships and respect for women and girls” (Futures Without violence 2017). Additionally, the charge for CBIM is for athletes to respect themselves, their teammates, and others.

Training Card 1, “The Pre-Season Speech” reminds participants that their position as an athlete is unique in both the visibility and prestige they experience. The card cautions, “As athletes, people will watch you and many will look up to you – the language you use, who you support and listen to, how you act, and how you treat people is very important. Use your visibility and leadership to promote respect” (Futures Without violence 2017). This card implicates both the culture of sport, which glorifies the status of athletes above others, and an institutional culture that hyper-surveils students who are structurally disadvantaged. Card 1 provides the opportunity to acknowledge and begin to challenge micro-, meso-, and macro- gender norms and practices by which athletes are socialized and expected to reproduce while holding an elite status as a representative of their institution.

Card 3 “Insulting Language”, Card 5 “Digital Disrespect”, Card 7 “Bragging About Sexual Reputation”, and Card 10, “Communicating Boundaries” all focus on the importance of language and disavow the practice of weaponizing race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and other immutable personal characteristics to cause harm. These cards also challenge participants to recognize aggressive and disrespectful digital communication practices that have become acceptable in spaces like locker rooms, but are harmful because they control, pressure, or threaten women and girls. These cards all focus on reform to individual and group level practices to foster health and respectful communication.

Card 2 “Personal Responsibility”, Card 4 “Disrespectful Behavior Towards Women & Girls”, Card 6 “Understanding Consent”, Card 8 “When Aggression Crosses the Line”, Card 9 “There is No Excuse for Relationship Abuse”, and Card 11 “Modeling Respect and Promoting Equality” all challenge participants to recognize and modify behaviors based on gender norms and practices reproduced by individuals and institutions. Card 2, for instance, acknowledges that athletes are positioned within a broader context; one discussion point notes, “You reflect our team, our school, the community, and your family and friends” (Futures Without violence 2017). Card 6, “Understanding Consent”, references “Teachable Moment” 2, “Locker Room Talk”, highlighting power imbalances and challenging the culture of toxic masculinity within sport spaces. Card 8, “When Aggression Crosses the Line”, directs athletes to understand when their behavior can be perceived as aggressive in unproductive ways (i.e., off the field) and the policies both within and outside of sports that regulate and impose consequences on aggressive behaviors. Card 9, “There is No Excuse for Relationship Abuse”, again emphasizes the institutions and legal structures that have determined violence and abuse are criminal and challenges participants to develop methods to navigate conflict that do not reproduce gendered domination through abuse or

threat of violence. Card 11, “Modeling Respect and Promoting Equality”, urges participants to leverage their status as athletes to inspire others to challenge gender norms and practice equity. Finally, Card 12, “The Pledge”, reiterates the tenets discussed over the previous eleven cards and declares that the athletes and coaches will continue the work to challenge individuals, groups, and systems that reproduce gender inequalities. Figure 1 provides a summary of each of the twelve “Training Cards” and an example of intersectionally-guided content from each card.

| Coaching Boys Into Men Training Cards                               |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Card Title  | Card Objectives   | Intersectionally-guided Content  |
| Training Card 1<br>"Pre-Season Speech"                              | Clarify groundrules and expectations for the sports season; introduction to CBIM  | Ask the Players: How can you show respect to even people you don't know, like at a restaurant or at the mall?  |
| Training Card 2<br>"Personal Responsibility"                        | Recognize the consequences of behaviors, how these reflect on themselves, team, and others; accept responsibility and hold themselves accountable for their actions   | Ask the Players: How do your actions off the field represent the team, your school, and your community?  |
| Training Card 3<br>"Insulting Language"                             | Recognize that language can be harmful in unexpected ways; refuse to use language that degrades women and girls; adapt language to show respect for others  | Discussion Points & Wrap Up: It's also unacceptable to make negative comments about someone's race, sexual orientation, religion, appearance, disability or any other part of who they are. No matter what, everyone deserves to feel respected and supported on this team and at school                             |
| Training Card 4<br>"Disrespectful Language Towards Women and Girls" | Recognize how certain behavior towards women and girls can be hurtful, scary or even violating; refuse to engage in lewd or foul behavior such as catcalling, whistling, sexual innuendo, or harassment   | Discussion Points & Wrap Up: Describing girls as stupid or easy reinforces negative stereotypes. How do you feel when someone insults you or someone you care about? It's unacceptable.  |
| Training Card 5<br>"Digital Disrespect"                             | Recognize that the actions they take online and on their cell phone have real consequences; refuse to participate in abusive or controlling digital behavior; create safe and respectful digital spaces for themselves and others.  | Ask the Players: What are some of the benefits of things like social networking, chatting, and texting? What are some not so great things?   |
| Training Card 6<br>"Understanding Consent"                          | Discuss and respect personal boundaries around intimate and sexual activities to create healthy, safe relationships and situation; refuse to use pressure, threats, or force in any physical or sexual encounter; actively oppose and prevent incidents of rape, sexual coercion and assault. | Ask the Players: What are ways pressure and threats can be used to make someone do something they don't want to do?  |
| Training Card 7<br>"Bragging About Sexual Reputation"               | Discuss and respect personal boundaries around intimate and sexual activities to create healthy, safe relationships and situation; refuse to use pressure, threats, or force in any physical or sexual encounter; actively oppose and prevent incidents of rape, sexual coercion and assault. | Discussion Points & Wrap Up: The men I look up to treat the people they care about with respect and dignity.   |
| Training Card 8<br>"When Aggression Crosses the Line"               | Recognize different degrees of aggression on and off the field; identify when becoming aggressive and adjust behavior when feeling becoming too aggressive  | Ask the Players: What problems can being too aggressive cause outside the game?<br>Discussion Points & Wrap Up: Always remember that violence doesn't equal strength.  |
| Training Card 9<br>"There's No Excuse for Relationship Abuse"       | Reject the use of pressure or intimidation in relationships and friendships; refer back to tools on how to monitor aggression and determine when it crosses the line; refuse to become violent or abusive in relationships  | Ask the Players: How can you tell someone that you don't like the way they're treating you or someone else?  |
| Training Card 10<br>"Communicating Boundaries"                      | Recognize importance of talking with partner about what's okay, or not okay, in their relationships; initiate conversations about setting boundaries in relationships.  | Discussion Points & Wrap Up: Good relationships are built on many things - like mutual respect. Respecting someone means asking what they are comfortable with and listening to what they say.   |
| Training Card 11<br>"Modeling Respect and Promoting Equality"       | Treat others how they want to be treated; model respectful behavior towards everyone, including women and girls, in language and actions (e.g., refuse to laugh at or support disrespectful jokes); notice and support teammates' or friends' respectful behavior.                            | Ask the Players: How can we partner with women and girls to promote gender equity?<br>Discussion Points & Wrap Up: Showing respect means valuing and supporting everyone's individuality. This includes how someone dresses and expresses themselves.  |
| Training Card 12<br>"Signing the Pledge"                            | Actively affirm individual and collective commitment against relationships abuse; serve as public examples of respect towards others, particularly women and girls  | Coach and Player Pledge: I believe that violence is neither a solution nor a sign of strength. By taking this pledge I publicly denounce violence against women and girls, and I understand that by treating everyone with respect, I am a role model to others. A world of respect starts today and starts with me. |

Figure 1 CBIM Card Content

Table 1 reports micro- and meso-level demographic information for each of the thirteen cases. Twelve of the thirteen implementers in this study had, on average, 16 years of coaching experience. One implementer was an athletic director (AD), with six years of administrative experience. Twelve of the thirteen coaches reported that this was their first experience delivering

CBIM. The coaches and AD represented six different sports at ten different schools delivering to an estimated 225 athletes between the Spring 2016 and Fall 2018 seasons. All but two coaches were men, and one woman and three men were Black. Of the nine white coaches, two-thirds coached in majority white schools. Half of the four Black coaches (including the athletics Director) coach in majority white schools.

**Table 1 Individual and School Demographics**

| CASE STUDIES |              |                         |                       |           |  |   |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--|---|
| Coach Race   | Coach Gender | Student-Body % Majority | Years Coaching        | Team Size | Card Session Recorded and Observed                   | # of Cards Completed as Reported by Coaches |
| White        | Man          | 88% White               | 12                    | 38        | Card 5 "Digital Disrespect"                          | 7 or 8                                      |
| White        | Man          | 65% Black               | 24                    | 14        | Card 7 "Bragging About Sexual Reputation"            | 12  |
| Black        | Woman        | 59% Black               | 6 (Athletic Director) | 12        | Card 11 "Modeling Respect and Promoting Equality"    | 6   |
| White        | Man          | 98% White               | 8                     | 24        | Card 8 "When Aggression Crosses the Line"            | 8 or 9                                      |
| White        | Man          | 65% Black               | 32                    | 32        | Card 7 "Bragging About Sexual Reputation"            | 12  |
| Black        | Man          | 77% White               | 3 (Assistant Coach)   | 25        | Card 8 "When Aggression Crosses the Line"            | 6   |
| White        | Woman        | 86% White               | 14                    | 15        | Card 11 "Modeling Respect and Promoting Equality"    | 10 or 11                                    |
| White        | Man          | 78% Black               | 14                    | 20        | Card 3 "Insulting Language"                          | 7 or 8 (Not Coach-delivered)                |
| White        | Man          | 86% White               | 30                    | 10        | Card 12 "The Pledge"                                 | 12  |
| Black        | Man          | 63% White               | 11                    | 15        | Card 4 "Disrespectful Behavior Toward Women & Girls" | Not Reported                                |
| White        | Man          | 86% White               | 8                     | 10        | Card 8 "When Aggression Crosses the Line"            | Not Reported                                |
| White        | Man          | 90% White               | 25                    | 20        | Card 7 "Bragging About Sexual Reputation"            | 12  |
| Black        | Man          | 97% Black               | 10                    | 15        | Card 8 "When Aggression Crosses the Line"            | Not Reported                                |

Three key patterns emerged across two key constructs – characteristics of individuals and institutional/sport culture. We found coaches producing: 1) sexism and masculine privilege, 2) racism and white privilege, and 3) intersectional racialized gender dynamics. These findings show extensive gaps between gender-transformative and intersectionally-guided CBIM content and intent, on the one hand, and coaches' implementation practices (documented by observers and in audio recordings) and discourse (documented in interviews), on the other hand.

### 2.3.2 Coaches Reproduce Benevolent Sexism and Hostile Sexism

Coaches' harmful gender stereotypes were steeped in benevolent sexism and paternalism (Rudman and Glick 2008) and sometimes blatant racialized sexism. Benevolent sexism manifests as coaches rationalizing respectful behavior toward women and girls because they *need* to be protected. Under the guise of protecting women, coaches justify the thinly veiled sexism that attributes the need for protection to the inferiority and vulnerability of women. This message is contrary to the spirit and letter of CBIM.

Several coaches operationalized benevolent and hostile sexism when delivering CBIM content to their athletes both because of their personal belief in the practice and their presumption that this rationale is most readily received by their athletes. For example, a Black assistant coach at a predominately white institution explained in his post-season interview that content about harmful behaviors seemed more accessible to his athletes when he put the point to them in familial and interpersonal terms.

