



CONTEXT ANALYSIS ON

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF
SPORT FOR AND BY STUDENTS (TPS)



COLOFON

Project title: The Transformative Power of Sport for and by students

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About the TPS project

TPS project is co-funded by the European Commission under the CERV-2022-DAPHNE call¹. TPS is an acronym for: Transformative Power of Sport for and by students. The project consortium consists of 3 partners: Plan International Belgium (BNO, established in 1983), Plan International Spain (SPNO, established in 2001) and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). The TPS project started in January 2023 and will run for 2 years. To achieve the project's general objective, the consortium specifically aims to mobilize around 10.000 young people aged between 14 to 24 years old, in 5 cities located in Belgium (Brussels, Liège) and Spain (Barcelona, Madrid & Valencia). These young people will be part of a gender-based violence (GBV) prevention journey. This GBV prevention journey will be partially inspired by the Champions of Change methodology developed by Plan International. The participants of the GBV prevention journey will be reached in 7 waves of change including curiosity sessions, focus groups, training sessions on bias, positive masculinities and bystander behaviour, international exchange sessions and campaigns led by the young people involved.



Picture taken during the Kick-off Meeting (27.01.2023):

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TERMINOLOGY

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|------------------------------|---|
| GENDER | Refers to the social differences, as opposed to the biological ones, between women and men that have been learned, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. |
| VIOLENCE | Violence includes a range of acts and a broad spectrum of behaviors, from bullying and physical fighting to more severe sexual and physical assault to gang violence and homicide. Youth violence often occurs alongside other types of violence. |
| GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE | GBV is defined violence directed against a person because of that person's gender, including gender identity or gender expression, or as violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately . |
| PREVENTION | Action or measures taken to prevent violence, problem, or disease from happening or to avoid the occurrence, development or spread of it. The goal of prevention is to safeguard individuals or communities from potential harm. |
| PRIMARY PREVENTION | Refers to proactive measures and interventions to prevent the onset of violence or diseases. |
| SECONDARY PREVENTION | Refers to interventions and strategies designed to detect and address violence and diseases. |
| TERTIARY PREVENTION | Refers to interventions and strategies aimed at managing, mitigating and recovering the consequences of violence or diseases. |
| SPORT | Unless specified otherwise in the present guide, the term "sport" is used as a generic term, comprising sport for all, physical play, recreation, dance and organized, casual, competitive, traditional, and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms . |

² European Commission. (2014). *Gender Equality in Sport. Proposal for Strategic Actions 2014-2020*. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/sport/events/2013/documents/20131203-gender/final-proposal-1808_en

³ UNESCO. (2017). *MINEPS VI – Kazan Action Plan*. UNESCO. <http://unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259362>

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

It is a well-known fact that sexual violence against girls and women is prevalent in multiple countries. The World Health Organization states that 1 in 3 women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence, most often by their partner (WHO, 2023). Over the years, multiple surveys (e.g., Violence Towards Athletes Questionnaire or Childhood Exposure to Violence Questionnaire) have been used to gain a better insight into the prevalence of interpersonal violence. In the UN-MENAMAIS research project that consisted of a population between 16 and 69 years old, 81% of the women and 48% of the men reported victimization of sexual violence in their lifetime (Keygneart et al., 2021). Although the prevalence of sexual violence among men is undeniable high, women still experience disproportionately more sexual violence compared to men. However, within the realm of sports, this disparity related to reported victimization of violence between boys and girls is less pronounced.

In the CASES study that included individuals of six European countries (i.e., Austria, Belgium, Germany, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom), 75% out of 10,302 respondents reported having experienced at least once a violent act in the sport context as minors (Hartill et al., 2021). For the Belgian respondents, 82% of boys and 70% of girls reported experiences of at least one type of interpersonal violence before the age of 18 years old within sport (Vertommen et al., 2021). In Spain, 81% of the boys and 75% of the girls reported experiences with interpersonal violence before the age of 18-year-old in their sport club (Hartill et al., 2021). Apart from the sport context, it seems that violence also often occurs within young people's educational context. Cantor et al. (2015) found that out of 150.000 female college students, a total of 62% had experienced sexual harassment since their enrolment in higher education. Unfortunately, there are to the best of our knowledge no similar studies including male college students, which is an important gap in this domain.

Most higher education students enrolled in physical education and movement sciences are part of both contexts (i.e., sport sector and higher education). By well educating these young people, that are passionate about sports, they can become change agents when making the transition to the sport sector or industry or when taking up leadership roles within one of these contexts during their college or university education. The target population of the Transformative Power of Sports project (hereafter mentioned as TPS project) was therefore strategically chosen from an impact-driven perspective.

The TPS project aims to develop, implement, and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of an evidence-based prevention intervention on gender-based violence for undergraduate physical education students. An intervention focused on understanding and developing healthy human behavior should be well prepared in terms of planning, implementation, and evaluation by incorporating theoretical insights and by systematically collecting and analyzing empirical data (Kok et al., 2004). The intervention mapping methodology (hereafter mentioned as IM approach) was consequently used as a planning approach as it consists of a systematic iterative process for intervention development, implementation, and evaluation (Figure 1).

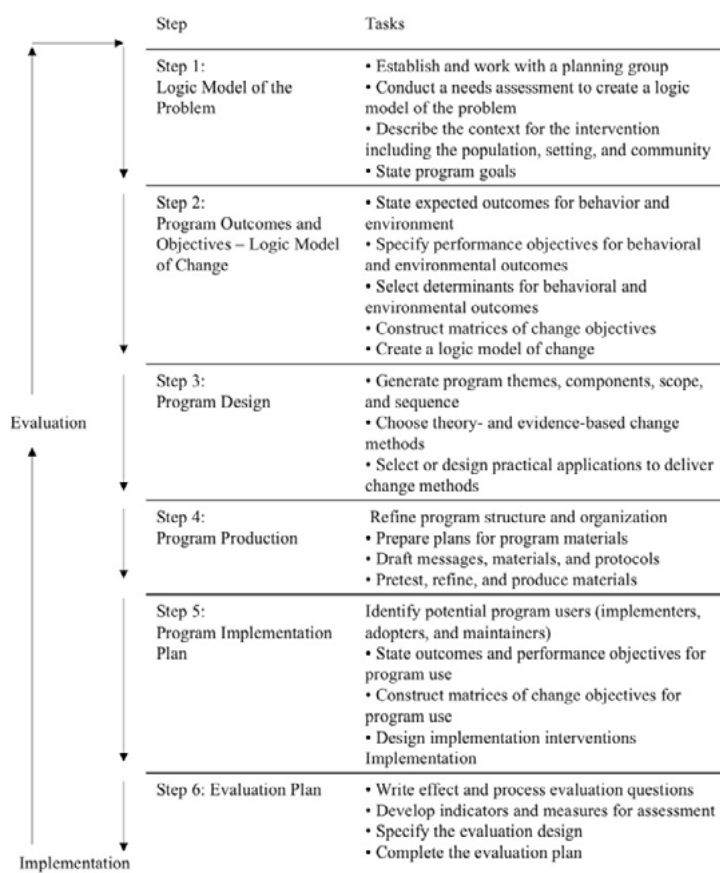


Figure 1. Intervention mapping steps and tasks (Bartholomew-Eldridge et al., 2016)

The IM approach consists of the following six consecutive steps: (1) establishing a detailed understanding of the problem, (2) describing the behavioral and environmental outcomes and create objectives for changes and specify the targets of the intervention, (3) identify theory- and evidence based-behavior change methods and translate these into practical applications that fit the intervention context, (4) refine the intervention structure and organization, (5) develop strategies to facilitate adoption, implementation, and maintenance of the intervention and (6) evaluate the intervention's efficiency and effectiveness (Bartholomew et al. 2001). This context analysis consists of a description of the first three steps of the IM approach undertaken for the TPS project. The **context analysis includes a detailed understanding of the problem**. This problem relates to **the prevalence of gender-based violence among the target group** (i.e., undergraduate physical education students) **and these young people's ability to prevent or appropriately react when witnessing or experiencing gender-based violence**.

In the **first phase**, data from a diverse range of sources were collected and analyzed to gain an in-depth understanding of **the problem** at the heart of the TPS project. To establish a detailed understanding of the problem, the following actions were taken:

- An **analysis of gender-based violence reports of citizens** residing in one of the five cities (i.e., Brussels, Liège, Madrid, Sevilla and Valencia) part of the TPS project, collected via the digital platform developed within the Safer Cities-project.
- The **conduction of a systematic review of academic literature** including scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals on the prevalence of gender-based violence and a **narrative review** of non-academic literature to map existing interventions on gender-based violence.

- The **organization of focus groups** in Belgium and Spain to gain an increased understanding regarding the **attitudes, behavioral intentions, and perceptions** of undergraduate physical education students on gender-based violence and to **identify their needs** in relation to gender-based violence in these young people's sport and university contexts.

The findings of this first phase have been used to develop the intervention or the so-called prevention journey targeted at undergraduate physical education students who are studying in one of the following five universities or colleges: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Erasmushogeschool Brussel, Université de Liège, Autonoma Universidad de Madrid, Universidad de Sevilla, and Universidad de Valencia. A **description of the prevention journey** is included in the last part of this context analysis (**PART 4**). This description relates to the second step and third step of the IM approach, in which outcomes and objectives of the TPS intervention are determined based on a theoretical blueprint which consequently leads to the program design. The first three sections of this context analysis focus on the detailed description of the problem at the heart of the TPS project based on **reports of citizens (PART 1)**, a **literature review (PART 2)** and **the results of focus groups** with the target group (**PART 3**).

