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Experiences of UC Santa Barbara female alumni exposed to a gender-based mass shooting

Erin G. Carpenter
eringcarpenter@gmail.com

EXPERIENCES OF UC SANTA BARBARA FEMALE ALUMNI EXPOSED TO A GENDER-

BASED MASS SHOOTING

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SUPERVISORY COMMITEE

The faculty listed below appointed by the Dean of Nursing and Health Professions have

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Brent "Rick" Ferm, Ph.D., Committee Chair
School of Nursing and Health Professions

Dellanira Garcia, Ph.D.
School of Nursing and Health Professions

Erin Grinshteyn, Ph.D.
School of Nursing and Health Professions

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DEDICATION

To my family, Mom, Dad and Morgan – I could not have done this without your unconditional love and support. Thank you for making my dream come true.

To the students who lost their lives on May 23, 2014, Veronika Weiss, Katie Cooper, Christopher Michaels-Martinez, Cheng Yuang-Hong, George Chen, and Weihan Wang – you are in our hearts forever.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the past five decades, mass shootings have emerged as a highly politicized, social problem that generates considerable public sentiment and media attention (Elsass et al., 2014; Rocque & Duwe, 2018; Shultz et al., 2014). Despite their elevated specter, mass shootings are difficult to investigate given a larger political discourse about gun control which has prevented the establishment of a single definition to capture the nature of these events (Paradice, 2015). Notwithstanding this debate, the increase in mass shootings carried out on or near college campuses over the past 50 years have led researchers to focus more intently on the predictors and consequences that characterize these attacks (Boykin & Orcutt, 2018; Elsass et al., 2014; Fox & Savage, 2009). As a result, existing research on college mass shootings provides valuable information about the aftermath of these events on individuals both directly and indirectly exposed (Shultz et al. 2014; Lowe & Galea, 2017). Specifically, empirical studies identify predictors of post-shooting mental health outcomes, including post-exposure trauma symptoms (e.g., Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012), mood disorder distress (e.g., Fallahi & Lesik, 2009), as well as data about post-shooting fear (e.g., Kaminski et al., 2010) and utilization of coping mechanisms (e.g., Vicary & Fraley, 2010) in community members from affected institutions. Given that nearly 98% of mass shooting perpetrators are male, a connection between masculinity and violence has been drawn to explain our country's mass shooting phenomenon (e.g., Kalish & Kimmel, 2010).

Since most of the work on college mass shootings has involved quantitative findings about the short-term consequences of mass shootings at Virginia Tech (VT) and Northern Illinois University (NIU), a qualitative exploration that explores the possible long-term impacts of a

college mass shooting is promising. One college mass shooting that has received limited attention in the literature is the 2014 mass shooting that occurred in Isla Vista, a town adjacent to UC Santa Barbara (UCSB) (White, 2017). In addition to killing six people and wounding 14 others, the Isla Vista gunman intentionally targeted female students in what he dubbed his "War on Women" (Rodger, 2014, p. 132). Moreover, although every mass shooting committed on or near a college campus has been carried out by a male perpetrator, there has yet to be a study that intentionally integrates the role of gender and the experiences of the affected community members. Therefore, these gaps in the research present a unique opportunity to diversify the current college mass shooting literature and potentially enhance clinical service delivery for women who were exposed to a college mass shooting or other acts of violence in which they were the intended victims on the basis of their gender identity (White, 2017).

In line with the Jesuit mission of University of San Francisco (USF) that fosters the pursuit of truth and exploration of evidence that honors a diverse set of perspectives, the overall research aim of this project was to better understand the lived experiences of college women exposed to a gender-based mass shooting in their college community. To do so, this project qualitatively examined the lived experiences of women who were enrolled students at UCSB during the 2014 mass shooting in Isla Vista, California. Using semi-structured interviews and a thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the researcher identified and interpreted themes in the data relating to the experiences of the participants.
The research aims of this project include:

1. To conduct a qualitative study that examines the experiences of women who were the intended victims of a college mass shooting.

2. To gain a better understanding about the experiences of intended victims to gender-based gun violence.

3. To examine the field's limited understanding about the long-term impact on psychological functioning following exposure to a college mass shooting.