*What if somebody said that about a female in your life that you loved? Their mothers, their sisters, their girlfriends, you know, whoever. And I looked to that a good bit this year and yea, that hit home for the kids.*

While some coaches called on such paternalistic benevolent sexism to dissuade their athletes from engaging in harmful behaviors, other coaches expressed a racialized sexism that not only reinforces gender inequality but also reproduces an adversarial model of gender relationality. Coaches at predominately Black institutions criminalized the behavior of their athletes' Black female counterparts as vindictive and retaliatory. One Black head coach at a predominately Black institution promoted the idea, when engaged in dialogue with his athletes about aggression, that men and women are not equal and

*We're not created to be equal.*

When an athlete further inquired whether one coach believed men are “*more dominant*”, the coach reasoned that in a physical altercation, women would experience more harm while also pathologizing her behavior, when he stated:

*I-I'm not disrespecting women at all. I'm just saying that, from a context where you guys gotta see, you have more to lose than she has to lose. Right? You see what I'm saying? You have way more to lose, and at the end of the day, y'all know she crazy!*

Black coaches and coaches at predominately Black institutions echoed this inclination to vilify young women rather than hold their athletes accountable for harmful language and behavior. They all cautioned:

*Do it to the wrong girl, watch what happens. Your life is done...you just gonna make her mad and we know when people get mad they get vengeance.*

One coach at a predominately Black institution shared with his athletes that young women in their community have a predisposition to antagonistic behavior in relationships because that is the model with which they are familiar. The coach explained:

*...they're brought up in a [not so] decent household, okay? And they saw their mother, or someone they were close to get their hands put on...they were taught that's how a man shows he like you, when he loves you, right?*

The only case in which a fidelity observer documented a coach promoting norms and attitudes not called for in the curriculum, was in the instance of the coach who declared women and men unequal, though none of the beliefs or opinions expressed were part of or endorsed by the CBIM curriculum. Coaches at predominately white institutions, in the observed behaviors, favored a paternalistic benevolent sexist approach to delivering card content and referenced the presumed

morality of their athletes. Coaches at predominately Black institutions practiced a more blatantly sexist approach to deter their athletes from engaging in harmful behavior. Rather than an appeal to their athletes' moral character, coaches focused on damage to their athletes' reputation and consequently their athlete status and pathologized the behavior of victims of gendered violence. Both approaches are rooted in racialized-gender norms that promote the morality of white masculinity, tether successful Black masculinity to recruitability, and pathologize heteronormative Black relationships. Benevolent and hostile sexism was not only a practice of male coaches, but was also internalized, enacted, and unchallenged by the female head coach and female athletic director.

In one of the two women-led CBIM sessions, the antipathy athletes displayed toward their coach was noted by observers. In her post-season interview, this coach discussed how she navigated delivering CBIM to her all-boys team:

*...I don't, they don't really show me a negative side because they know I don't tolerate it and I think because I am a woman as well...I don't think that it was, I don't think, it might be, obviously I speak to them differently than a male coach would, but I have a good relationship with my guys and I think it's a respectful one.*

However, during her recorded session, her athletes were extremely antagonistic for the duration of the session, challenging each discussion point and question posed. As the session concluded, a male authority-figure interjected in frustration,

*Couple things, guys pay attention...One of the ways ya'll can show respect is simply to listen.*

He immediately commanded the attention of her athletes without interruption and attempted to decisively summarize the content of card 11, "Modeling Respect and Promoting

Equality” what this female coach had been attempting for almost twenty minutes. Card 11 explored how to treat others, modeling respectful behavior toward women and girls, and supporting teammates’ respectful behavior. He did not, however, in either the observation notes or in the audio-recording explicitly address the gendered dynamics that may have added to the difficulty this particular coach (a woman coaching boys and young men) had in delivering CBIM card content.

### **2.3.3 Coaches Reproduce White Privilege and Racial Stereotypes**

All coaches from majority-Black schools saw the program as consistent with their coaching philosophy and the development of their student-athletes. This was demonstrated through language that included presumptions about their athletes being in “*difficult situations*”, or coaches’ belief of their athletes that, “*they have the mind of ‘I play basketball’*. *Very few have the mind of the student-athlete.*” Coaches shared that CBIM allows them to “*help or assist to maybe lead them to the right direction*” and “*coach these young guys up into being some decent men. And productive members of society...*”

Coaches at predominately Black institutions also tended to condemn physically and sexually abusive behavior and expressed concern for the depreciation of their individual and institutional reputation above all else. When recounting a high-profile incident of serial sexual abuse involving a University sports team, one coach implored his athletes to consider the repercussions to coaches’ reputations. He declared:

*The coaches didn’t go, go rape nobody. The coaches didn’t do anything. What they did wrong was not say anything and not take an action. But, they are getting*

*penalized for your behavior. So, when I am talking to you about being recruit-able, these are the things that they want to know.*

In this instance, the coach expressed concern for the repercussions of sexual violence incurred by the coaches as leaders and potential ramifications to the reputation of athletes involved rather than condemning sexual violence itself. While CBIM card content does systematically address the criminality of violence and abuse, neither criminality nor loss of status are underlying rationale for *why* athletes should not cause harm.

The swimming coach, when asked in his post-season interview how he typically delivered CBIM reported:

*It was a small boys team, combined boys and girls team. But we just met with the boys.*

Yet, while he decided to sex-segregate the combined team and deliver CBIM to only his male athletes, on several occasions during the interview, the coach reported the combined team as a true asset which aided in the ease of CBIM delivery. When asked if he thought delivering to his combined team would have made a difference he explained:

*We, the girls are our teammates every day. So, we have a relationship with them already, and being part of my team, like I said before, they have expectations, guidelines in order to be on my team...Maybe for a couple of the guys, it might have been a little different....My team is very close all around so I think having just the guys allows them the opportunity to have something separate that's just theirs.*

This same coach, who celebrated the perspective that a combined team afforded him, was also recorded at the beginning of his observed session callously dismissing a woman, his assistant coach, from the room. He exclaimed, “[coach’s name], get out. We have a meeting,” and failed

to admonish his athletes for laughing at the exchange. This coach declared the strength of this team and his low perceived need to deliver CBIM to his athletes was because his team was sex-integrated; however, in his delivery of the program, he sex-segregated the team to foster kinship among only his male athletes. Additionally, while he delivered a program striving to develop healthy and respectful relationships and respect for women and girls, he demonstrated, during a session in front of his athletes, that men (and especially men in positions of power) can disrespect women with impunity.

CBIM offers numerous opportunities to engage athletes in complex conversations about race, gender, sexuality, and how the intersections of identities and social inequalities may impact socialization and acceptable behaviors. Yet coaches who were not explicit about race and gender seemed to intentionally avoid the importance of race and gender altogether. During a recorded session when delivering card 8 “When Aggression Crosses the Line,” one coach singled out an athlete and posed the card question, “How does aggression help you in the game”? The athlete failed to respond, and instead was documented giggling when the coach utilized a sexist interpretation – through the erasure of the controversial sexual assault accusations against him, especially in the context of delivering a violence prevention program – of the Kavanaugh hearing to shame his athlete to respond.

*Dude! This is your day. Kavanaugh got accepted. You should be on cloud nine. You can't give me any garbage right now. Let's go.*

Several coaches expressed attitudes and beliefs that reproduced benevolent and hostile sexism, white privilege, and racialized gender expectations in direct conflict with the content mission of CBIM to challenge and transform the individuals, institutions, and systems that intersect

to produce and reinforce structural inequalities. When delivering card 7, “Bragging About Sexual Reputation,” one coach posed the hypothetical question to his athletes:

*Is she allowed to say no? Yeah! Is a typical guy like that going to take no? Maybe not. Now imagine she hadn't even done it with all the guys on the [sport] team?... Not only does it disrespect them, it puts them in danger. Now beyond that, we have to look at, we talk about, 'don't be a d.bag'. Don't be a bad guy.*

That coach – and several others during their delivery of CBIM training cards – went on to mention the idea of the “*real man*”. Most coaches consistently avoided talking explicitly about race and gender though CBIM content offers multiple opportunities for athletes and coaches to recognize how they are being perceived. The use of racialized gender categories, as with the “real man” trope, while simultaneously avoiding explicitly addressing race and gender undermine the gender transformative and intersectionally-guided content of CBIM. CBIM tries to mobilize masculinity (including in racialized ways) to change team culture and social norms.

#### **2.3.4 Coaches Reproduce Racialized Gender Norms and Expectations**

Coaches discussed their beliefs regarding racialized gender norms and expectations of their and other athletes’ behaviors when answering evaluators’ questions about the perceived need for violence prevention programs at their institutions. A 2011 study of Black adolescent male youth on their transition to manhood reported, “dominant constructions of manhood may be internalized by African-American men...” (Bharmal et al. 2012). That internalization, coupled with external expectations, produces what I (following, e.g., (Kendi 2019)) and the Black Feminist thinkers cited above) refer to as racialized gender norms. Racialized gender norms are those “constellation of practices” (Connell 2005) that are taught and believed to be how one engages in interpersonal

interactions based on race and gender. For example, racialized gender norms can be the tendency for individuals or groups to hypersexualize Black male bodies and normalize white male bodies as the default reference for hegemonic masculinity.<sup>2</sup> These coaches expressed beliefs – whether latent or explicit – that are incompatible with the ideas espoused in CBIM cards of respect, integrity, and non-violence. One white coach at a predominately Black institution, for instance shared with an interviewer that his athletes, “*need our help now more than ever to style these activities and thoughts,*” to describe the need for CBIM at his institution.

Particular attention was given to how racialized-gender beliefs and expectations became evident as when coaches disidentified with athletes of certain sports. For example, one athletic director explained,

*my basketball players are much more, like, assertive and they're much more confident sort of deal, my bowlers are confident on the lanes, they have different sorts of relationships with girls...*

She went on to express a presumption of hyper-sexuality with her basketball team, “*we have, surprisingly so, far few[er] sexually active students than I would've thought*” and believed in a greater need for CBIM because of their presumed cultural deficiencies of over-confidence and hyper-sexuality. Another coach shared his belief that cultural deficiency is, in part fostered by sex-segregated sports, a deficiency to which his sex-integrated team was immune. He reported in his interview,

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<sup>2</sup> Hegemonic masculinity, a term coined by R.W. Connell, refers to the “culturally exalted” form of masculinity that “sustains a leading position in social life” (Connell 2005). Critical Race Theorists and Black Feminist Theorists note that in racist social formations (that is, everywhere), this exalted construction of masculinity is always-already white (Connell 2005).

*like the boys' basketball team. It's night and day cause my boys are teammates with the girls. They are in there training with the girls. Everything that we do, strength training, water training, traveling to meets together. They are all with girls so it's a little bit different than how an all-male team that never deals with women on a daily basis...*

White coaches at predominately white institutions consistently described their athletes as “good guys.” In defining their athletes as “good,” coaches declared some iteration of the “*not-all-boys-are-jerks*” trope to interviewers and encouraged their athletes in sessions to be, “*real men.*” The only white female head coach in this study neither praised nor denigrated her athletes. Instead, she spoke of her belief in a duty to “*kind of open their eyes*” by delivering CBIM content. CBIM was necessary, she explained, because of a presumption from her athletes and herself about violence at their predominately white institution. She shared delivering CBIM to her privileged white athletes would:

*...maybe give a little bit of a twist on things that they are thinking doesn't happen. It only happens in poor communities and having gone to prep school where things like that happen. It doesn't matter what kind of community it is, it can happen anywhere kind of thing.*

Black coaches and coaches at predominately Black institutions focused on athletes' responsibility, absolving themselves and their institutions for what coaches perceive as their students' cultural deficiencies. One white coach at a predominately Black institution felt it necessary when delivering card 7, “Bragging About Sexual Reputation”, to deliver the content, “*a bit more in today's language.*” The objectives of card 7 are to help athletes recognize bragging, lying, and spreading stories about someone else's sexual reputation is disrespectful, harmful, and

wrong and that athletes should refuse to engage in those behaviors. The coach that felt the need to translate the messaging of CBIM to his athletes explained to his athletes when delivering card 7 that, *“a real man wouldn’t talk about it.”*

Coaches’ beliefs in racialized gender norms manifested not only in how coaches discuss CBIM content with their athletes, but how they rationalized the need to deliver CBIM to their teams – both of which affect the implementation practices of coaches. During post-season interviews coaches were asked if CBIM aligned with their approach to coaching and to describe their team’s perceived level of need for such programming. The coaches at all five predominately Black institutions believed the program directly aligned with their coaching approach and expressed a sentiment similar to the beliefs that the program would aide in, *“building the character and building these guys up”* and *“maybe lead them to the right direction.”* One Black assistant coach at a majority white institution explained his enthusiasm for the program as such, *“You know, and of course athletes, we won’t be looked at as, you know, beasts, and Neanderthals all the time. [laughs] You know we are some educated people.”* The appeal of CBIM for coaches at predominately Black institutions was as a tool to develop the moral character of their athletes and humanize the racialized athletic body.