PART 1: REPORTS OF CITIZENS

Mapping sexual street harassment and abuse

To map the prevalence of sexual street harassment and abuse in public spaces of citizens residing in one of the five cities (i.e., Brussels, Liège, Madrid, Sevilla and Valencia) of the TPS project, we collected so-called pins via the digital platform developed by Plan International within the Safer Cities project (www.safercities.be). This digital platform allows citizens to indicate the exact location where they experienced or witnessed sexual harassment or abuse. A so-called pin is in essence a report of a citizen that may, apart from the exact location, also include information on the type of sexual street harassment or abuse that can range from a general perceived unsafe space to verbal harassment with or without physical contact. For the TPS project, we analyzed all submitted pins (n=256) from March 2023 to October 2023. The reach and usage of the platform, however, are still quite low, which influenced the number of responses. In addition, participants are free to complete the questions they wish to answer, without an obligation to complete all questions related to the reported incident. This influenced the response rate of the survey. We decided to only report on the questions with the highest response rate. This means that the number of respondents differs per question. The reported results focus on sexual street harassment and abuse, inhabitants experienced and reported on the Safer Cities platform in Brussels, Liège, Madrid, Sevilla and Valencia. Plan International Belgium and Plan International Spain will keep collecting and analyzing incoming pins in the upcoming period (i.e., from January until April 2024) to reach the targeted number of 1000 pins. During the students' national weekend in the last weekend of April 2024, the results of these pins will be reported to the students. These results will be used during the brainstorm sessions related to the campaign they will build on the prevention of gender-based violence and advocacy activities. The results of this additional analysis related to the pins of the Safer Cities Platform will be added to the student outreach report (deliverable D3.3).

Prevalence of sexual street harassment and abuse

In the results section we will report the answers to three questions, which had the highest response rate, including:

1. *Where did you experience a type of sexual street harassment and abuse?*
2. *Which type of sexual street harassment and abuse did you experience?*
3. *Who perpetrated the sexual street harassment and abuse?*

For Belgium, the central areas of **Brussels**, including the locations of Etterbeek where the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Université Libre de Bruxelles campus are situated, were the **most frequently cited public places for sexual street harassment and abuse** (Figure 2). In **Liège**, the respondents mentioned **the city center and the train station as frequent places where they experienced sexual street harassment and abuse**. The **center of Madrid** was commonly mentioned by the respondents of Spain. For the other two cities (i.e., Sevilla and Valencia) no one specific place was mentioned. The most common sexual street

harassment and abuse experienced by the respondents in Belgium (n=186) was verbale intimidation (Figure 3). In Spain (n=9) all type of sexual street violence (i.e., verbale, non-verbale, and physical) were equally experienced by respondents.

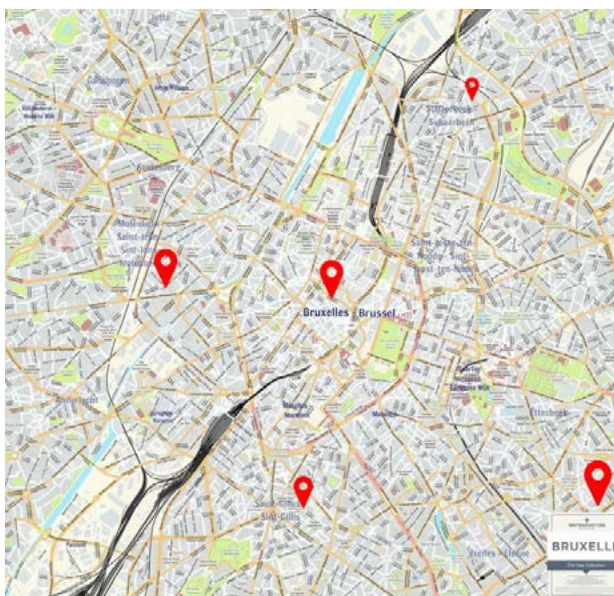


Figure 2. Most reported places of sexual street harassment and abuse in Belgium

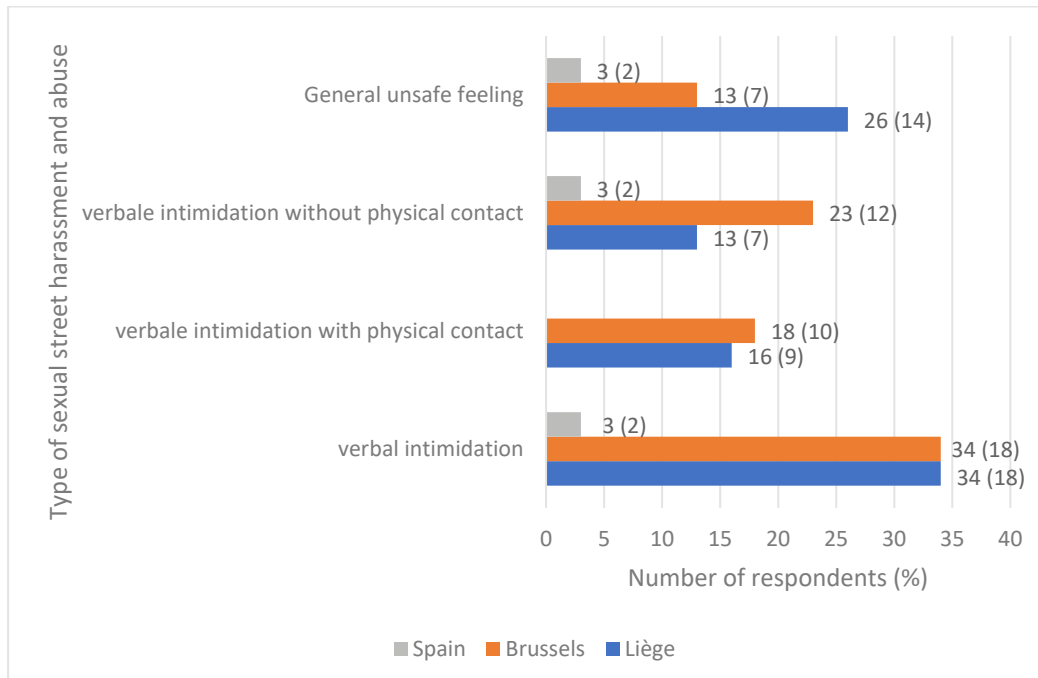


Figure 3. Frequently experienced type of sexual street harassment and abuse

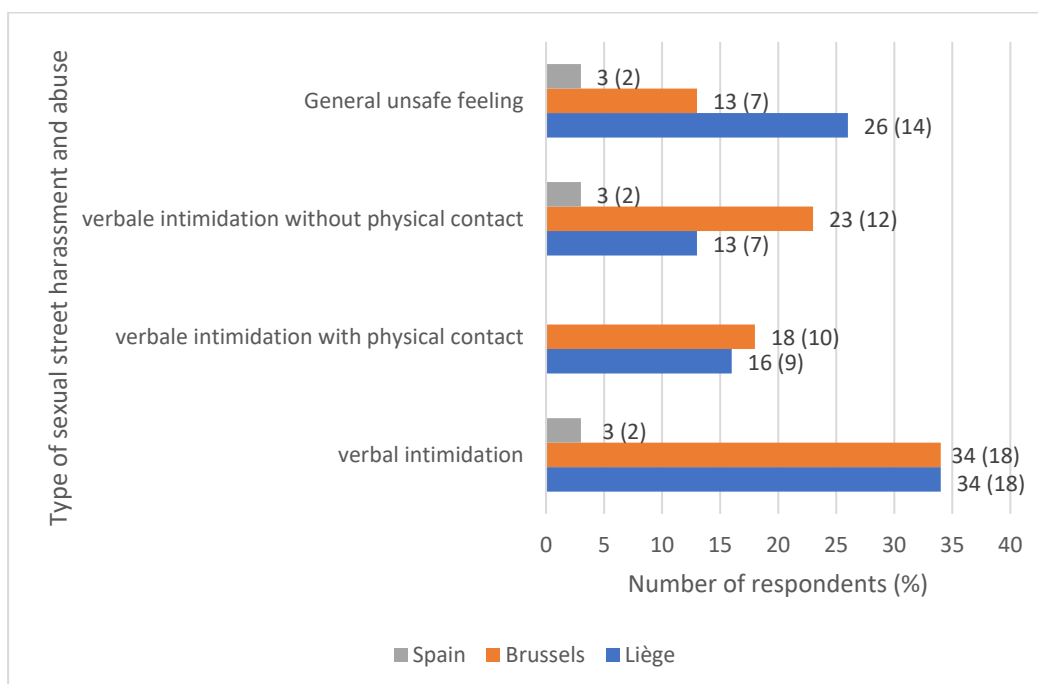


Figure 3. Frequently experienced type of sexual street harassment and abuse

*A total of 186 respondents answered the question 'Which type of sexual violence did you experience?'

