

EXISTING NARRATIVES

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

The predominant group leading the conversation for decades has been liberal feminists, and they gained a lot of traction in the 2000s by focusing on college campuses. The academic and political nature of these narratives generates a predictable conservative chorus about false accusations, promiscuity, heteronormativity, and generally blaming victims. This push-pull dynamic will likely take decades to resolve through legislation, if that can be achieved at all.

Should we expand beyond entrenched arguments that center the state and the justice system? Are there other appeals that could form the basis of an aligned, multilateral coalition that could make a humanitarian impact on quality of life independently of legislative action?

If substantial social or legislative change will take decades, what can we be doing to provide relief and joy to the millions managing symptoms now?

There is a heavy emphasis on prosecution and prison time for sex offenders, which is out of step in many ways with the rising prison abolition movement.

If we want to be in solidarity with activists who are advocating away from prosecution and prisons, what kinds of preventative or rehabilitative measures need to be popularized? Is that an appropriate action given the severity of the crimes? What would be a stop gap during the transition from one approach to another? Is this what a majority of victims would want?

Sexual violence is embedded within many issues, but it is often erased in order to elevate non-sexual objectives. For example: An undocumented person who is raped is asked to suppress this information so as not to detract from broader pushes for immigration reform. Or a soldier is assaulted but asked not to report it so as not to disrupt the push for gender equality in military service.

What would happen if we stopped waiting our turn in line to be recognized? What if issue group leaders incorporated the consequences of sexual trauma into their frameworks for social change and emphasized it?

Most discourse frames sexual violence and recourse as a women's issue. While women comprise a currently-known majority of the impacted population, research on men and queer people is undersourced.

Should we consider framing the crisis as a human rights issue in the sex education and mental health sectors? This could allow for a wide range of demographics to be included in the coalition.

What actionable knowledge might be unlocked if we dedicated as much or more time to long-term symptoms management as we do to the immediate crisis period?

Solutions for straight and queer people are siloed. It creates valuable safety measures to stay separate, but the lack of integration prevents us from making strides toward a global sex positive curricula.

What could be possible if straight and queer people join forces to address toxic gender behaviors that spur sexual violence?

The portrayal of us in prose and imagery is largely fragile and tragic. This creates a perception of being irreversibly tainted, damaged, or unable to recover.

What impact might sex positive, mentally-healthy messages about us thriving have on perceptions of us? How might celebratory, respectful images restore our inherent sexuality?

How could robust, inclusive sex education become a strong preventative measure?