All but one coach at predominately white institutions were notably less enthusiastic about their teams’ need for CBIM, though all but one agreed that CBIM in some way aligned with their coaching approach. Sentiments regarding the CBIM and coaching alignment either mentioned the program structure, *“You know, it’s got a goal in mind, a set structure, that addresses that goal, and it’s working to a specific objective;”* the emphasis on respect, *“certainly, I think that they coincide...you know, respect is a key component in every aspect of sport and is one of the primary components of the program”*; or the emphasis on personal responsibility,

*Well I think it, it shows you that you need to have control of your actions and to be responsible and we try to teach the kids especially like away games, no matter where you're at or what you're doing, you're always representing the school and team and yourself.*

One coach, when asked how he believed CBIM aligned, or did not, with his coaching approach shared quite candidly that his,

*First initial thoughts were, I mean before I learned what it was and what it pertained to, it was more, I guess my first initial thoughts are here's another thing that I'm going to have to do on top of practice.*

The appeal of CBIM to most coaches at predominately white institutions was the added level of structure to their coaching approach and emphases on respect and personal responsibility which only bolstered the reputation of the team and coaching staff.

One particularly salient and “intersectionally-guided” training card was card 8, “When Aggression Crosses the Line.” This card explores athletes’ recognizing aggression on and off the field, identifying when they are becoming aggressive, and adjusting their own behavior. All Black coaches reported and/or were recorded acknowledging their racial identity at some point in the delivery of this card. While discussing this card with their athletes, coaches began to address systemic violence and the agents of institutions whose very occupation seemingly requires, or at least does not suppress, aggressive behavior. All the Black coaches addressed a general mistrust of the police and one coach challenged his athletes,

*“...it makes you feel like less of man, or you know ‘I ain’t calling no police...but they’ll call ‘em on you.’”*

Another Black coach echoed and expanded this challenge beyond the engrained cultural teachings on how to engage with the police to include other interpersonal interactions:

*“I don’t wanna call it, for lack of a better term, they brain-washin’ us, especially as Black men, as we go, we go through. ‘Cause we’re told, ya know, not to call the police or you’re a snitch, right? Like, don’t call the police, handle it yourself. But really it’s not the right way to do a lot of situations, right? Secondly, we look at...when we’re told if someone hits you, you hit ‘em back, regardless if it’s a boy or girl. We’ve been taught that since we were his age right? But that’s not right! And those are the things we were trained...we were trained to think that way, and it’s not the right way to think...”*

The team of coaches that delivered during this session spoke to the socialization process by which behaviors are taught and learned regarding interpersonal interactions as well as what it means for these Black boys to “*be a man.*” The fidelity observer categorized the dialogue regarding police interactions as a discussed topic not intended by card content and noted the dialogue as “off topic a little bit, but seemed conducive to the discussion.” Black coaches at predominately Black institutions tended to challenge racialized-gender expectations of Black masculinity specifically during the delivery of this card. On the contrary, racial identity was never explicitly addressed by white coaches during their delivery or in post-season interviews.

## **2.4 Discussion**

Findings suggest that coaches’ personal identities – their race and gender – greatly affected whether or not they explicitly addressed the gender-transformative aspects of CBIM material.

Coaches tended to address racialized-gender in instances of Black-identified coaches and gender in instances of women-identified coaches, regardless of the demographics of their team. The racial composition of the institution along with coaches' personal attitudes and beliefs – in part a product of their own racial and gender identity – regarding gender and race shaped how they discussed and rationalized *why* violence against women and girls is unacceptable. Finally, coaches' delivery practices contradicted and undermined the intent of CBIM to “alter norms that foster Adolescent Relationship Abuse/Sexual Violence (ARA/SV) perpetration” (Jaime et al. 2014). In fact, all coaches reinforced gender norms and expectations in ways that racialized athletes and constituted Black men and women as culturally deficient.

Three key patterns emerged in reviewing the end of season interviews and recordings of coaches' actual delivery of sessions with their athletes. Themes included: 1) sexism and masculine privilege, specifically practices common among the coaches (both white and Black) that reproduce benevolent and hostile sexism, 2) racism and white privilege, including coaches' uses of racial stereotypes and implied moral superiority of white athletes, and 3) intersectional racialized gender dynamics where coaches either explicitly or through omissions reproduce racialized gender norms and expectations.

#### **2.4.1 Coaches Reproduce Benevolent Sexism and Hostile Sexism**

Coaches' charge, as implementers of CBIM, is to train their athletes to build healthy and respectful relationships with others, especially women and girls, yet in multiple instances they failed to address (much less reflect on) their own reproduction of toxic and harmful behaviors toward women with whom they engaged or referenced during sessions. Whether it be the curt dismissal of women from spaces in which they are expected and allowed to be or the denial of

program delivery to team members by skipping over card content, coaches' behaviors often blatantly contradicted CBIM card content. The coach that espoused the belief that men and women are not equal may be perhaps seemingly the most alarming instance of them all. That said, the coaches who preached a message of benevolent sexism may be perhaps more insidious because those instances can go more easily unchecked. In their unique role as coaches, Jaime et al 2014 acknowledge, "their [coaches] delivery of the material is inevitably influenced by their attitudes and experiences related to gender norms and ARA/SV" (Jaime et al. 2014). And those long-held beliefs and expectations of coaches seep into their delivery of card content and their perceptions of their delivery quality.

While the directive of coaches to their athletes, do no harm off the field, is consistent with CBIM content, coaches embedded the "do no harm" message in a system of beliefs incompatible with the ethos of CBIM. Coaches used dehumanizing language, practiced benevolent as well as hostile sexism, and reproduced a culture of sport that idolizes individual athletes and team reputation and minimizes and defends harmful athlete behavior. Coaches seemed unaware of the problematic messaging and appeared not to reflect on how their uncritical reproduction of sport culture (with associated expectations around gender and race) muddled the intent of CBIM.

#### **2.4.2 Coaches Reproduce White Privilege and Racial Stereotypes**

All coaches reproduced racialized gender norms and expectations through different tactics, coaches at predominately Black schools tending to be concerned with character development while coaches at white institutions tended to be concerned with structure, personal responsibility, and team reputation. Those coaches at predominately Black institutions also tended to be concerned with the reputation of the athletes and their "recruitability," a concern that demonstrates an

overemphasis on sports as the only means to escape oppressive environments for Black boys. In fact, the concern over the “recruitability” of their athletes is motivated by coaches’ concerns about their own reputations. This overemphasis is rooted in a belief that Black men are *exceptionally* disadvantaged – far more than any other group – and thus *require* exponentially more assistance to address their burdens. The belief in this sort of Black male exceptionalism (Butler 2013) conforms to those gender norms of white patriarchy such that Black masculinity is a deficit model of the ideal, white hegemonic masculinity. Coaches often perceived themselves as archetypes of ideal masculinity and believed their position to be one in which they were obligated to correct those perceived cultural deficiencies to both save their athletes and protect their reputation.

Except for the cases in which Black coaches were implementers, it was clear that coaches overlooked or expressly avoided engaging with the intersectionally-guided CBIM card content. When, for instance, addressing card 8, “When Aggression Crosses the Line,” one of the objectives seeks to help athletes identify when they are becoming aggressive and adjust their behavior. These prompts also lend themselves to a discussion about perceptions of aggression, whether on or off the field and why perhaps, Black athletes are perceived as more aggressive than their white counterparts. Just as coaches must direct their athletes before a game about entering “hostile territory” when playing away games against their opponent, the parallel can be made to society and the anti-Black “hostile territory” that always exists. And, as coaches believe their Black athletes only access to success is through sport, they over-emphasized the importance of recruitability.

### 2.4.3 Coaches Reproduce Racialized Gender Norms and Expectations

By introducing Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh in the context of a discussion about preventing adolescent relationship abuse and sexual violence, the coach could have facilitated a dialogue on race, gender, sexual violence, rape culture, and masculinity norms. Mentioning Kavanaugh potentially may have even led to a discussion on the disparities between how the Senate (mis)handled the confirmation hearings of Kavanaugh (a white man against whom a white woman, Christine Blasey Ford, testified) and Clarence Thomas (a Black man against whom a Black woman, Anita Hill, testified). Instead of treating this as a “teachable moment,” however, the coach characterized Kavanaugh as an innocuous, “*typical guy*.” It was a failed effort to engage athletes with CBIM card content addressing when aggression is/is not appropriate. To invoke the Kavanaugh ruling as cause for celebration during delivery of a violence prevention program during a session addressing aggression was, at best, misguided. Especially not taking the time to address the case and the aggression displayed by Kavanaugh during the trial signals to athletes that not only the judicial system, but the coach to some capacity, accept or at least do not condemn Kavanaugh’s actions. If that is indeed the case, then how seriously should the athletes take the tenets of this program?

This “*typical guy*” to which the coach refers is an unmarked white man engaged in a culture that normalizes and trivializes rape and sexual harassment. The coach continues with a “*bad guy*” trope that has been disavowed in gender-transformative violence prevention programming (Jaime et al. 2016; Miller et al. 2014; Nolon, et al. 2017) because it perpetuates the racist stereotype of the hyper-sexualized hyper-aggressive Black man (Duneier 1992; Ferber 2007; Hill Collins 2005; Leonard 2004). Education professor Carl E. James suggests,

sport serves as a mechanism through which coaches and sports figures, operating as mentors and role models, send Black male youth the message that it is possible for them to succeed in this society in spite of their colour. (James 2012)

Every coach at a predominately Black institution spoke to the need for character development, consistently labeling Black male youth as deficient and in need of “corrective agents” (James 2012). Coaches and mentors are pathologizing individuals and their culture rather than addressing institutionalized systems of oppression. The failure to recognize these systems and instead employing a sort of “color-blind racism” (Bonilla-Silva 2006) inhibits coaches' ability to understand the need to challenge and deconstruct racialized-gender norms.