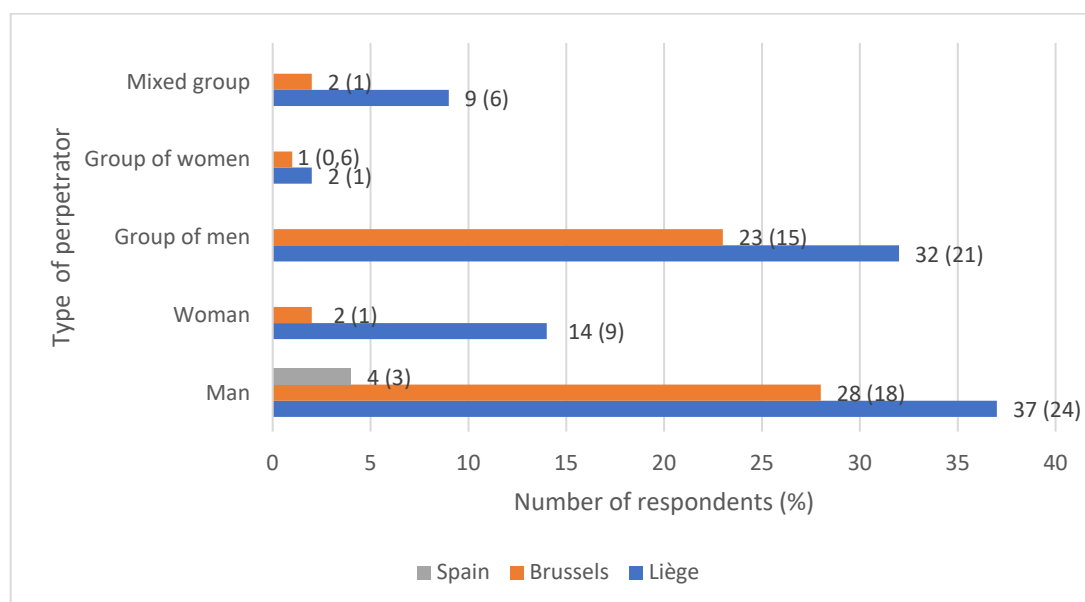


Figure 4. Type of perpetrator of sexual street harassment and abuse

*A total of 154 respondents answered the question 'Who committed the offence?'
The participants from Belgium and Spain reported to have experienced sexual street harassment and abuse most often by a man. The second most common type of offender was a group of men (Figure 4).

Conclusions related to citizens' reports of gender-based violence

Sexual violence in public spaces remains a significant issue for several cities, and Brussels, Liège, Madrid, Sevilla, and Valencia are no exceptions. The Safer Cities Platform and online data collection via the use of pins illustrated that some incidents occurred around the vicinity of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Université Libre de Bruxelles, indicating that sexual street harassment and abuse is a concern near universities and among students. As part of TPS-project, we aim to broaden the understanding of the contexts in which violence occurs. Therefore, our focus is on undergraduate students in field of physical education. The objective is to gather more information, through a literature review and focus groups, about the definition of gender-based violence, its prevalence in sports and universities, and the knowledge, attitudes, and competencies of undergraduate students in physical education to respond to situations of gender-based violence.

PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The first step of the intervention mapping is to gain a detailed understanding of the problem for the target population of the research context (i.e., undergraduate students in the study field of physical education). The literature review is one of the two studies we conducted to build the needs assessment. The literature review was driven by the research question: *How is the prevention of gender-based violence taught in the sport and university context?*

In the literature review we included academic literature on gender-based violence and bystander behavior, as well as non-academic literature (i.e., existing practices). Firstly, keywords were selected to target scientific articles relevant to the topic, population and context of this literature review. Therefore, the concepts of gender-based violence, interpersonal violence, physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, neglect, students, university, college, sport, bystander and prevention were used. A combination of the keywords was used to search for scientific articles in different databases (e.g., Google Scholar, Web of Science and Wiley Online Library). Scientific articles that had two or more keywords in the title or abstract (related to the topic, population and/or context) were saved. Secondly, common search engines (i.e., Google) and government databases (e.g., EU portal) were used to find good practices and intervention programs on gender-based violence or interpersonal violence. Those implemented after 2010 were included in this review. **The results of the literature review are split into three different parts:** 1) the definition of gender-based violence, 2) the prevention levels of gender-based violence, and 3) the identified knowledge and competence gaps of prevention interventions on gender-based violence.

Defining gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is a well-known worldwide health issue. The European Commission's Proposal for Strategic Actions on Gender Equality in Sport (2014) defined gender-based violence as: **"Violence directed against a person because of that person's gender, including gender identity or gender expression, or as violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately"** (p. 47). This definition of gender-based violence includes psychological violence, physical violence, sexual violence, and neglect, in all types of relationships (e.g., among friends, acquaintances, and partners, or with a supervisor or even a stranger). In the case of gender-based violence, the violent behavior specifically targets someone's biological sex, gender identity, or gender expression. To explain the difference between sex, gender, and sexuality the Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2011) is used in prevention and awareness campaigns on gender-based violence. The **Genderbread Person** (Figure 5) covers five dimensions: biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual attraction, and romantic attraction. Every individual can be placed on a continuum along each of the five dimensions.

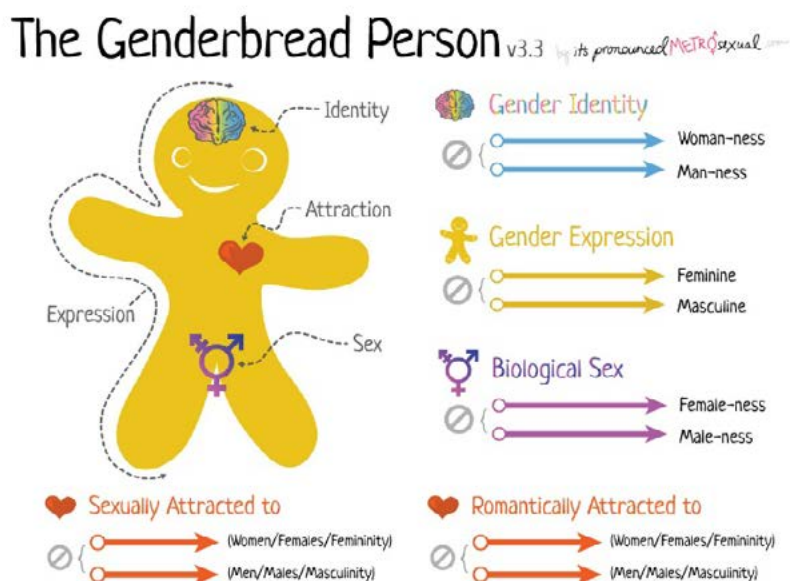


Figure 5. The Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2011)

- The **biological sex dimension** refers to the biological sex marker (i.e., at the chromosome level) that a person has at the time of birth.
- The **gender identity dimension** describes the self-perceived identity of a person (e.g., I feel as a woman, man, both or neither).
- The **gender expression dimension** refers to how someone expresses oneself through language, fashion, or behavior (e.g., as androgynous, masculine or feminine).
- In terms of **attraction**, two dimensions have been identified. First, **sexual attraction** is the gender identity or expression to which someone is physically attracted to. Second, **romantic attraction** is the gender identity or expression to which someone is emotionally attracted to.

All dimensions stand alone, making every possible combination in multiple gradations possible. For example, a biological man can identify as non-binary, have a feminine gender expression, be emotionally attracted to someone who identifies as a woman with a masculine gender expression and be sexually attracted to both women and men.

Gender (i.e., gender expression and gender identity) can be understood as a dimensional and variable concept. This impacts the understanding of gender-based violence and who experiences victimization. The research on gender-based violence is mainly focused on girls and women, even though the prevalence of boys and men experiencing interpersonal violence is undeniably high (Hartill et al., 2021; Keyneart et al., 2021; Vertommen et al., 2016). Furthermore, a limitation of prevalence surveys is that participants are not asked if they believe they were targeted due to their gender identity or gender expression (Lang et al., 2021). In addition, there is a lack of research questioning the motives of perpetrators, which implies that researchers do not yet know the extent of gender-based violence in different communities. Researchers know that individuals who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community experience more interpersonal violence (Hartill et al., 2022; Vertommen et al., 2016). LGBTQIA+ individuals are at a higher risk to experience violence than their heterosexual counterparts.

Gender and sexual orientation are, as the Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2011) illustrates, inherently linked to one another. Individuals fall for their perception of someone's else gender identity or gender expression. The LGBTQIA+ community refers to more than sexual or romantic attraction, transgender,

intersex, non-binary and queer persons are represented in the acronym, which refers to someone's biological sex, gender identity and gender expression. In addition, sexual orientations are often used as insults (e.g., fagget or lesbo) independent of the sexual orientation of the victim (Anitha & Lewis, 2018). Those insults are based on the perpetrator's mental associations of biological sex, gender identity, or gender expression and how a person has to behave, dress or live in a certain way. However, as stated in the definition, gender-based violence refers to violence perpetrated against someone's biological sex, gender identity and gender expression, regardless of whether they identified with the LGBTQIA+ community. This means that if a cisman is insulted by someone for being a 'fagget' because he does not portray the expected gender expression of a man, this should be recognized as gender-based violence. This example illustrates the shortcomings of the Genderbread Person (Killermann, 2011). The Genderbread Person explains gender on an intrapersonal level. However, it is imperative to comprehend gender on an interpersonal level as well. This leads to the concept of **gender perception, which entail how individuals interpret social roles and behaviors associated with gender identity and gender expression**. Gender perception is strongly influenced by the culture of a place and time period (Ali & Rogers, 2023).

From a feminist perspective, individuals argue that all violence against men should not be considered gender-based violence, as this definition would shift gender-based violence programs from a women-centered approach to a more gender-neutral approach, leading to less effective policies (Coalition of Feminists for Social Change, 2023). This argument is rooted in the narrative of girls and women as victims, and boys and men as perpetrators of gender-based violence. Emphasizing the binary division of gender (i.e., men versus women), however, can potentially neglect the lived experiences of gender-based violence among men, non-binary individuals, transgender individuals, and queer individuals.

The narrow perspective of gender-based violence is commonly applied in prevention programs, where girls are portrayed as the sole victims and boys as the sole perpetrators, and efforts are concentrated on convincing boys to become allies of gender-based violence and teaching them new behavioral guidelines that are often rooted in 'feminine' behavior (Equischools, 2019; Lindqvist et al., 2018; Peacock & Barker, 2014). Consequently, girls and boys have shown resistance and reluctance to participate in interventions on the prevention of gender-based violence (Bruno et al., 2020). Prevention programs using mainly feminist perspectives in bystander interventions about gender-based violence have elicited defense mechanisms within participants and facilitators (Bruno et al., 2020).