Sport culture, as a microcosm of broader society, may exacerbate the uptake of racialized gender norms and expectations in that it suggests Black male athletes are physically superior yet intellectually inferior to white male athletes (Sailes 1993; Singer et al. 2017; Singer 2005, 2009). This stereotype manifests itself in the hierarchical structure of sport that positions white men as administrators and head coaches with the authority to discipline and control their Black male athletes. The idea that only Black athletes are at risk to engage in abusive behavior was shared by several coaches in this study. These pre-conceived expectations are deeply embedded in the culture of sport that hyper-surveils, criminalizes, and underestimates the intellectual capabilities of Black male athletes. Coaches tended to express racialized-gender expectations explicitly by directly addressing, for instance, learned ideas about what Black young men can or cannot do; and implicitly through coded-language – as with the “*typical guy*” or “*good guy*” tropes used to refer to white athletes or the perceived need to “*build[] the character*” or “*lead them in the right direction*” when rationalizing delivering CBIM to their Black athletes. “Healthy black masculinity” (hooks 1995) rhetoric indicts Black masculinity and Blackness rather than

confronting the structural forces that construct and maintain racialized-gender hierarchies, norms, and expectations.

Of the thirteen coaches in this study, three identified as Black men and one as a Black woman. All three of the Black male coaches, regardless of their institutional demographics, spoke explicitly about their experiences as Black men. White coaches, on the other hand, regardless of their institutional demographics used coded language like “culture” and “bad guy” that may be suggestive of their belief in the criminality of some bodies and not others. That is coaches referring to their athletes at predominately white schools as “good guys” and coaches suggesting a need for their athletes at predominately Black schools to be coached into “decent men” suggests a belief in the criminality of Black masculinity and innocence of white masculinity. The Black male coaches in this study challenged the racialized-gender stereotypes of Black masculinity as hyper-aggressive and morally corrupt. White coaches reproduced racialized-gender expectations that uplifted the innocence and desirability of white masculinity and condemned and pathologized Black masculinity.

Sport culture is structured, just as white patriarchy, where domination and threat of violence are tools employed to control and grant or deny power, and the coach at the helm remains unchallenged as the ultimate authority. If coaches have and express beliefs incompatible with the content of CBIM, given his/her position as leader, those messages will remain unchecked, and both implicit and explicit harmful gender beliefs are communicated and reinforced to their athletes. Similarly, to only address race and gender, when and if it affects coaches’ delivery to their athletes erases, for a large majority of athletes and coaches, the dialogue and necessary intersections of those topics altogether. Coaches as implementers need to be supported and encouraged to learn that race is not just Blackness but *also* whiteness and gender is not just white hegemonic

masculinity, but a multiplicity of masculinities and the relationality of masculinities to a spectrum of gender identities. The multiple ways in which race, gender, sexuality, and social location emerge in CBIM discussions may reflect the extent to which coaches as implementers of “gender transformative” violence prevention programs may have not done the critical work of reflecting on power, privilege, and for white coaches, their ‘whiteness.’ This in-depth analysis of CBIM implementation (in a setting where coaches had extensive support from victim service advocates and CBIM trainers) reveals that ‘on the ground,’ gender transformative programming may remain aspirational as opposed to actualized unless greater attention is paid to helping coaches reflect on their positions, histories, identities, and privilege.

## **2.5 Limitations**

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The sample size of this study was limited to just thirteen case-studies, as each case study examined three data sources – a post-season interview, a fidelity observation, and a recorded session – which were available for a small proportion of coaches implementing CBIM. In addition to the small sample, the coaches with complete data may be qualitatively different from coaches who did not participate in observations, recordings, or interviews, adding participation bias. Secondly, these data were regionally specific and only representative of high schools delivering the program to their athletes in Southwestern Pennsylvania. There may be differences in findings dependent on the sport and/or the region in which the program is delivered. Third, though there were scripts and trainings to ensure conformity, fidelity observations and post-season interviews were conducted by various members of the research team and there may be some variation in how observations were documented or

how questions were posed. Finally, in the interviews with coaches, there may also have been recall bias (as they were asked to reflect on the season after the fact) and social desirability bias (saying what they think the interviewer wants to hear).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

These case studies suggest that despite the fact that CBIM card content aims to be intersectionally-informed, the coaches themselves may not fully embrace the aspirational goals of this gender transformative program. While CBIM is considered ‘effective’ in reducing ARA/SV among young male athletes, these findings also highlight the extent to which CBIM implementation remains far from ideal. Potentially augmenting the depth and rigor of coach training prior to implementation with discussion about the explicitly intersectional aspects of CBIM could help coaches prepare for these discussions, but such additional in-depth training may then become a barrier to implementation and scalability. Evaluating where and how to perhaps more explicitly convey how CBIM training cards are intersectionally-driven may increase the likelihood that coaches consider the social location of both themselves and their athletes. One possibility is a training with coaches in which they, along with their advocate or a research team member, evaluate and critique their recorded observation session to learn where they may have expressed beliefs incompatible with CBIM principles. The role that coaches hold in their athletes’ lives is extremely influential, and undoubtedly coaches implementing CBIM have a positive effect. Equipping these coaches with tools, support, incentives, and motivation to make these monumental shifts within themselves and their institutions may be the next logical steps in refining and optimizing “gender transformative” programming, especially in the context of sport.

These monumental shifts will require training and/or supplementary CBIM curriculum content that educates coaches on 1) how their gender equitable (or inequitable) beliefs and practices affect their delivery of CBIM; 2) how to recognize and deliver intersectionally-guided content as intended; and 3) how to recognize and challenge institutional and sport culture that racializes and criminalizes Black athletes. Because coaches are cognizant of their uniquely influential position, they must be trained to be self-reflexive and critically engage micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of sexism, racism, and race-specific gender ideologies. By reviewing their implementation practices on a consistent basis – critiquing audio-recordings and fidelity observations – coaches can begin to recognize expressed attitudes and beliefs that may have seemed innocuous but are in fact modeling racist and sexist beliefs to their athletes and undermining the principles of CBIM.

Comparing the content and declared intentions of the CBIM curriculum to evidence obtained through interviews, audio recordings, and observations of coaches, this manuscript examines the extent to which athletic coaches implementing CBIM explicitly acknowledge the ‘gender transformative’ (especially the ‘intersectional’) aspects of the program, specifically whether and how they discuss race, gender, and sexuality. The analysis considers how the social identities of coaches and athletes and their structured social locations in intersecting hierarchies (schools, sports) influence how coaches interact with athletes, present the CBIM materials they are supposed to implement, and model the kinds of gender transformations for which CBIM calls. This paper examines the extent to which the intersectionally-guided content of CBIM training cards are delivered as intended and how coaches’ implementation practices support or undermine its gender-transformative and intersectional intent.

### **3.0 Evaluating Strategies for Assessing Fidelity and Quality of Implementation of a Sexual Violence Prevention Program**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) technical assistance package on sexual violence prevention calls for attention to changing gender norms as a subset of social norms that contribute to sexual violence (Holditch Niolon et al. 2017). Violence prevention programs based in the CDC model are designed to shift social norms by converting widely held individual overestimates of the prevalence and acceptability of violence into collective responsibility for community members' safety and dignity (Orchowski 2019). Specifically 'gender-transformative' sexual violence prevention programs engage men and boys to challenge social norms that buttress widespread and status-enhancing sexist attitudes and behaviors (Brush and Miller 2019). Several systematic reviews of gender-transformative violence prevention programs document statistically significant reductions in violence against women, increases in positive bystander behavior, and in some cases changes in harmful attitudes (Barker, Ricardo, and Nascimento 2007; Casey et al. 2016; Dworkin, Treves-Kagan, and Lippman 2013; Ruane-McAteer et al. 2019; United Nations Population Fund, Promundo, and MenEngage 2010). In other cases, however, program evaluations show no changes in what Jewkes and colleagues (2011) call "gender-equitable" attitudes (Jewkes et al. 2011). Among the factors likely to explain the mixed evidence of gender-transformative program effects on behavioral outcomes through the mechanism of changes in attitudes are flawed measures of gender attitudes and failures of implementation fidelity (Brush and Miller 2019). This research

contributes to violence prevention research and advocacy by analyzing the evaluation practices that assess implementation fidelity as it contributes to or undermines program effects.

The prevention literature, including sexual violence prevention research, has understandably focused on establishing the efficacy of programs as standardized interventions rather than on implementation. Guidance to violence prevention practitioners is therefore limited around how best to evaluate what the fidelity and quality of program implementation contribute to a program's demonstrably changing outcomes. Because the social norms theory guiding gender-transformative programs causally connects gender-equitable attitudes to behavioral outcomes such as self-reported perpetration (Brush and Miller 2019), testing the underlying model requires attention to the mechanisms that are supposed to change both attitudes and behaviors: accurate content delivery, but also role modeling and active engagement of participants. Moreover, because programs designed to change behaviors via attitudes have to be acceptable to both implementers and participants, evaluations have to consider carefully whether implementation adaptations (i.e., changes in content or delivery) contradict or complement program content and intent and therefore enhance or undermine program effects (Cutbush et al. 2017; Demby et al. 2014; Durlak and DuPre 2008; Dusenbury et al. 2005; Meyers, Durlak, and Wandersman 2012; Ozer, Wanis, and Bazell 2010). Durlak and Dupre offer eight different aspects of implementation to consider for evaluation: fidelity; dosage; quality; participant responsiveness; program differentiation; monitoring of control/comparison conditions; program reach; and adaptation. This study focuses specifically on implementation fidelity, implementation quality, and implementation adaptations. These aspects of program implementation difficult to measure through quantitative implementation evaluation measures of dosage and control/comparison conditions.

Coaching Boys into Men (CBIM) is one example of a violence prevention program that aspires to gender-transformation. CBIM is a 12-week gender-transformative violence prevention program that leverages the unique relationship coaches develop with their athletes and enlists coaches to transmit CBIM content to their athletes. The CBIM curriculum card series is a compilation of twenty-four card including preparation and additional resource cards with twelve core training cards with a key topic for weekly discussion (intended for weekly use in a 12-week sport season). These key topics address personal responsibility, harmful language, and harmful behavior.

CBIM has been shown to “alter norms that foster ARA/SV (Adolescent Relationship Abuse/Sexual Violence) perpetration by engaging athletic coaches as positive role models to deliver violence prevention messages to adolescent male athletes” (Jaime et al. 2015). As a rigorously-evaluated and evidence-based program designed to prevent ARA/SV by promoting gender transformation through changing social norms, CBIM is highlighted in the CDC technical assistance package on sexual violence prevention. In addition, systematic analyses and reviews of prevention programs characterize CBIM as a “promising” intervention (Center for Disease Control and Prevention 2014; Dworkin et al. 2013; De Koker et al. 2014; Niolon, et al. 2017). The program is considered “promising” because of the mixed findings of randomized control trials. The randomized control trial of CBIM with high school students showed no changes in attitudes (Miller et al. 2012; Brush and Miller 2019), whereas a middle school trial of CBIM found increases in gender-equitable attitudes at one year follow up were directly proportional to intervention intensity and dosage. That is, the more training cards that coaches delivered and the more complete the program package (at least 8 of the 12 cards delivered), the higher the middle school male athletes scored on measures of gender-equitable attitudes. This certainly suggests that, at least for younger

adolescents, if implemented relatively completely, the program shifts gender attitudes towards equity. Attention to how well this prevention program is being implemented may help to guide the dissemination, scaling up, and ongoing evaluations of CBIM as well as similar prevention programs. In addition, problems with measurement (i.e., the items used to assess gender attitudes are not actually measuring them) and with the social norms-focused paradigm undergirding gender transformative programs notwithstanding (Brush and Miller 2019), implementation fidelity and quality are as important as dosage and intensity.