The feminist perspectives on gender-based violence are historically understandable. Women were oppressed by the patriarchy for decades, the rage and hurt that comes from those years of being seen as the lesser gender must be recognized. However, in this current day and age, the feminist binary division (i.e., men and women) and the negative narrative of men may increase the polarization of gender-based violence and – unconsciously – keep the myth of men being aggressive alive. Feminist perspectives using a predominant women-center approach are, however, still commonly applied in prevention interventions on gender-based violence (Plan International, 2023). A shift to a trauma-centered approach within interventions could help to decrease the polarization and defense mechanisms the topic of gender-based violence can elicit in participants.

Crenshaw (1991) introduced **the theoretical framework of intersectionality to illustrate the multiple systemic oppressive systems that benefited the individual social positioning of some and negatively impacted the social positioning of others**. The concept of intersectionality compares identity-based variables (e.g., sex, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, life roles, developmental stage, etc.) on a group level. Intersectionality is used to highlight the complexity of communities, rather than the lived experience of one single individual. The power of the use of intersectionality for prevention-based programs on gender-based violence lies in the increase of knowledge and awareness of oppressive systems and social norms. Phipps (2018) explained the importance of the theoretical framework of intersectionality to understand how social behaviors are linked to systemic and historical aspects. The framework of intersectionality shifts the narrative from an individual perspective to

structural inequalities and institutional cultures (Anitha & Lewis, 2018; Lim et al., 2021). The concept of intersectionality helps us understand the perceived behavioral beliefs of individuals in a set society. Therefore, intersectionality is linked to stereotypes, biases, norms, and values within a specific context.

Prevention levels

Prevention programs and policies implemented to prevent gender-based violence can be situated at **three levels of prevention**: the primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention level. Primary intervention strategies aim to prevent the occurrence of gender-based violence (Forsdike & O'Sullivan, 2022). It focuses on increasing the quality within a specific context (e.g., policy development or agreements on desired behavior). Secondary intervention strategies focus on limiting the drivers for gender-based violence. The aim is to increase the knowledge of signals of gender-based violence (e.g., identify risks or make action plans). Tertiary intervention strategies aim to support victims, perpetrators, and bystanders, when gender-based violence occurs, by providing them access to appropriate care (CDC, 2023) (e.g., guidelines on how to respond and provide care).

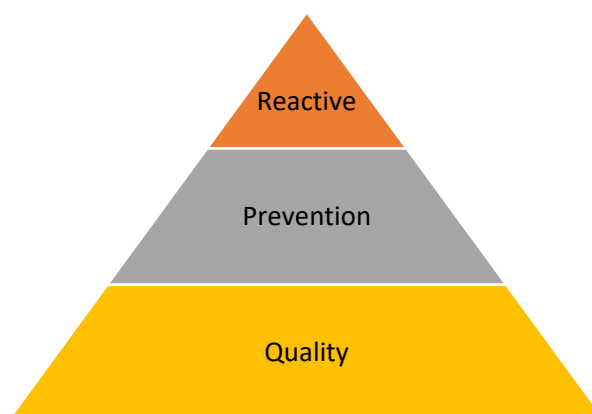


Figure 6. Levels of intervention

Gender-based violence has, until recently, been researched through the lens of an individual perspective (Banyard, 2011; Laughon et al., 2020). Thus, dividing individuals into categories of victims and perpetrators. This individual approach has increased the support victims could receive and the punishment strategies for the perpetrators (Lewis & Marine, 2018). Reactive interventions of gender-based violence should mainly focus on offering victims, perpetrators, and their loved ones the necessary support and justice they deserve. The individual perspective is undeniably necessary for tertiary prevention strategies; however, it fails when developing strategies for primary and secondary interventions (Banyard, 2011). The target population of primary and secondary interventions are (in)formal individuals present in a specific social context (e.g., college students), often called bystanders (Banyard, 2008; Laughon et al., 2020).

Banyard et al. (2007) defined bystanders as those who are willing or likely to engage in proactive or reactive bystander behavior, both aspects can be expressed in a positive way (e.g., encouraging dialogue about the topic of gender-based violence or intervening when someone refuses to practice with a girl) or in a negative way (e.g., encouraging aggressive behavior or blaming a victim for endured violence). Hence, bystanders are individuals who are part of a specific context in a specific time and place. Consequently, when developing bystander interventions to prevent gender-based violence, a contextual approach is preferred (Banyard, 2011; Laughon et al., 2020).

Gaps in existing interventions

Prevention interventions on gender-based violence often target (potential) victims of gender-based violence, which makes them second or tertiary prevention strategies aiming at increasing helpful behavior on an individual level. This is the first gap we identified when reviewing the literature on prevention interventions on gender-based violence. Interventions highly focus on increasing the knowledge of bystanders on signals of gender-based violence (e.g., where to turn to when help is needed, and how to react when witnessing a gender-based violence situation) (Allesoverseks, 2023; Centrum Ethiek in de Sport, 2021; Michiels et al., 2022).

Forsdike and O'Sullivan (2022) mentioned in their systematic review that most prevention-based interventions contained information about gender equality, rigid gender roles, gender stereotypes, masculinity behavior and what is disrespectful behavior. Forsdike and O'Sullivan's findings show that most interventions aim to increase the knowledge about gender inequality and gender-based violence. While this information is crucial, bystanders are often not instructed on the necessary behaviors to foster a safe sport and university climate. The social culture within a group, encompassing accepted and expected behaviors, can significantly influence the occurrence of interpersonal violence (Palmer & Fieldman, 2017). According to Klein (2018), the interaction of factors such as drug use, peer pressure, popularity rankings, and misogynistic practices at parties and sport events can create an environment that fosters sexual aggression, disrespect towards women, and aggression among men. The undesirable behaviors identified can be, furthermore, reinforced by negative proactive bystander conduct among students. Palmer and Fieldman (2017) noted that sports organizations upholding patriarchal cultures were less effective in responding to violent situations. To proactively prevent gender-based violence in sport and university settings, there is a need for a cultural shift among individuals and organizations. Therefore, **bystanders should be explicitly taught the desirable behavior that uphold a positive and constructive sport and university climate.**

The **second gap** identified in the literature pertains to the absence of instruction for participants in acquiring the necessary skills for constructive interactions when witnessing or experiencing mild situations of gender-based violence. Existing interventions primarily focus on imparting cognitive knowledge related to gender-based violence, such as definitions, signs, and immediate response strategies (A call to men, 2015; Pawlak, et al., 2012; Safe Sport Allies, 2022). However, the behavioral competence required for engaging in constructive conversations following incidents of gender-based violence is often overlooked or omitted. During interventions targeting gender-based violence, it is essential that implementers carefully assess the potential consequences of sharing knowledge with the participant group. Creating awareness may expose individuals to vulnerability, particularly when 1) the context lacks the practice of a safe climate, or 2) participants do not possess the necessary social skills to engage effectively in the given situation. Therefore, **prevention interventions should incorporate the practice of constructive (non)-verbal communication skills when witnessing gender-based violence situations.**

The third gap identified in the literature pertains to a lack of recognition of the role of the nervous system of bystanders during situations of gender-based violence. Different prevention interventions (e.g., Safe Sport Allies, Coaching Boys into Men, or It's On Us) and the theoretical model proposed by Darley and Latané (1968) outline the stages of bystander intervention and explain potential actions for bystanders when witnessing interpersonal violence. This approach is inherently rational in addressing an inherently irrational situation (i.e., violence against one's gender). Consequently, instructing bystanders on reaction strategies without acknowledging their own potential stress response and providing guidance on regulation strategies contradicts trauma-sensitive approaches (Maynard et al., 2019).

It is crucial to recognize that bystanders are unique individuals with their own life stories, psychological, and physical functions. They are continually influenced by their past and present context, as well as the inner workings of their psyche. These individual factors impact bystanders' ability to react during

a gender-based violence situation. Even if a bystander is motivated to intervene and possesses the required knowledge, they may be hindered by their body's stress reactions. Therefore, **acknowledging the role of the (para)sympathetic nervous system in bystanders is essential during prevention interventions.**

The **three identified gaps: 1) lack of attention for the desired behavior, 2) lack of teaching soft skills to support positive proactive and reactive bystander behavior, and 3) lack of acknowledging human's stress reaction**, form the basis of the logic model of the problem. In PART 3 of this context analysis, we conducted focus groups with undergraduate physical education students in the six universities partnering with the TPS-project. We will further complete our logic model of the problem according to the information gathered from the focus groups.

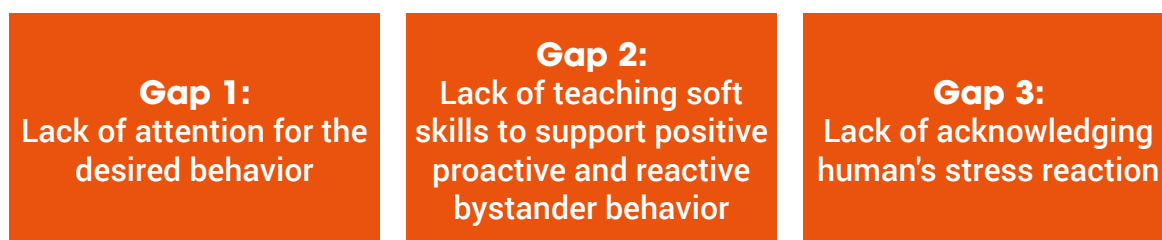


Figure 7. Identified gaps in existing interventions on gender-based violence

Conclusions related to the literature review

The literature review (PART 2) of the context analysis provided us with answers on the definition of gender-based violence, prevention levels of gender-based violence, and identified three gaps in the current academic and non-academic literature. Firstly, the importance of recognizing the multifaceted nature of gender-based violence, as well as considering societal and individual complexities, was stated. While feminist perspectives have historically shaped discussions on gender-based violence, a shift to a trauma-centered approach could enhance inclusivity. Secondly, primary and secondary intervention strategies should opt for a systemic approach, rather than an individual one. Thirdly, to enhance the effectiveness of interventions, prevention efforts should focus not only on increasing knowledge but also on fostering desirable behaviors and skills among bystanders for creating safe environments. A comprehensive, inclusive approach that considers gender nuances, social context, and the biological stress reactions of human beings could be essential for developing more effective strategies to prevent gender-based violence.