The evaluation literature notes that implementation matters just as much as the content in the curriculum itself (Cutbush et al. 2017; Joseph A Durlak and DuPre 2008; Durlak 2015; Meyers et al. 2012). Thus, identifying strategies for assessing the quality of implementation is particularly relevant for advocates and researchers seeking to understand how to optimize a prevention program for maximal effectiveness. Qualitative methods to assess implementation may include observations of program implementation, audio recordings of discussion sessions, and interviews with implementers. Fidelity observations and audio-recorded sessions provide information on the connections between who the implementers are and how those implementers deliver program content in ways that are especially salient for evaluating gender-transformative violence prevention programs engaging boys and men. This study takes advantage of an in-depth evaluation of CBIM to assess the extent to which these methods provide details about program implementation.

Three sources of qualitative data (fidelity observations, corresponding audio recordings, and post-season interviews) were available for thirteen cases in this study. Of those thirteen cases, two cases offered an opportunity to assess variation in observers' practices. These two implementation evaluations featured paired fidelity observers who both documented and rated

implementation practices, allowing for a comparison of two observations of the same session – which was also audio recorded. To assess CBIM implementation evaluation strategies, we use multi-source data to document consistencies and variabilities of fidelity observations within each of two cases.<sup>3</sup>

These fidelity observations conducted by research team members assessed “the extent to which the innovation [intervention] corresponds to the originally intended program (i.e., adherence, compliance, integrity, faithful replication)” (Joseph A Durlak and DuPre 2008). The issue of fidelity in content and delivery is complicated by Durlak and DuPre’s report of a “provocative finding” in their review of factors affecting implementation. Durlak and DuPre acknowledge there is considerable debate over the extent to which implementation fidelity is the most desirable practice or whether adaptations for “cultural fit” are acceptable. Durlak and DuPre report several studies that found “better implementation occurs when providers can make some program adjustments.” They go on to suggest, “researchers can thus learn from local practitioners how to improve interventions, if they carefully measure what is happening during implementation” (Joseph A Durlak and DuPre 2008). Evaluation research also assumes that observational data are relatively objective and thus the preferred method for monitoring implementation fidelity. Systematic reviews of gender-transformative programs report on both the promise of the approach as well as variability in outcomes; unfortunately, few studies of gender transformative programming actually describe implementation processes and how implementation quality was

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<sup>3</sup> Retrospective interviews with coaches were conducted at the conclusion of the season. Unlike the dual observations and audio recordings of a specific delivery session, therefore, the interviews do not provide coaches’ real-time perceptions or impressions regarding the session in which they were observed and recorded. We feature interview data in other analyses.

measured. This paper shows how evaluation practices can help researchers and practitioners understand how much variability in implementation contributes to mixed findings of prevention program effects. The ability to compare evaluation practices between two different fidelity observers provides some insights into evaluation methods, and as well as how such evaluations might be utilized beyond assessing implementation fidelity to improving program implementation.

Thus, this study has two purposes. First, we closely examine two implementation evaluation strategies – observations and audio recordings - to identify how suitable these methods are for assessing the fidelity and quality of CBIM implementation. Second, related to the need for documenting and assessing program adaptations, the analysis also establishes how observations and audio recordings could help to inform continuous refinements to program implementation. This research contributes to the broader public health and social justice projects of violence prevention by using multiple sources of data from an evaluation of implementation fidelity and quality in a gender-transformative violence prevention program. The analysis identifies and interprets lapses in implementation and gaps between program intention and implementation that subvert efforts to shift social norms and consequently diminish program effects. Findings provide an evidence base for remedial improvements in both evaluation and implementation of violence prevention programs that follow CDC guidance and adopt a gender-transformative approach.

## **3.2 Methods**

### **3.2.1 Participants and Procedures**

Between the Spring 2016 and Fall 2018 seasons, CBIM engaged 40 coaches from nine different sports teams representing 24 high schools in southwestern Pennsylvania. CBIM curriculum was to be delivered by coaches to their athletes in weekly 15-20 minutes sessions. A full description of the 12-week program and coaches' training and recruitment is available elsewhere (Fenn et al. 2019; Miller et al. 2020; Miller, Tancredi, et al. 2012).

### **3.2.2 Data Sources**

#### **3.2.2.1 Fidelity Observations and Audio Recordings**

Fidelity observations provided a real-time evaluation of coach-implemented CBIM sessions and a subjective assessment (by an external observer) of the quality with which coaches deliver program content (i.e., the 'training cards') based on whether each card component is addressed and adequately completed. Sessions being evaluated by fidelity observers were simultaneously digitally recorded. The date, location, duration, card number, and research team members observing a coach-implemented session were documented. "Warm-Ups", "Discussion Points", "Ask the Players", and "Teachable Moment" components were documented as either delivered or not delivered.

Observers then assessed the extent to which coaches met the objectives outlined on cards using a Likert-scale from 1 (poorly) to 5 (exceptionally). The observation tracking tool has four sections. Section one provides the performance levels – from poorly (1) to exceptionally (5) – to

rate the extent to which the coach successfully communicated the topic objectives (see Appendix A). In this case, implementation quality and program efficacy are considered to improve with implementation fidelity. A poorly implemented evaluation rating is applied when the observer expects no positive impact or expects a negative impact because the implementer did not attempt to discuss the objectives or the implementer delivered ideas counter to the objectives. The tool also provides examples of specific behaviors for assigning ratings. For example, the tool instructs observers to rate a session “poor” because it is likely to have no positive or a negative impact when they observe: “(1) discussion related to this objective is not attempted; (2) The discussion and/or athletes miss the point in such a way that the objective is not achieved; or (3) athletes walk away with ideas that run counter to the intended objective” (CBIM Research Team 2016). At the other end of the rating scale, observers are instructed to rate a CBIM session as exceptionally well implemented when the observer expects a substantial positive impact based on the observers’ perception of athletes’ understanding and belief in delivered content, noting that this rating will be a rare occurrence. The criteria provided for expecting a substantial positive impact include: “athletes clearly understand and believe in the message, such that the program will have a clear and significant positive effect on beliefs, attitudes, motivations, or skills” (CBIM Research Team 2016). See Appendix A.

Section two evaluates implementer fidelity – how well the implementer adhered to each component of the Training card – when delivering content. Observers are directed to note any discrepancies or deviations from content in their evaluations – whether those discrepancies and deviations altered the intent of training card material.

Section three evaluates the practices of implementors during the delivery of CBIM cards. Specifically, this section evaluates adaptations or changes to the delivery (e.g., format of

discussion, sequence of cards, addition of activities, added or altered questions) and messaging of CBIM card topics (e.g., new norms, attitudes, or skills promoted, or concepts not intended for session discussed).

Section four evaluates the overall atmosphere and quality of implementation by assessing: (1) athlete engagement; (2) discussion management; (3) athlete-implementer relationship; (4) quality of delivering the card activity and discussion; (5) implementer's understand of program concepts; and (6) estimated effectiveness (United Way 2017). Criteria for assessing the overall atmosphere and quality of delivery and a template of the observation tracking tool are in Appendix B.

Trained observers assessed the extent to which coaches' complied with the content and directives of CBIM training cards and overall atmosphere and quality of delivery during a single session (Cutbush et al. 2017; Joseph A Durlak and DuPre 2008; Durlak 2015; Jaime et al. 2018; Meyers et al. 2012). Observed sessions were also audio recorded. These audio recordings captured most (but not all) content of discussions. The duration for both recordings was less than the fifteen-minute session length recommendation, one lasting just under six and a half minutes and the other lasting eleven and a half minutes. The recordings were transcribed verbatim.

### **3.2.3 Data Analysis**

Recorded sessions were uploaded to Dedoose qualitative analysis software (Version 8.3.17) and fidelity observations were uploaded to the REDCap online database (Version 9.7.1).

### 3.2.3.1 Case-Oriented Study

This paper employs a case-sensitive approach – fidelity observations and recordings were collected in tandem of the same event, a CBIM discussion led by coaches with their athletes.<sup>4</sup> The two cases selected represent four fidelity observations and two corresponding audio recordings. These two cases with paired fidelity observers reveal variations in both evaluation practices and implementation practices that cannot be gleaned from the comparison of a single observer’s rating and notes and the corresponding recorded session transcript. These data were analyzed to assess what these observations and recordings each reveal about how CBIM – as a community-based violence prevention program – is implemented, and how these different methods may reveal different aspects of implementation quality.

First, each case was evaluated as a singular “meaningful and complex configuration of events and structures” (Ragin et al. 2014). The two fidelity observations for each singular case were compared to assess conformity and divergence in observers’ assessment of coaches’ implementation practices. Next, the corresponding recorded sessions were evaluated alongside the two fidelity observations for each case to assess observers’ practices when conducting a fidelity observation. Finally, both cases were compared to assess similarities and differences in practices by research team members and illustrate what these evaluation methods reveal about implementation fidelity and implementation quality. These procedures allow us to address the vexed question of whether local and individual adaptations or changes to the content and

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<sup>4</sup> As the post-season interviews elicited coaches’ retrospective perceptions and impressions of the entire CBIM program, those data are not included in this paper, which focuses on the evaluation of just one CBIM discussion session.

prescribed delivery of a program intended to change attitudes and behaviors through a combination of engaged discussion and role modeling attenuate or enhance program effects.

### **3.3 Results**

#### **3.3.1 Discrepancies in Observations**

During two sessions, two research team members observed the same recorded session in tandem. Evaluating the consistencies and variations in these two cases will provide insights regarding the strengths and weaknesses of fidelity observations. In the first case two observers were present for a session on card 7, “Bragging About Sexual Reputation”, both observers documented the same basic information, including card observed, season, sport, location, team size, and duration of the session. When evaluating the extent to which the coach being observed achieved the three objectives outlined on card 7, one observer consistently rated the implementer one category lower than the other observer, but both sets of ratings were around the mid-point of the scale (rather than “poor” or “exceptional”). Both observers affirmed that all “Warm-up”, “Ask the Players”, and “Discussion Points” were addressed. The observer who rated the coach lower on achieving card 7 objectives provided detailed notes on an anecdote the delivering coach shared during the “Ask the Players” segment. That observer also noted a change in the delivery format:

*Card delivery was about six minutes long. This was mostly due to the late start we got since the implementer told the observer the wrong start time, and the coach seemed anxious to get practice moving along.*

In contrast, the other observer simply estimated, *“The session lasted roughly ten minutes.”* The prescribed session duration is at least 15 minutes per week, and implementers whose sessions last less than the recommended length are considered to have changed the delivery format. Both observers noted the change to delivery format because of the abbreviated session. By explaining that the abbreviation was due to scheduling problems combined with the coach’s apparent eagerness to move from the program discussion to sports practice, one observer establishes the fact that this particular adaptation was likely to the detriment of program effectiveness.

The two observers disagreed that an anecdote shared was a new element. One considered the anecdote an added *“visualization activity”* while the other documented no new element but noted, *“the athletes seemed to appreciate the different approaches the implementer took to explain the topic in different ways.”* This discrepancy exhibits a difference in interpretation of what qualifies as a “new element” or local adaptation of program content and delivery. The ambiguity is understandable, as materials for this session include two “Teachable Moment” cards that both outline visualization activities similar to the implementer’s and are thus technically not new elements because they exist as supplementary content for coaches.

Both observers rated the implementer as having an extremely strong understanding of the concepts that were taught. One observer noted, *“implementer is a violence prevention advocate at a local DV agency,”* an observation that does not necessarily acknowledge the implementer’s demonstrable understanding of content, rather a supposition based on the implementer’s profession. The observers, however, disagreed on how well the discussion was managed, the quality of athlete-coach relationships, the overall quality of delivering the card activity, and discussion. The observer who rated the implementer’s discussion management and athlete-coach relationship lower noted *“athletes seemed checked out”* and that the implementer was not a coach

but a violence prevention advocate. That same observer rated the implementer's overall delivery quality higher noting, *"The implementer is very enthusiastic and took ownership of the material"*. Enthusiasm is first among the criteria for a high "quality delivery" rating and clearly influenced the rating of this observer. The more detailed notetaker of the two observers noted:

*The implementer was not a part of the coaching staff, but he told me that the athletes understand what happens every week, and when they see him coming, they gather chairs and start moving into the meeting room where they have discussions.*

This observer noted additionally, *"Implementer is a violence prevention advocate at a local DV agency"*. Neither observer documented the session not being implemented by a coach as a change in the delivery format. This gross oversight potentially undermines the entire design of CBIM in that the intimacy of coach-athlete relationship is at the crux of what makes the program both innovative and allows for athletes to relate to the material through sports.

Unfortunately, aside from the brief notations on the session duration and new element addition, the observer that tended toward higher ratings for the implementer documented no other notes, providing us with no empirical observations to substantiate their ratings. The observer who consistently rated the implementer lower documented a final observation:

*Athletes appeared to understand the concepts taught, especially when the implementer broke it down in different ways. The discussion seemed rushed and there wasn't robust participation, though.*

Thus, the documentation of their observations reveals that the tool used for these observations itself may be constraining how well observers are able to capture the 'in the moment' adaptations being made by coaches. Observers seem to have trouble fitting coaches' behaviors into the prescribed 'objective' categories based on actual behaviors and language. Despite the

differences between these two observers' assessments of the extent to which this implementer successfully met program objectives and those factors contributing to the implementer's overall quality of delivery, both observers estimated the "effectiveness of the session impacting participants' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors as intended by the program in this session" (United Way n.d.) as "average."

The CBIM Observer Manual provides detailed criteria for each rating along the 1-5 Likert-scale to rate implementer's achievement of objectives for session training cards (see Appendix A). The manual also provides specific behavioral criteria for rating the overall atmosphere and quality of delivery by the implementer. The manual suggests observers consider athlete engagement, discussion management, athlete-implementer relationship, and overall delivery quality and provides specific behaviors as "positive signs"/ "negative signs" to inform the ratings. If observers are adequately trained to use specific behaviors as the basis for rating, the process produces the kind of reasonable inter-rater reliability found in this case. However, in a fast-moving session, observers may not have time to document and interpret changes in content and delivery that constitute adaptations – let alone provide enough data to evaluate implementation practices as supporting or undermining program intentions and therefore augmenting or diminishing program effects as measured in a randomized control study.

In the second case, evaluators observed and rated a session on card 3, "Insulting Language." Both observers documented the same basic information regarding season, sport, team size, and session duration. There was however, variation in how observers documented the location where the session was delivered. One observer noted the school name as the location while the other noted the location as "gym". Even the mundane and "objective" information built into the form may, when variation is seen, provide insight into how attentive and precise observers are

during a session. Both observers rated the coach's achievement of objective two "Implementer articulates the need to refuse the use of language that degrades women and girls" (United Way n.d.) as "average." Both observers rated the coach's achievement of the other two objectives as "exceptional." Both observed room for improvement in how the coach would focus on and clarify the point outline in objective two, the only objective on the card that explicitly addressed the treatment of women and girls. Similarly, both observers noted this coach failed to deliver two discussion points that directly and explicitly addressed sexism, racism, and homophobia. The coach failed to deliver discussion point three,

Calling someone a "girl" or "gay" to insult or tease them is not okay. Saying to a group of guys, "speed it up ladies," or "you play like a girl" may seem harmless, but it's not.

These remarks are derogatory towards women and girls and they're unacceptable on this team. The same goes for saying "that's so gay." (Futures Without violence 2017)

and discussion point four,

It's also unacceptable to make negative comments about someone's race, sexual orientation, religion, appearance, disability or any other part of who they are. No matter what, everyone deserves to feel respected and supported on this team and at school.

(Futures Without violence 2017)

Both observers documented every instance in which the coach actively opted to not deliver any card content that referred to women and girls, race, or sexual orientation. One observer, however, contradicted these observations when noting,

*Read from the card. Used his own references. Coach holds the team to a high standard. Personal relationship/stories were talked about by the coach. Coach/implementer described how teachers have complimented some of the*

*students to him and how he felt about that. Implementer asked if they have seen disrespectful actions or have done disrespectful actions and asked individuals their opinions.*

As with the above-mentioned notation, both observers documented their perception of the coach's attempts to summarize card sections without actually utilizing any of the card content. Both observers agreed the coach did not address any of the outlined "Ask the Players" prompts, potentially diminishing the effectiveness of the intervention. Both observers made remarks following the "Ask the Players" card element. One observer noted:

*Talked about using demeaning language to insult someone else and included how pictures can do the same. Specifically talking about explicit photos being posted on Facebook and the damage that can cause.*

The other observer documented:

*Stressed the need to stand up for what's right and set a positive example. The coach tried very hard to engage his athletes through question and response to get them more involved in the card's subject.*

The observers agreed that the coach successfully addressed the discussion points that declared (1) insults, name-calling, and slurs cause harm, and (2) observe the "golden rule". They disagreed that the coach successfully engaged with the discussion point that offered a healthy alternative behavior to taunting or mocking. The observers again agreed that the coach failed to deliver the discussion points that addressed the harms of homophobic taunting, reinforcing gender stereotypes that demean women, and discriminatory remarks made about race, appearance, disability, or sexual orientation. Both observers made similar notations in this regard, one observer summing up the sentiment of the two when documenting:

*The coach didn't touch on the negative use of gender or sexual orientation as insults and what the implication[s] of that are.*

The other observer noted that the coach “... *did not follow most of the card format, most of the talk was off-script.*” This same observer rated the coach’s understanding of concepts to be slightly below average and noted, “*He understood the concept of respect, but hard to gauge for the other concepts as [they were] not discussed.*” The other observer rated the coach’s understanding as slightly above average explaining, “*I believe the coach understood the concepts being taught but didn't express their importance.*” The more generous observer admits to rating the coach based on a belief rather than what the coach demonstrated, a clear divergence from the instructions of the CBIM observer manual and the intention of fidelity observation.

Both rated the quality of the athlete-coach relationships as excellent, noting the respect athletes displayed for their coach, citing “*there seemed to be a large amount of respect between athletes and implementer.*” The athlete engagement however was rated as average to slightly above average. Similarly, they estimated the “effectiveness of the session impacting participants’ beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors as intended by the program in this session” (United Way n.d.) as slightly below average to average. The observer who rated the overall quality of delivery as slightly below average noted: “*As stated before, not much was talked about.*” The observer who noted a belief in the coach’s understanding though it was not demonstrated, rated the coach’s overall delivery quality as average with no note as to rationale, but perhaps a belief. For these paired observers the contradiction between the observation tracking tool form (see Appendix C) and the CBIM observer manual may have had some effect on how they determined overall quality ratings. However, more egregious in this case, is the blatantly subjective admission by one observer to base ratings not on what was observed – the practice and purpose of fidelity observations – but on

a belief in the competence of the implementer. And, belief in the competence of the coach is inconsequential as this belief is not translated into demonstrable delivery to athletes.

### **3.3.2 Discrepancies between Observation-Based Ratings and Audio Recordings**

In the afore-mentioned first case of paired observers, there is documentation of the anecdote/ “visualization activity” to which the observers referred. The coach introduces this visualization by way of a slightly altered warm up of card 7, “Bragging About Sexual Reputation”, to athletes:

*So imagine you’re telling your buddy on Monday morning, hey after the game Friday night at [name] party I was up in the bedroom with [a girl] ...Um, we were fooling around and whatever and she had this green bra on. Soo what should your buddy now do with this information? [inaudible] So the next time your buddy is walking down the hallway, he sees [name], I don’t care if she’s wearing a turtleneck sweater and a parka, what’s he thinking?*

To which an athlete responded, “About her bra. Green bra”. This represented one of the few times athletes engaged with the coach beyond mono-syllabic answers which garnered the implementer an average and slightly above average rating on engagement from the observers. The coach is recorded as going through the content with some rapidity, completing the entire training card in six minutes and twenty-six seconds, less than half of the recommended fifteen-minute session. The recording also documents how little time the coach spends waiting for athletes to respond to questions before providing the answer himself, a practice that informed the observers’ ratings of discussion management and athlete engagement as average and slightly above average. The average rating suggests that the implementer demonstrated limited “positive signs” that they

were able to manage athlete behavior and facilitate discussion. Audio-recordings and transcripts reviewed alongside fidelity observations in fact present additional information that documents just how the implementer rushed through material with limited time and effort to engage athletes in discussion. Here it also becomes clear that fidelity – articulating all card content – is not equivalent to quality of delivery, when the intent of CBIM is not only to disseminate information, but foster discussion.

In the second case when two observers were present, the audio recording of the coach's delivery substantiates why observers noted: *"not much was talked about"*. The session begins with the coach recapping a recently played game and the efforts of some of his athletes. The recording elapses three minutes and forty-three seconds before the coach declares, *"alright, so we're going into our uh, card."* The coach reads verbatim the warm-up for card 3, "Insulting Language", before going, as the observers characterized his delivery, *"off script"*. As observers reported, the coach focused specifically on an example of posting explicit photographs to Facebook and compared it to, *"in my [coach's] day we might have just talked about this. Overhear this. What'll happen now, if someone does something?"* The coach went on to ask his athletes to consider the repercussions for posting inappropriate pictures,

*Now whose 18?... Ok, so like 17, 18, there could be charges for [cross talk] people think it's funny or whatever. You'll get in serious trouble. Alright?*

As observers documented, none of the discussion points related to gender, race, sexuality, or ability were addressed. In the audio recording, we hear the coach abruptly ending the session after posing the question *"What can we do when we hear other people making these comments?"* The coach directed his athletes:

*Just like if you're at the mall, just like if you're at the T-station, you want to say chill. C'mon don't trip and stuff, don't do this. Okay? Alright. Does anyone have questions on any of this stuff? Alright. That's it, let's go three-man weave [a basketball warm-up].*

Including the nearly four minutes of post-game breakdown recorded, the entire session took eleven minutes and thirty-five seconds. The observers rated the overall quality of delivery by this coach as slightly below average to average. Figure 2 reports observations and audio-recordings do not consistently match up on either fidelity or quality and rating variations between paired observers. Below is a chart of these results.