PART 3: FOCUS GROUPS

To adapt the prevention journey on gender-based violence to the needs of undergraduate physical education students, we conducted focus groups in all higher education contexts where the intervention would eventually be implemented (i.e., Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Erasmushogeschool Brussel, Université de Liège, Universidad de Sevilla, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and Universidad de Valencia). **The focus groups were set up to explore the students' attitudes, behavioral intentions, and perceptions about gender-based violence in their sport and university contexts.**

Procedure

For the focus groups, we submitted an ethics application that was approved by the Ethical Committee Human Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. The results presented in PART 2 (i.e., literature review) of this context analysis, were used to develop an interview guide for the focus groups addressing the following five themes: (1) perceptions of gender-based violence, (2) attitudes and intentional behavior as bystanders of gender-based violence, (3) perceptions of preventive behavior as role models, and (4) the motivational drivers to engage in a gender-based violence prevention journey. This interview guide was tested in one pilot focus group (n=6) involving second-year students of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Based on the results of the pilot focus groups, the interview guide was further refined (specifically theme three and four). The question "As a trainer, do you think you can have an impact on preventing gender-based violence" was deleted, as the following question "As a student ambassador, do you think you can have an impact on preventing gender-based violence" covered more the request information needed for the development on the prevention journey. The revised interview guide was used for the focus groups conducted in all six universities part of the TPS-project. Each participating student attended a 90- to 120-minute focus group on the university campus. The focus groups were organized in the language spoken at the university. The focus groups in Dutch and French were transcribed and analyzed in their original languages. The focus groups in Spanish were transcribed in Spanish and then translated into English for analysis. The focus group transcripts were thematically analyzed using NVivo software.

The aim was to organize two focus groups per participating university/college. In total, we conducted 12 focus groups in the six universities (i.e., Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Erasmushogeschool Brussel, Université de Liège, Universidad de Sevilla, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and Universidad de Valencia). In Table 1 an overview of the number of focus groups, participants per university/college and the number of study participants included in the pilot study, descriptive analysis and thematic analysis can be found.

| | Focus groups | Participants | Pilot study | Descriptive analysis | Narrative analysis | Excluded* |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Vrije Universiteit Brussel | 3 | 18 | 6 | 12 | 12 | - |
| ULiège | 2 | 16 | - | 16 | 16 | - |
| Erasmus hogeschool Brussel | 2 | 12 | - | 12 | 12 | - |
| Universidad Autónoma de Madrid | 2 | 22 | - | 2 | 2 | 20 |
| Universidad de Sevilla | 1 | 7 | - | - | 7 | - |
| Universidad de Valencia | 2 | 23 | - | 23 | 23 | - |
| TOTAL | 12 | 98 | 6 | 65 | 72 | 20 |

Table 1. Detailed information on the composition of the focus groups

*The total number of participants excluded from the descriptive and narrative analysis, resulted from overpassing the ethical approval of total number of participants per focus groups.

Of the 12 focus groups, one focus group was conducted as a pilot study, involving six undergraduate students affiliated to the Vrije Universiteit Brussel located in Belgium. The first focus group conducted at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid exceeded the total accepted number of students per focus group. The total number of accepted students was set at an average of six students per focus group and approved by Ethical committee of Human Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. We therefore excluded this focus group conducted at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid from the analyses as it included 20 students. The ideal number of participants in a focus group ranges from 6 to 10 participants to stimulate conversation between every individual taking part, making the collection of information richer, and allowing each participant to share their perception and experience on a topic decided by the researcher. If a focus group is conducted with more than 10 individuals this negatively affects the group discussion moderated by the researcher (Johnssen & Christensen, 2004).

The results of the focus group from Sevilla, including seven students, were also excluded from the descriptive analysis. The descriptive information of the students affiliated to the Universidad de Sevilla were lost as they were collected in the same document as the data from the students of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (n=20) without making a clear distinction between the two institutions. Since we were unable to filter the descriptive information of these seven students from Sevilla from the overview document, it was decided to exclude them for the descriptive analysis. However, the transcript of the focus group (n=7) conducted in Sevilla was integrated in the thematic analysis. This means that the total number of students differs for the descriptive analysis and the thematic analysis related to the data of the focus groups. The descriptive analysis relates to the information provided by 65 students, while the thematic analysis is based on the input of 72 students. The latter concurs with the objective of reaching 72 undergraduate physical education students for the focus groups as described in the TPS-project proposal.

Participants

The participants are undergraduate students studying physical education and movement sciences and are all born between 2000 and 2005.

Table 2 provides additional descriptive information at the group level related to participants' gender, sexuality, migration background, whether they are the first in their family to pursue higher education, if they take up some kind of leadership role and if so, what type of leadership role, in which year of their studies they are currently in and if they already followed a course that touched upon the topic of gender-based violence.

The undergraduate program in physical education is predominantly attended by male students. Male students consistently outnumbered female students in the focus groups as well (64%). In total, 72% percent of the participants had no migration background, 13% were second generation immigrants (i.e., a person who was born in and is residing in a country that at least one of their parents previously entered as a migrant), and 12% were third generation immigrants (i.e., a person who was born in and is residing in a country that at least one of their grandparents previously entered as a migrant). Most participating students in the focus group held leadership positions (83%), with coaching within their respective sport clubs being the most frequently mentioned function. Furthermore, approximately 58% of the students did not previously follow a course on ethical issues

Results

Five themes emerged from the results of the focus groups. The first theme pertained to the perceptions of gender-based violence. The second theme provided insights into students' attitudes towards gender-based violence, while the third theme illustrated strategies employed by students when acting as bystanders or victims in incidents of gender-based violence. The fourth theme relates to perceived hindering and supportive factors influencing student's bystander behavior. The fifth theme consists of push and pull factors determining whether students want to engage in a prevention journey on gender-based violence.

| | Belgium Wallonia | Belgium Flanders | Spain | Total | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| Total number of study participants | n = 16 | n = 24 | n = 25 | N = 65 | 100 % |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Girls | 6 | 9 | 9 | 24 | 37 |
| Boys | 10 | 15 | 16 | 41 | 63 |
| Do not want to answer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sexuality | | | | | |
| Heterosexual | 14 | 23 | 21 | 58 | 89 |
| Homosexual | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lesbian | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Bisexual | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Migration background | | | | | |
| Yes, first generation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Yes, second generation | 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 14 |
| Yes, third generation | 4 | 4 | 0 | 8 | 12 |
| Do not want to answer | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Parent side | | | | | |
| Mother | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 8 |
| Father | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 9 |
| Both | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 6 |
| Do not want to answer | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| No migration background | 8 | 16 | 23 | 47 | 72 |
| First generation going to college or university | | | | | |
| Yes | 6 | 6 | 6 | 18 | 28 |
| No | 10 | 18 | 19 | 47 | 72 |
| Had a leadership function | | | | | |
| Yes | 11 | 23 | 20 | 54 | 83 |
| No | 5 | 1 | 5 | 11 | 17 |
| Type of function | | | | | |
| Coach | 9 | 17 | 6 | 32 | 49 |
| Instructor | 7 | 10 | 4 | 21 | 32 |
| Class representative | 4 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 17 |
| Scout leader | 1 | 9 | 1 | 11 | 17 |
| Board member | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| Other | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 9 |
| Undergraduate year | | | | | |
| 1 | 0 | 18 | 22 | 40 | 62 |
| 2 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 11 | 17 |
| 3 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 21 |
| Followed a course on ethical issues | | | | | |
| Yes | 3 | 5 | 13 | 21 | 32 |
| No | 12 | 14 | 12 | 38 | 58 |
| I do not know | 1 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 9 |

Table 2. Descriptive information of study participants

THEME 1: PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Undergraduate physical education students from Spain and Belgium considered gender-based violence as psychological violence, physical violence and sexual violence, against someone's sex or gender. **The students mentioned different expressions of violence such as sexism, homophobia, partner violence, and discrimination, but they did not consider neglect as a form of gender-based violence.** Most of the Belgian respondents considered that all sexes and genders (i.e., male, female, non-binary, and transgender), could be victims or perpetrators of gender-based violence. This finding contrasts with the dominant perspective of the Spanish respondents who considered gender-based violence as violence perpetrated by men against women. The Spanish students attributed gender-based violence against girls and women to the persistent dominant belief that men perceive themselves to be superior to women. This dominant belief about the different positions of men and women in society may lead to boys and men to have negative attitudes towards girls and women and potentially result in psychological or physical humiliation of girls and women. Violence perpetrated by women or experienced by men was perceived to be different. Spanish students could not explain this difference, but for them it felt not the same. Noteworthy is that one Belgian student mentioned that gender-based violence can only occur if physical violence is used. A minority of the participants in this study referred to examples of gender inequality in their sport or university contexts when talking about how to define what gender-based violence is. Students mentioned that men often receive more opportunities in the sport context than women. For example, girls are chosen last during football or handball training, or girls are put together with the weaker footballer. The consequences of such choices could lead to a decrease in motivation, sense of belonging, and learning opportunities (e.g., learning from male students who have 10 years of experience in football). Such behavior could be recognized as a form of neglect, potentially exacerbating the perceived gap between boys and girls in sports.