| Discrepancies Between Observer Ratings and the Utility of Observer Notation When Comparing Observations to Audio-Recording<br>Case 1 - Card 7 "Bragging About Sexual Reputation" |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Implementation Characteristics   | Observer 1  | Observer 2   | Audio-Recording  |
| Time Spent On Card   | "Card delivery about 6 minutes long"  | "The session lasted roughly ten minutes"   | Elapsed Time 06:26   |
| Implementation Fidelity  | Average   | Slightly Above Average   | Addressed every card element   |
| Discussion Management  | Average "Some athletes seemed checked out, but for the most part, they listened and paid attention"   | Slightly Above Average   | Discussion seemed rushed. Implementer provided little time after prompts for athletes to process before responding.  |
| Athletes Engagement  | Average "Athletes seemed to appreciate the different approaches the implementer took to explain the topic in different ways"  | Slightly Above Average   | Athletes engagement was limited. Responses were often mono-syllabic or a repetition of points just made by the implementer   |
| Athlete-Implementer Relationship   | Average "The implementer was not a part of the coaching staff, but he told me that the athletes understand what happens every week and when they see him coming, they gather chairs and start moving into the meeting room where they have discussions" | Slightly Above Average   | Athletes were respectful to implementer, referring to him as "sir" and thanking him for his time at the sessions conclusion.   |
| Overall Delivery Quality   | Slightly Above Average "Athletes appeared to understand the concepts taught, especially when the implementer broke it down in different ways. The discussion seemed rushed and there wasn't robust participation though"                                | Average  | Implementer added content not outlined on Card 7, as for instance when he asked athletes "How would you be a man?" While he addressed all card elements, he struggled to engage athletes in a discussion that would demonstrate athletes' understanding of card content. |
| Contradictions Between Observer Notations, Observer Ratings, and Audio-Recording Analysis<br>Case 2 - Card 3 "Insulting Language"  |   |  |  |
| Implementation Characteristics   | Observer 1  | Observer 2   | Audio-Recording  |
| Time Spent On Card   | 6-10 minutes  | 6-10 minutes   | Elapsed Time 11:35   |
| Implementation Fidelity  | Slightly Above Average  | Slightly Above Average   | The majority of the coach's delivery was unscripted. He did make points on the harm caused by insulting language. He did so by sharing an extended anecdote about a young man he chose not to bully in his formative years.  |
| Discussion Management  | Slightly Above Average  | Exceptionally  | The coach was able to make the questions relatable to his athletes' by referring to their real-world experiences.  |
| Athletes Engagement  | Average "The athletes were moderately engaged. There was not much of a dialogue"  | Slightly Above Average "I do think the coach missed a lot of opportunities to have a more impactful conversation by skipping many valuable topics" | Athletes were engaged. They responded quickly, and asked questions.  |
| Athlete-Implementer Relationship   | Excellent "There seemed to be a large amount of respect between the athletes and the implementer"   | Excellent "The athletes seemed to really respect the coach"  | There were quite a few side conversations and mumbling during the session which could be deemed disrespectful, but athletes continued to engage so there is some level of respect between athlete and coach.   |
| Overall Delivery Quality   | Slightly Below Average "The quality was not great. Much of what needed to be discussed was not used"  | Average "I think the coach skipped too much of the card and didn't deliver the information with enough passion to get the point across"            | While the coach was able to facilitate discussion and made points regarding the harm caused by insulting language, his delivery was completely unrecognizable when compared to card content.   |

**Figure 2 Discrepancies and Contradictions Between Observations and Audio-Recordings**

### 3.4 Discussion

Taken alone, both observers' notes and ratings, on the one hand, and audio recordings, on the other hand, provide some insight into what coaches are doing when delivering CBIM. The evaluative pay-off, however, comes from jointly analyzing live observations and audio recordings

of the same coach-implemented session. A side-by-side comparison demonstrates the value added by comparing trained observer ratings and notations with audio recordings for evaluating not only how much content coaches deliver (the intensity or dosage of the program implementation) but also how well they did so, according to the guidelines for fostering participant engagement through discussion. The results support the hypothesis that mixed findings about changes in gender-equitable attitudes as the mechanism of behavior change in violence prevention are due at least in part to relatively low fidelity and quality. Indeed, given evidence of problematic adaptations coaches make to both content and process, the quantitative evidence of behavior change is impressive. The implementation evaluation evidence also suggests it is important to figure out how to use qualitative assessment to improve implementation, accurately test the social norms model that underwrites CBIM and other gender-transformative programs, and thus bolster program effectiveness and violence prevention efforts.

### **3.4.1 Fidelity Observations**

Fidelity observations are an evaluation method that can provide real-time assessment of implementer practices and delivery quality. This research shows how important it is to train observers to use observation tools and apply rating criteria. There are some elements of the fidelity observation form that can be objectively completed, for instance: total implementers facilitating discussion; total athletes present; session duration; session location; and content delivery of “Warm Up”, “Ask the Players”, and “Discussion Points & Wrap Up” materials. While the paired observers mostly rated implementation in adjacent categories (using the Likert-style scale appropriately to rate these examples as “average”), these evaluation data show considerable

variation in the observers' documenting how implementers met objectives, managed discussion, and engaged athletes.

Across these four fidelity observations, it was not standard practice to document notes that informed observers' ratings, especially on the overall quality of delivery, athlete-implementer relationship, and estimated effectiveness of a session impacting attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. It was particularly useful in those fidelity observations with two observers when impressions were documented by observers because, while observers were provided with a fidelity tracking tool guide, notations provide insight into *how* observers use that guide to inform their assessments. Those notes also direct evaluators to content within the recorded session that highlight successes and failures in implementer practices which informed observers' ratings.

### **3.4.2 Multi-method Evaluation**

This study took advantage of having audio recordings of discussions that were also observed by two different external observers, allowing for a highly detailed comparison of observations (to each other) as well as to the recordings. Because sessions were recorded while the real-time fidelity observations were conducted, the recorded session can be referenced when assessing the fidelity observations. When documented, observers note specific instances during the session that can be empirically observed in the recordings. Recorded coach-implemented sessions document the actual practices of implementers – what coaches are doing when Coaching Boys Into Men.

The potential uses of these recorded sessions are two-fold: (1) these sessions can be used in tandem with the fidelity observations for observer training; and (2) these recorded sessions along with the corresponding fidelity observations can be used as a training tool for coaches.

First, coupling fidelity observations and quality ratings with audio recordings presents the opportunity to improve observer training. As it stands, new observers learn how fidelity observations are conducted by attending a session with a seasoned observer. In addition to in-the-field training, a new module in which new observers can evaluate and critique previously completed fidelity observations and their affiliated recordings may provide insight on best practices. A training module that utilizes fidelity observations in which two observers were present may be particularly useful to demonstrate the importance of note-taking while conducting observations. Additionally, just as the fidelity observation form provides space for commentary for several elements of card content, space on the form should also be allocated for observers to document their rationale for rating how well the implementer met the core objectives of training cards while also noting additional adaptations, additions, and interpretations of the cards.

Second, coaches, along with advocates and observers, could observe and critique their implementation at structured check-points throughout the season to better understand their own practices and improve their quality of delivery. Additionally, these recorded sessions can be universally employed to train coaches on best and worst practices when implementing CBIM. Recording coach-implemented sessions throughout a season, rather than just one session, also has the potential to demonstrate coaches' shifts in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors as the season progresses – a shift that could positively influence coaches' implementation practices in terms of both adherence to content and delivery quality in an intervention designed to change behavior and attitudes by engaging athletes in discussion as well as highlighting coaches as role models and credible deliverers of content.

### **3.5 Limitations**

These findings should be interpreted in light of three limitations. First, this qualitative study was limited to only two cases in which two fidelity observations for the corresponding recorded session were available to compare implementation and evaluation practices. Secondly, recorded observations and fidelity observations were only conducted with consent from coaches and thus limited the number of cases available. Finally, only a small number of research team members were trained and dispatched to conduct fidelity observations, which limited their availability for paired observations.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

These limitations notwithstanding, this case-oriented approach demonstrates the importance of combining audio recordings with observation in assessing implementation fidelity to both content (intensity and dosage) and mode of delivery (quality of discussion and engagement). These evaluative methods can be used to enhance training procedures for both observers and implementers. Regular documentation of coach practices captures challenges coaches are having with the material while also documenting explicit shifts in beliefs and attitudes of coaches, helping them to consequently improve their implementation practices.

This analysis of evaluation practices leads us to recommend conducting a coach interview in tandem with an observed session to capture coaches' perceptions of their delivery quality for a more robust and descriptive account of how community-based violence prevention programs operate in the real world. Coaches' over-confidence in their understanding of the material and their

over-reliance on their own perceptions of the strength of their coach-athlete relationships affect how closely they adhere to card content, how ably they engage athletes in discussion rather than resorting to “talking head” delivery, and the extent to which their “off-script” adaptations undermine or support the principles of CBIM. Assessing coaches’ over-reliance on their relationship with their athletes may also illuminate factors that influence why and how they express sexist, racist, homophobic, or classist beliefs – intentionally or unintentionally.

Moreover, pairing coach interviews with audio-recordings and fidelity observations will provide insights into salient discrepancies between what coaches think they are doing in their implementation and what they are actually doing in their delivery practices. In assessing coach interviews along with audio-recordings and fidelity observations, we may be able to triangulate where and how implementation failures – of both fidelity and quality – occur. Multi-mode evaluations also make it possible to distinguish between the sorts of adaptations that make programs more culturally relevant and accessible to participants and those that contradict program content, counter intended processes, and thus undermine program goals and diminish intervention effects.

These findings also suggest a need to invest in training fidelity observers. The CBIM observer manual provides legible ratings categories and specific, behavioral criteria for substantiating ratings. Fidelity observations as an evaluation strategy assess the implementer’s adherence to CBIM content and several factors assessing the overall atmosphere and quality. However, observers can miss details of an implementer’s language and tone when delivering card content, and may not note important evidence of participants’ (lack of) engagement. Although audio recordings are often imperfect given the real-life conditions of recording (cross-talk can obscure both content and tone of discussion), they can usefully reveal the gaps in fidelity

observations. Even with these gaps and imperfections, fidelity observations, as an evaluation strategy, provide important insights into the implementation practices of coaches in real time. Ratings of athlete engagement and discussion management complement audio recordings of sessions.

Finally, these findings suggest fidelity observations and audio-recordings are indeed important and useful strategies in evaluating both fidelity and quality of implementation and if used recursively promise to improve training, delivery, and evaluation. Across both cases several adaptations were documented that in both cases decreased content fidelity and diminished delivery. Whether adaptations involve the failure of a coach to deliver complete program content to athletes or blatant refusal to engage in materials and activities that explicitly challenge racism, sexism, and homophobia, noting these adaptations means they can be addressed. Developing trainings to promote confidence in these concepts amongst coaches and reworking content and training to improve coaches' ability to promote learning through discussion will improve both implementation and therefore program effects. The possibilities of how these evaluations strategies can improve CBIM are truly exciting and researchers and funders should continue to invest in these multi-mode evaluations.