THEME 2: ATTITUDES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SPORT AND UNIVERSITY

Most participants referred to lived experiences, as a bystander or victim, to reflect on their opinion and attitude about situations of verbal, physical, and sexual gender-based violence between academic staff and students, sport staff and athletes or peers. All students had witnessed at least one incident of gender-based violence in their lifetime. In general, **students experienced hostile feelings against gender-based violent behavior.** Students felt anger, incomprehension, fear, hurt, helplessness, and unfairness against situations of gender-based violence. One specific situation, making jokes about gender and sexuality, left students in an unsure state. Students were conflicted about whether such jokes could be considered amusing in a particular relationship and context.

All students agreed that individuals in a position of power (e.g., professors or coaches) should not make jokes about gender or sexuality with their athletes or students. The power imbalance related to the function of professor or coach renders jokes about gender and sexuality, directed to someone specific or in general, unacceptable. Furthermore, **participants considered academic staff and staff from a sport organization as potential role models for students and athletes.** These **role models** hold the **responsibility** to set the **norms and values, and consequently determining what 'acceptable' behavior looks like within these contexts.** Students were more ambivalent when it came to jokes about gender and sexuality between peers. A fraction of the students believed that individuals should be able to joke and laugh about everything by considering the context. However, all of them agreed that the line between funny and hurtful can easily become blurry. The individual sharing the joke needs an understanding of the group dynamics, the ability to anticipate a positive reception of the joke, and the readiness to acknowledge and apologize if the joke might offend someone. The prevailing agreement was that if unsure about how the joke would be perceived, it is advisable to avoid making it.

A couple of male Spanish students considered aggressive behavior as part of the sport culture. Although they had a positive attitude towards gender-based violence in sport and university, they believed aggressive behavior was inherent to the sport sector, but not specific to male athletes. The students explained that both women and men could be aggressive and experience the need to exhausts frustration in their sport. For them, aggressive behavior could be a source for motivation and help athletes to achieve higher sport performances.

THEME 3: STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY STUDENTS WHEN ACTING AS BYSTANDERS IN INCIDENTS OF GENDER-BASE VIOLENCE

During all focus groups the facilitator presented four cases of gender-based violence. Two cases pertained to verbal violent behavior, one case was about sexual violent behavior and one was about physical violent behavior. After presenting each case the students were asked to reflect on how they would act as a bystander. The participating students in this study provided multiple intervention strategies depending on the level of severity and the type of violence of case presented. In **mild verbally violent situations, students were more inclined to confront the perpetrator if the individual in question was a fellow student**. In incidents with mild verbal violent situations students expressed a preference to ask the person in question to clarify their statement or to draw attention towards the potential negative impact of their verbale outburst. If similar behavior was perpetrated by a member of the academic staff or someone in a hierarchical higher position, participating students found it much harder to react to this right away. Some respondents mentioned that they would await to see if similar verbal excesses happen on a systematic basis. And only if this would be the case, they could consider reacting.

The case with sexual violent behavior elicited the most direct and immediate intervention strategies. Most students agreed that they would try to remove the victim out of the situation, and subsequently ask the victim how else they could help. Several examples to further support the victim were mentioned by the students such as remaining near to the victim or trying to make eye contact with the victim. The sexual violent case had no information about the exact location of the situation, yet most students used parties as a frame of reference.

All students agreed that it is necessary to respond in cases of physical violence. Diverse options were mentioned including reporting the incident to the police or individuals in authority positions (such as professors or the rector) or involving other bystanders for support. Some male students mentioned that they would intervene by hitting the perpetrators back, but only if they were certain to be able to outrun them. Only a small number of participants referred to the official point of contact of their university for reporting incidents. Out of the six universities where data were collected, only a couple of students from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel mentioned the point of contact of the university. However, almost all students from the six universities mentioned vagueness around the reporting procedure of their university. Students also referred to a lack of trust in the reporting systems of their university (e.g., point of contact and disciplinary procedure). Students, for instance, expressed uncertainty about how seriously their report would be followed up and whether there would be any consequences at all for the perpetrator(s). In addition, **students talked about the mixed feelings they have regarding the supportive services provided in their own university or college.** While they welcome the existence of such centralized services, they also expressed concerns about the personalized support for the victim and the neutrality of the case manager. Concerns that may hinder students from using such a service. Participants of one focus group in Belgium also referred to the point of contact in their respective sport clubs.

THEME 4: PERCEIVED HINDERING AND SUPPORTIVE FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT'S BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR

Participating students mentioned several hindering and supportive factors that influence student's bystander behavior. The **first barrier** was **student's lack of knowledge about the relationship** (e.g., friends or partners) **between the people involved in the incident**. Students explained their perceived difficulty in correctly interpreting a mild or severe situation of gender-based violence. Within all focus groups, students justified their passive attitude (i.e., lack of reaction) by referring to not really knowing the nature of the relationship and the appropriate behaviors (e.g., dark humor or seduction games) associated with it.

The second barrier students mentioned was the **hierarchical position of the perpetrator**. If the violent behavior was perpetrated by someone in a hierarchical higher position such as a professor, students would most likely not intervene - at least not immediately. Students explained that the considerable influence professors wield over their academic careers led them to refrain from responding, thereby avoiding the potential threat of receiving lower exam scores when addressing inappropriate behavior from professors. A minority of students from both Spain and Belgium asserted that they would always react, as they could never remain silent, attributing this inclination to their personality. The **third barrier** experienced by students when witnessing a gender-based violent situation was **their individual potential levels of arousal**. Students conveyed a belief that, despite their desire to respond, the probability of not reacting was higher, with the assumption being that they might either flee the scene or freeze. Students mentioned two issues that elicited a stress reaction: the fear related to consequences and the lack of knowledge on intervention possibilities. Students feared of becoming a target for violent behavior if they intervened. Female students were hesitant to intervene in cases of sexual violence, due to the fear of becoming one of the victims. In cases of physical violence both male and female students feared to get physically hurt (e.g., being hit or pushed). Other students explained they had no idea what possible intervention steps they could take. Students felt as if they cannot react to the situation due to a lack of knowledge on the dynamics in relationship, confidence in their abilities, and hierarchical position. Unsurprisingly, students referred to knowing one of the persons (i.e., victim or perpetrator) or having someone around they know, as the main supporting factor to feel capable of intervening as a bystander.

THEME 5: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS DETERMINING WHETHER STUDENTS WANT TO ENGAGE IN A PREVENTION JOURNEY ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Many of the students participating in the focus groups expressed an interest in partaking in a prevention journey on gender-based violence. The most common **pull factor** or **reason for participating** in a gender-based violence prevention journey was the willingness to learn how to appropriately react to an incident of gender-based violence. All students explicitly explained that the focus should lie on providing them with practical tools to enable them to better manage situations of gender-based violence, instead of providing them with a lot of theoretical background. Other reasons students mentioned were to become a better teacher, to contribute to creating change, and the possibility to go on an international exchange (i.e., exchange weekend of the TPS-project).

The most common **push factor** or **reason for not participating** in a gender-based violence prevention journey was a lack of time. The participating students indicated that if they must sacrifice too much personal time for the gender-based violence prevention journey it negatively affects their motivation to participate. A minority of students showed a complete disinterest in such an educational journey, stating that they did not perceive themselves to be the appropriate target group. They believed that students who had been victims of gender-based violence would be better candidates for such

interventions. One of the Belgian female students mentioned that she believed that victims would be more motivated to participate in a gender-based violence prevention journey compared to students who have not yet encountered gender-based violence themselves.

Conclusions related to the focus groups

In conclusion, undergraduate physical education students demonstrated varying perceptions of gender-based violence. Attitudes toward gender-based violence seemed to be shaped by lived experiences, with students expressing strong negative emotions towards gender-based violent behavior. The results of the focus groups showed the significance of power dynamics in influencing the acceptability of jokes related to gender and sexuality, emphasizing the role and responsibility of authority figures as potential role models. The students were able to conceive several strategies for intervening as bystanders, based on the perceived severity and type of gender-based violence and were also affected by the interpersonal power dynamics. Several obstacles affecting their reaction were mentioned, including a lack of knowledge about the interpersonal relationship between the victim and perpetrator and an individual stress reaction (i.e., a freeze or flight reaction). Even though most students in this study expressed interest in partaking in a gender-based violence prevention journey, concerns about time constraints and doubts about being the appropriate target audience were raised. Regarding the content of an educational journey, students agreed that they mainly want practical tools to better deal with incidents of gender-based violence. Overall, the findings of this study underscore the need for tailored prevention interventions that address the specific concerns and perspectives of undergraduate physical education students in the context of gender-based violence in sport and university settings.

PART 4: A TAILORED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION JOURNEY

The preceding sections of the context analysis focused on the **first phase of the intervention mapping approach**, namely a detailed understanding of the problem. This problem relates to **the prevalence of gender-based violence among the target group** (i.e., undergraduate physical education students) **and these young people's ability to prevent or appropriately react when witnessing or experiencing gender-based violence**. Based on **reports of citizens (PART 1)**, **a literature review (PART 2)** and the **results of focus groups** with the target group **(PART 3)** we pinpointed **four distinct gaps** (Figure 8).

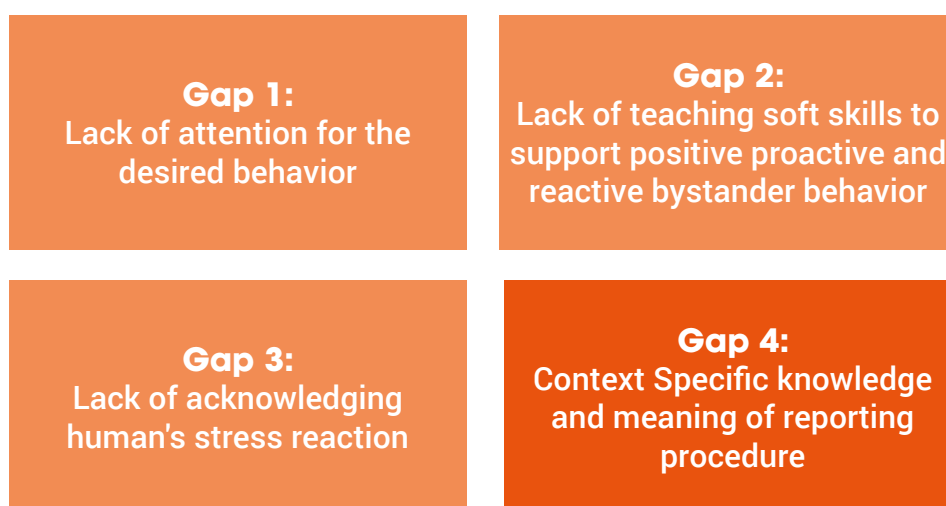


Figure 8. Identified gaps out of the literature review and focus groups

The first three gaps emerged from the literature review. These gaps relate to a lack of attention for developing desired behavior among young people to prevent incidents of gender-based violence (GAP 1), a lack of attention for teaching specific soft skills that support positive and reactive bystander behavior (GAP 2) and a lack of acknowledging human's stress reaction (GAP 3). The second and third gap were corroborated through the focus groups. Through the analysis of the focus groups an additional fourth gap was identified namely: a lack of knowledge about where to report gender-based violence in the university context or elsewhere (GAP 4).

The findings of this first phase of the IM approach have been used to develop the intervention or the prevention journey targeted at undergraduate physical education students who are studying in one of the following five universities or colleges: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Erasmushogeschool, Université de Liège, Autónoma Universidad de Madrid, Universidad de Sevilla, and Universidad de Valencia. In this section of the context analysis a **description of the prevention journey (PART 4)** will be provided. This

description relates to the second step of the IM approach, in which outcomes and objectives of the TPS intervention are determined and the logic model of change is presented (Figure 9).

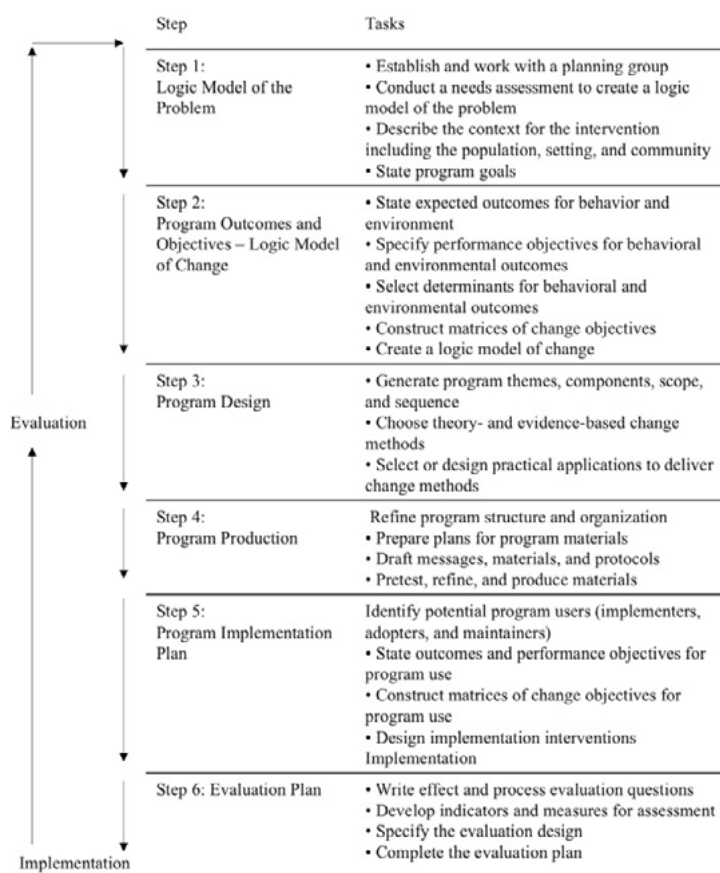


Figure 9. Intervention mapping steps and tasks (Bartholomew-Eldridge et al., 2016)

The logic model of change for the TPS intervention - a gender-based violence prevention journey for undergraduate students - is developed based on the identified gaps in phase 1 of the IM approach. To address the identified gaps and develop a theory-based intervention, our first hurdle was to explore the following three key questions:

- Which social science theories are essential to support the desired changes?
- What determinants do we aim to impart to the students?
- Which methods will be employed to effectively convey knowledge and competences to the students?

The aim of the gender-based violence prevention journey of the TPS project for undergraduate physical education students is two-fold. On the one hand we aim to prevent gender-based violence victimization and perpetration of physical education students. On the other hand, we aim to increase the skills of prospective employees in the sport sector by educating them on how to support and create a safe sport climate that can consequently lead to a decreased risk of gender-based violence. Within the prevention journey of the TPS project students will learn to become change agents able to prevent gender-based violence, as they will increase their knowledge needed in this regard and reflect on their bystander attitude and behavior.

Theoretical blueprint

We strongly believe that to prevent gender-based violence, interventions should focus on day-to-day interpersonal interactions (e.g., how are individuals managing conflicts, how do they communicate with each other, and how do they regulate emotions). To do so, we selected, three social science theories that enables us to overcome the identified gaps and to contribute to the desired changes (i.e., specific knowledge, attitudes and behavior). The three social science theories that underpin the gender-based violence prevention journey are the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the bystander stages theory (Darley & Latané, 1968) and the window of tolerance theory (Siegel, 1999) (Figure 10).

The **theory of planned behavior** is an extension of the theory of reasoned action by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and **explains that behavior intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control**. For example, students' negative attitudes towards gender-based violence reduce the likelihood of them engaging in sexist jokes. Subjective norms indicate how social pressure may lead to students keeping discomfort about sexist jokes to themselves in a specific group. Perceived behavioral control assesses how easy or difficult reporting such incidents is perceived by students. Ajzen's theory helps us to grasp the internal processes driving to observable behavior. Most students expressed negative attitudes towards gender-based violence during the focus groups, through feelings of anger, disappointment, and helplessness. Consequently, building a prevention that mainly focuses on increasing positive attitudes towards gender-based violence would be counterproductive, as students' negative attitudes regarding gender-based violence are in our favor. However, some students perceived certain risk factors for gender-based violence (e.g., aggressive behavior as tool for winning) (Fortier et al., 2020) as non-problematic. This belief could influence the subjective norm of the group in a negative way and could lead to tolerating incidents of gender-based violence. Verhelle et al. (2021) highlighted the significant impact of the subjective norm on positive bystander behavior by coaches in addressing sexual violence. Additionally, the focus groups revealed a low perceived behavioral control to report situations involving individuals in hierarchical positions and students. These findings prompt us to prioritize subjective norm and perceived behavioral control as key determinants in our prevention strategy.

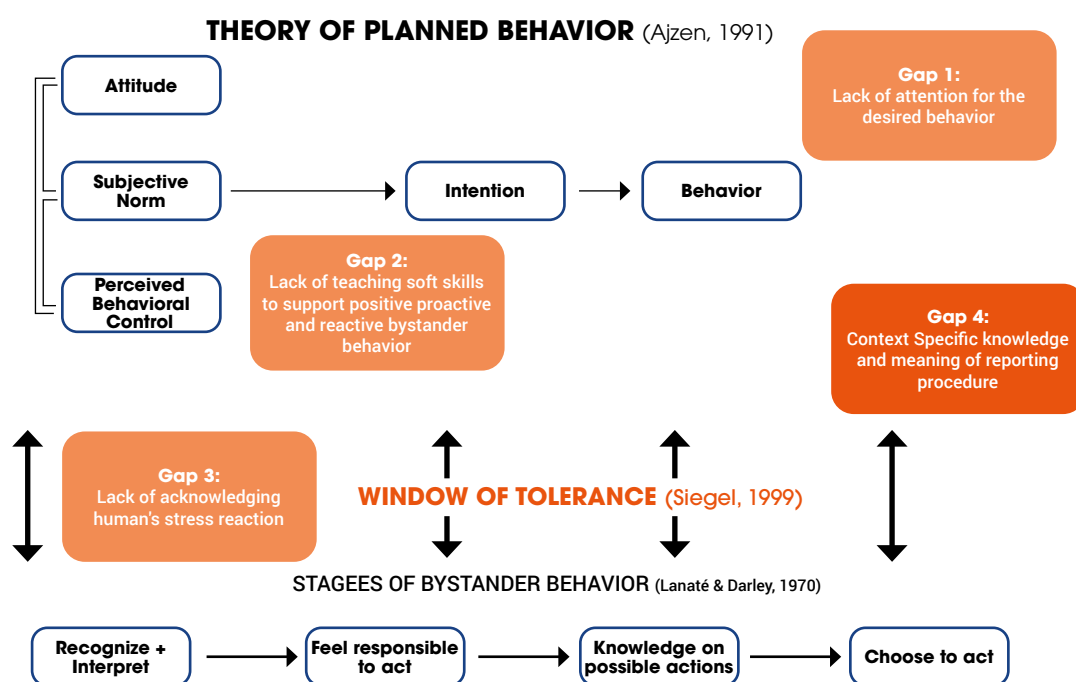


Figure 10. Theories and gaps underpinning the GBV prevention journey of the TPS project

The prevention journey targets bystanders, which we define as all as active members of a community. Darley and Latané (1968) were the pioneers on **bystander theory**, as they developed the bystander stages theory which **explains that individuals who witness an acute violent situation will provide help if they can recognize and interpret the situation as violent, feel responsible to act, have the knowledge about possible actions, and actively choose to act**. This theory is primarily cognitive, with the only emotionally driven step being the second one: to feel responsible to act.