## Appendix A “User’s Manual for Observation Tracking Tool for Coaching Boys Into Men”

### – Criteria for Assessing CBIM Training Card Objectives

#### User’s Manual for Observational Tracking Tool for Coaching Boys into Men Training Card Series<sup>5</sup>

##### Section 1: Coversheet

Guidance for rating the achievement of objectives for session training cards.

| Rating                      | Description   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Poorly</b><br>(1)        | Apply this rating when <b>no positive impact or a negative impact is expected</b> because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion related to this objective is not attempted,</li><li>• The discussion and/or the athletes miss the point in such a way that the objective is not achieved, or</li><li>• Athletes walk away with ideas that run counter to the intended objective</li></ul>   |
| <b>Adequately</b><br>(2)    | Apply this rating when <b>a limited positive impact is expected</b> because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The implementer covers the points in a training card, but the quality of the discussion or athletes’ reaction to the discussion suggests that it will have a limited positive effect on beliefs, attitudes, motivations, or skills.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Average</b><br>(3)       | Apply this rating when a <b>moderately positive impact is expected</b> because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The discussion stays on topic most of the time</li><li>• Athletes are attentive for at least half of the discussion</li><li>• There is room for improvement in how the coach focuses the discussion and clarifies points for at least half of the discussion time.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Very Well</b><br>(4)     | Apply this rating when a definable <b>positive impact is expected</b> because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The discussion is clear and focused most of the time.</li><li>• Athletes take what the implementer says seriously, are attentive, and respond positively to the message presented,</li><li>• More than half of the time, the implementer is able to focus the conversation and clarify points, but there is still some room for improvement.</li></ul> |
| <b>Exceptionally</b><br>(5) | Apply this rating when a <b>substantial positive impact is expected</b> because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• athletes clearly understand and believe in the message, such that the program will have a clear and significant positive effect on beliefs, attitudes, motivations, or skills.</li></ul> <p>Note: Perfection is rare, so ratings of <i>Exceptionally</i> should also be rare.</p>  |

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<sup>5</sup> Based on User’s Manual: Evaluation Lizard Assessments of Quality of Delivery (Hansen, 2010)

## **Appendix B “User’s Manual for Observation Tracking Tool for Coaching Boys Into Men”**

### **– Criteria for Assessing Overall Atmosphere and Quality of CBIM Implementation**

#### **Section 4: Overall Atmosphere and Quality**

##### **1.Athlete Engagement**

Judge engagement by assessing how directly athletes participated in the activities called for in the session as well as what proportion of athletes were involved. Engagement is not a measure of how entertaining the implementer was. Nor should engagement be judged based on their participation in tasks irrelevant to the objectives of the session. Engagement is intended to reflect how personally involved the vast majority of participants were in accomplishing the program’s goals and objectives.

| <b>Negative Signs</b>   | <b>Positive Signs</b>   |
|---|---|
| Athletes took a long time to come to attention and follow directions            | Athletes quickly followed directions  |
| Athletes were bored, distracted, or inattentive                                 | Athletes had attentive body language, e.g., facing the speaker, raising hands, sitting/standing upright |
| Implementer had to pry responses out of athletes, prompt athletes several times | Athletes volunteered constructive comments, freely offered answers to questions                         |
| Athletes were reluctant and only participated because they had to               | Athletes were enthusiastic about participating  |
| Athletes were sarcastic and opposed to what was being discussed                 | Athletes “bought in” to what was being discussed  |

## 2. Discussion Management

Judge management by assessing how well the implementer managed the athletes' behavior and was able to keep the discussion on the intended topic. This is intended to assess the implementer's ability to keep the athletes on task and control their behavior while delivering CBIM.

| Negative Signs  | Positive Signs   |
|---|--|
| Implementer had difficulty correcting misbehavior   | Implementer responded promptly and appropriately if there were incidences of misbehavior |
| Implementer had to issue several corrections or constantly nag athletes to pay attention or get on task | Athletes responded well when the implementer issued corrections or asked them to behave  |
| Athletes were disruptive by having side conversations, roaming, or fidgeting                            | Athletes listened and paid attention when the implementer or other athletes were talking |
| The implementer had very little control over the athletes   | The team was focused, well-controlled and consistently on task                           |

### 3. Athlete-Implementer Relationship

Judge the quality of the relationship by the level of respect and trust demonstrated between the athletes and the implementer. When there is an excellent athlete-implementer relationship, you will see evidence of this in how the implementer relates to and treats the athletes and vice versa.

| Negative Signs  | Positive Signs  |
|---|---|
| Implementer was rude or short with the athletes. Implementer ignored athletes who tried to participate                          | Implementer treated his/her athletes with respect by listening to athletes when they participated, not talking over them, and validating their responses  |
| Implementer did not seem to know athletes well based on the examples used, which were either inappropriate or irrelevant        | Implementer provided relevant and appropriate examples to which the athletes on the team could relate   |
| Implementer was impatient with athletes and shot down their responses.  | Implementer was patient with athletes and encouraged their participation by praising, affirming, and by acknowledging and restating athlete contributions |
| When an athlete responded with an off-the-mark statement, implementer put down the athlete, scoffed, or embarrassed the athlete | Implementer redirected off-the-mark responses in such a way that athlete contributions were not undermined  |
|   |   |

### 4. Quality of Delivering the Card Activity and Discussion

This should reflect your overall impression of how well the implementer delivered the curriculum. Try to determine if the delivery style translated correctly to the athletes and if the implementer communicated the intended messages. Another helpful gauge is to consider whether you would like a child you care about to have this implementer for this session.

| Negative Signs                                       | Positive Signs  |
|--|---|
| The implementer seemed bored, put out, or lackluster | The implementer was enthusiastic about and took ownership of the material |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The implementer seemed disinterested, discussing the material only because s/he had to                              | The implementer was prepared and demonstrated familiarity with the curriculum                         |
| The implementer was lost and constantly reading from the manual. S/he made a lot of mistakes in delivering the card | The implementer managed time well and ensured all main points were covered and understood by athletes |
| The implementer spent time on irrelevant issues and excluded what was important to cover                            | The implementer had insightful ways to motivate and engage athletes                                   |

## 5. Implementer's Understanding of Program Concepts

This should reflect how well the implementer understood CBIM. This includes not only the topics covered in the training cards and in the discussion, but also the overarching goals, messages, and logic of the program.

| Negative Signs   | Positive Signs  |
|--|---|
| The implementer made major errors in interpreting the program                                      | The implementer made comments that revealed an understanding of the program goals and objectives                        |
| The implementer spent too much time talking about irrelevant or inappropriate topics               | When athletes gave answers that missed the point, the implementer persisted until correct or desired answers were given |
| The implementer expressed ideas that differed from or contradicted the program's intended messages | Any changes the implementer made to the discussion reinforced or enhanced the intended goals and objectives             |

## 6. Estimated Effectiveness

It is challenging to estimate the effectiveness of a session in terms of how it will affect participants' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors as intended by CBIM. Please consider that this is just an estimate. However, if you think about participants' overall experience, there should be clues about the potential for the session to impact their attitudes, beliefs, motivations, skills, and behavior.

| Negative Signs  | Positive Signs   |
|---|--|
| Athletes did not seem to understand the intended messages                                 | Athletes appeared to have flashes of insight about the concepts in the program                                     |
| Athletes made jokes or sarcastic comments counter to the intended messages of the program | Athletes who already had appropriate beliefs, attitudes, and habits were reinforced                                |
| Athletes did not seem to take the program seriously                                       | If you were to quiz athletes about what they learned in today's session, they would have learned what was intended |
| Discussion of some objectives was omitted or poorly done                                  | Athlete engagement and quality of discussion were high   |

## Appendix C Fidelity Observation Tracking Tool Template

Training Card 7: Bragging about Sexual Reputation

1

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Sport: \_\_\_\_\_

Season: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Delivery Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Implementer ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation #: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Implementers involved in the card activity:

1 implementer facilitating      2 implementers co-facilitating      >2 implementers co-facilitating

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Athletes involved in the card activity and discussion:

1-5      6-10      11-15      16-20      21-25      >25      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Time Spent on the card activity and discussion:

1-5mins      6-10mins      11-15mins      16-20mins      21-25mins      >25mins      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate how well the implementer met objectives for the Session Training Card:

Objective 1: Implementer articulates the need to recognize that bragging or lying about their sexual reputation doesn't prove or improve their masculinity.

1      2      3      4      5  
(poorly)                     (exceptionally)

Objective 2: Implementer articulates the need to recognize that spreading stories about someone else's sexual activity can be disrespectful and harmful.

1      2      3      4      5  
(poorly)                     (exceptionally)

Objective 3: Implementer articulates the need to refuse to spread private information or to speak disrespectfully about another person's sexual reputation.

1      2      3      4      5  
(poorly)                     (exceptionally)

Appendix Figure 1

| Delivery and Adherence Note Sheet |   | Y/N | Comments |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----|----------|
| Warm Up                           | I know there's a lot of pressure to be popular and hook up.   |     |          |
|                                   | Some people think this means bragging about what you and your friends may do sexually.  |     |          |
|                                   | The men I respect don't joke, lie, or brag about what they do intimately with anybody.  |     |          |
| Ask the Players                   | What do you think about when someone is bragging about their hook up?   |     |          |
|                                   | Why might someone involved in your stories not appreciate your storytelling?  |     |          |
|                                   | Why is it disrespectful to listen to or laugh when a friend is talking about what he does sexually?   |     |          |
| Discussion Points & Wrap Up       | You guys might be feeling pressure to be popular and hook up, but bragging or lying about sex or intimate experiences isn't the way to do it. It's not only disrespectful to the other person; broadcasting your personal life like that disrespects yourself, too.   |     |          |
|                                   | Whether it's true or not, it can be harmful to talk or spread rumors about someone's sexual reputation. They may become depressed, isolated, or even put in danger by those comments. My opinion is that such information shouldn't be shared. When you hear stories about someone's sexual experiences, don't laugh or encourage it. It's best to ask the person to stop or leave the situation. |     |          |
|                                   | The men I look up to treat the people they care about with respect and dignity.   |     |          |
|                                   | It's important not to brag about the intimate details of your relationships and friendships. If you have questions about sex and sexuality, discuss them with me or someone you trust and let them know you want them to keep it private.   |     |          |
| Teachable Moment                  | Observed during card activity or at the end of the activity, can ask the coach if he/she had a Teachable Moment to share.   |     |          |

Appendix Figure 2

| Recording Adaptations   |   |     |  |
|---|---|-----|--|
| <b>Step 1 - Determine the type of change:</b> Determine the category that best describes the change. Categories of adaptations are divided into three broad types: delivery, message and omissions. |   |     |  |
| <b>Step 2 - Activity:</b> Record the activity in which the change occurs.   |   |     |  |
| <b>Step 3 - Description:</b> Write a narrative description of each definable change you observe and include as much detail as possible.   |   |     |  |
| Step 1 - Type of Change   |   | Y/N | Step 2 - Activity & Step 3 - Description |
| Delivery  | Changed delivery format (e.g., to lecture format, to < 15 minutes, reordered training card sequence)  |     |  |
|   | Added new elements to the activity (e.g., role playing )  |     |  |
|   | Added or altered the questions asked of students (beyond simple rewording)  |     |  |
| Message   | Discussed/promoted norms or attitudes not called for in the curriculum (e.g., violence-condoning norms, sexist attitudes, norms about unrelated topics).                          |     |  |
|   | Emphasized the importance of what was taught beyond what is outlined in the training card (e.g., emphasizing a particular topic or conclusion to increase interest or motivation) |     |  |
|   | Promoted skill development beyond what is called for in the activity (e.g., information about conflict tactic or anger management skills)   |     |  |
|   | Discussed concepts not intended for the current session   |     |  |
| Omissions/<br>Skips   | If what you observe is an omission or skip of something prescribed in the manual, describe what is skipped (e.g., the warm up or wrap up, questions for athletes)                 |     |  |

Training Card 7: Bragging about Sexual Reputation

4

Overall Atmosphere and Quality

1. Please rate how engaged the athletes were in the discussion:

1 2 3 4 5  
(not engaged) (highly engaged)

Notes:

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2. Please rate how well the discussion was managed:

1 2 3 4 5  
(poorly managed) (well managed)

Notes:

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3. Please rate the quality of the athlete-implementer relationships:

1 2 3 4 5  
(poor) (excellent)

Notes:

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4. Please rate the overall quality of delivering the card activity and discussion:

1 2 3 4 5  
(lowest quality) (highest quality)

Notes:

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5. Please rate how well the implementer understood the concepts that were to be taught:

1 2 3 4 5  
(no/incorrect understanding) (extremely strong understanding)

Notes:

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6. Please estimate how effective this session will be in terms of having an impact on participants' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors as intended by the program in this session:

1 2 3 4 5  
(not effective) (highly effective)

Notes:

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Appendix Figure 3

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