Existing interventions such as 5 A method⁴ or A call to men⁵, typically address participants' knowledge on gender-based violence including the definition of gender-based violence and appropriate reactive bystander behavior (i.e., how to act when witnessing an incident of gender-based violence). However, the analysis of the focus groups revealed that students physical education lacked knowledge regarding reporting gender-based violence incidents within their university context or elsewhere.

A third theoretical model, the **window of tolerance** (Siegel, 1991) has been introduced to further complete the blueprint of the prevention journey. Including this third theory, enables us to address the third gap in the current understanding of bystander interventions according to the literature review. The window of tolerance (Siegel, 1991) theory delineates three functional zones (i.e., green, orange, and red) in human stress response, explaining **how arousal levels trigger instinctive reactions of hyperarousal (i.e., flight or fight) and hypoarousal (i.e., freeze)**. These instinctive reactions have an influence on our attention and awareness and our body functionality and thereby reveal the complexity of human stress response. By acknowledging and incorporating the knowledge related to natural stress reactions in a gender-based violence prevention journey we create the opportunity to build a trauma-sensitive intervention. These three theories form the blueprint of the gender-based violence prevention journey of the TPS project.

Program design

The **program design** is the focus of the third phase of the IM approach (see Figure 9 on page 32 of this report). For our intervention on the prevention of gender-based violence this consisted of identifying the specific soft skills and methodologies. The gender-based violence prevention journey, which are the second and third wave of change of the TPS project includes a total of five consecutive sessions, one curiosity session and four 2-hour workshops. Based on the detailed understanding of the problem (i.e., phase 1 of the IM approach: reports of citizens, literature review and focus groups) we developed a theoretical blueprint (see Figure 10 on page 33) that enabled us to decide upon the specific content and objectives of each separate workshop (Figure 11).

The **curiosity session** is designed to impart knowledge on gender-based violence, including its definition, recognition, and the shared responsibility of undergraduate physical education students in the prevention of gender-based violence. Apart from acquainting students with the **concepts of gender-based violence and prevention**, the curiosity session is also used to communicate about the content of the subsequent sessions part of the prevention journey.

² <https://www.allesoverseks.be/hoekan-je-helpen-als-je-seksueel-grensoverschrijdend-gedrag-ziet>
³ <https://www.acalltomen.org/healthy-manhood/>

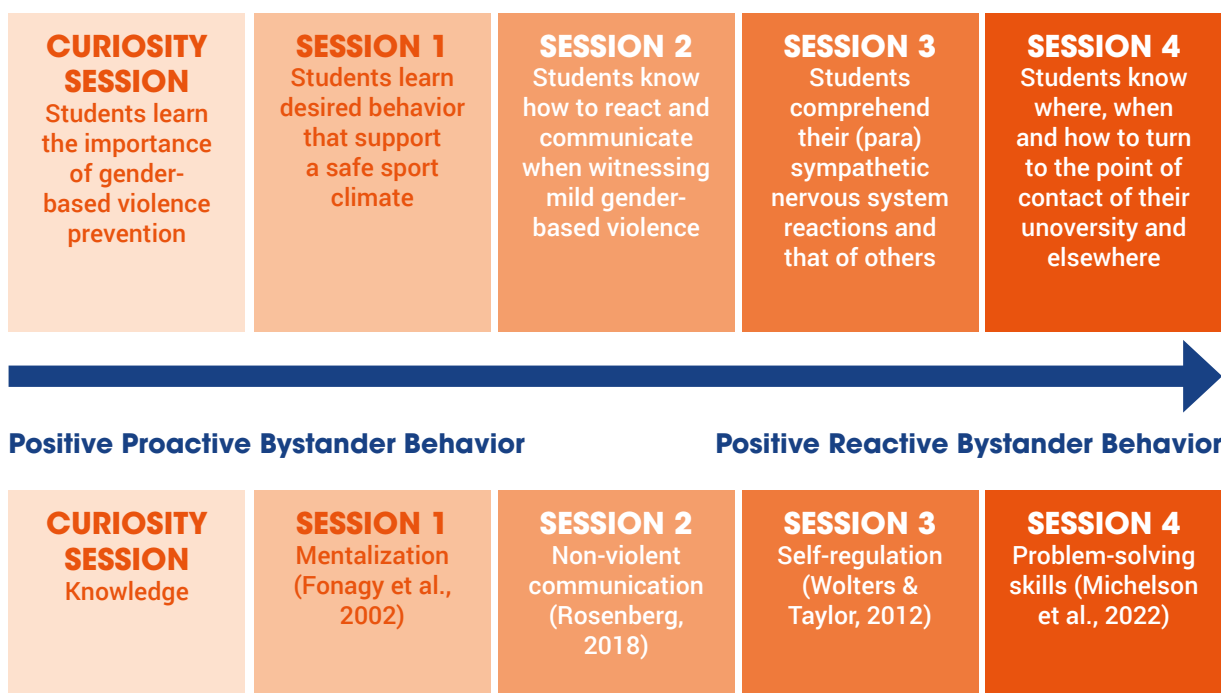


Figure 11. Positioning and content of the sessions part of the gender-based violence prevention journey of TPS

The four subsequent sessions are developed to address the identified knowledge gaps (See Figure 8 on 31 of this context analysis) and focus on specific soft skills (i.e., mentalization, non-violent communication, self-regulation and problem-solving). The primary objective of session 1 of the gender-based violence prevention journey is to instill desired behaviors supporting a safe sports climate. Consequently, this session focuses **on mentalization - an individual's capacity to comprehend both their own and others' mental states, encompassing intentions and affects** (Fonagy & Target, 2002). Mentalization, derived from the attachment theory and forms the basis for empathic human interactions that can enhance interpersonal functioning. To foster a safe sport climate, the practice of mentalization is essential when addressing proactive bystander behavior. Via a sport plus approach⁶, students will learn about the significance of mentalization.

In **session 2**, students learn how to respond and communicate effectively as a bystander of mild gender-based violence incidents. The protocol of non-violent communication by Rosenberg (2015) will therefore be introduced. Non-violent communication emphasizes the importance of language in human interactions, advocating mindfulness in word choice for effective communication and connection. The protocol teaches expressing desires, needs, and feelings without resorting to aggression, promoting active listening and open to foster an empathetic dialogue. The prominence is on power-sharing and seeking mutually beneficial solutions, avoiding polarization and demonizing opinions about gender-based violence.

Session 3 addresses stress reactions, fostering trauma-sensitive practices to aid comprehension and self-regulation. Promoting a safe climate and preventing gender-based violence is the collective responsibility of all individuals within the sport and university context. However, it is crucial to clarify that it should never be the intention of a prevention journey to establish a therapeutic relationship where individuals lived experiences are directly addressed. Instead, the focus is on enhancing the

⁶ A sport plus approach consists of fostering embodied experiential learning in which the participant is actively involved.

competencies and knowledge of future employees to effectively prevent such incidents. Nevertheless, witnessing incidents of gender-based violence could be traumatic, and responding to these situations may not always be self-evident, even for those who desire to intervene. Consequently, **the objective of the third session is to deepen students' understanding of their natural stress reactions and those of others**, fostering a holistic and trauma-sensitive approach to addressing the complexities of gender-based violence prevention.

In **session 4** students will further develop their problem-solving skills with a focus on appropriate reactive bystander behavior (i.e., how and where to report incidents of gender-based violence). This soft skill was positioned strategically after the emotional regulation session, as it equips students to navigate moderate to severe incidents of gender-based violence, emphasizing collaborative problem-solving and a proactive bystander attitude.

Next steps

In this context analysis we provided an in-depth insight into our approach for the three steps of the intervention mapping procedure (See Figure 9 on page 32 of this document). These three steps including (1) a detailed understanding of the problem based on the reports of citizens, the literature review and focus groups and (2) a theoretical blueprint for the intervention and (3) the actions taken to design the program led to the initial draft of a theory- and evidence-based intervention for the prevention of gender-based violence (See Figure 11 on page 36). This gender-based violence prevention journey including five consecutive 2-hour workshops seek to empower students as change agents against gender-based violence, by fostering a safe and supportive environment through a holistic and well-informed approach.

The content of the TPS intervention will be described in detail in the activity guide for coaches and teachers (deliverable 4.1 of the TPS project) that will be next year. It will include detailed lesson sheets and instructions for the facilitators. The first draft of the prevention journey is currently tested in one university (i.e., Université de Liège). The purpose of this testing phase relates to the fourth phase of the intervention mapping approach. In this testing phase we focus on evaluating the feasibility of the intervention. The following evaluation indicators are therefore included in the feasibility assessment: (a) reach (i.e., recruitment capability and sample characteristics), (b) dosage (i.e. predetermined number, duration and content provided), (c) fidelity (i.e., the degree to which an intervention has been delivered as intended; we will therefore evaluate the delivery of the prevention journey against specific criteria) and (d) acceptability (i.e., reflects the extent to which people delivering the intervention consider it to be appropriate for the users based on experienced cognitive (i.e., perceptions) and emotional responses (i.e., feelings). The results of the feasibility assessment will be used to refine the initial draft of the TPS intervention on the prevention of gender-based violence that will be implemented for the first time in 2024 across the remaining partner institutions.

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