The research questions that were explored in this project include:

1. How did UCSB women experience the Isla Vista mass shooting?

2. How did UCSB women respond to the gunman's intention to target female students?

3. In what ways did the Isla Vista mass shooting impact the rest of their time at UCSB?

4. In what ways does the Isla Vista mass shooting currently impact their lives?

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

This review examines the existing literature that is pertinent to the project's aims and

research questions. To explore the field's current understanding of college mass shootings and

the role of gender in gun violence, the researcher reviewed 48 peer-reviewed articles, in addition

to other relevant sources, including books (e.g., Connell, 1995) and mass shooting statistics (e.g.,

Federal Bureau Investigation [FBI], 2013). The review will cover a breadth of information about

mass shootings, with a particular focus on mass shootings in college settings. Next, the

researcher will present findings related to the aftermath of college mass shootings, including the

sequalae of mental health symptoms following these events. Additional post-shooting responses,

including fear, coping mechanisms, and narratives from community members from affected

academic institutions will also be discussed. Lastly, research concerning the gendered nature of

mass shootings and studies unique to the Isla Vista mass shooting will be presented.

Isla Vista Mass Shooting

"The Second Phase will represent my War on Women. I will punish all females for the

crime of depriving me of sex. They have starved me of sex for my entire youth and gave that

pleasure to other men. In doing so, they took many years of my life away. I cannot kill every

single female on earth, but I can deliver a devastating blow that will shake all of them to the core

of their wicked hearts" (Rodger, 2014, p. 132)

On May 23, 2014, Elliot Rodger killed two female students and six male students, and

wounded 14 others before taking his own life in the unincorporated beachside town of Isla Vista,

California adjacent to UCSB. His onslaught began earlier that day by stabbing his two male

roommates and their male friend to death in their shared apartment. At 9:18 pm, Rodger

electronically distributed his 137-page manifesto entitled "My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger," and a self-produced video dubbed "Retribution," to family members, acquaintances, and health providers, among others. The digital archives provide an autobiographical account and his vengeful plans to kill female students whom he believed unwisely rejected him, and their male counterparts who he felt the women chose at his expense. After an unsuccessful attempt to gain entry into the UCSB Alpha Phi sorority house where he intended to commence his "War on Women," Rodger returned to his vehicle and shot three women passing by on foot, killing two and critically wounding the third. Just as the first emergency call was made at 9:27 pm, he drove through the streets of Isla Vista and fired over 50 rounds of ammunition. In his spree, he killed a student who fled for refuge in a delicatessen and wounded seven others with gunfire and another seven pedestrians and cyclists by striking them with his vehicle. Following a confrontation and exchange of gunfire with authorities on Del Playa Drive, Rodger was pronounced dead at 9:35 pm from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The attack resulted in seven causalities, 14 injuries, and a community tasked to mourn a tremendous loss (Felix & Dowdy, 2014; Myketiak, 2016; White, 2017).

Mass Shootings

Mass shootings are difficult to empirically investigate given a larger political discourse which has prevented the establishment of a single definition to capture the nature of these events (Paradice, 2015). This lack of consensus can be attributed to conflicting opinions on gun control as it pertains to the construct of victimhood in mass shootings. More restrictive definitions of mass shootings emphasize the number of gun-induced causalities, while broader definitions also include injuries caused by gunfire (Myketiak, 2016). For example, the FBI regards mass shootings as single incident events that result in three or more causalities (FBI, 2013), and

similarly, the Congressional Research Service defines mass shootings as multiple homicide incidents in which four or more victims are murdered with a firearm (Krouse & Richardson, 2015). Conversely, Gun Violence Archive proposes that mass shootings occur when at least four people are injured or killed over a general space (Myketiak, 2016). Policy aside, without a uniform definition, the literature will remain equivocal with regard to the reported frequency of mass shootings and the related trends, risk factors, and consequences that characterize them (Rocque & Duwe, 2018). This project will utilize Gun Violence Archive's definition of mass shooting (i.e., when at least four people are killed or injured over a general space) as it allows the researcher to discuss a greater number of empirical studies and statistical data that are pertinent to the research aims.

Over the past six decades, mass shootings have emerged as a highly politicized, social problem that generates considerable public sentiment and media attention (Elsass et al., 2014; Rocque & Duwe, 2018; Shultz et al., 2014). Each mass shooting event is deliberate, designed to cause many deaths, and has the potential to affect individuals situated both closely and spatially located from the attack (Elsass, Schildkraut, & Stafford, 2016). Mass shootings typically last for minutes to hours, yet the resulting domestic and international media coverage can span from days and weeks, and in the most extreme cases, a month or more (Elsass et al., 2016). In fact, these media spectacles (Elsass et al., 2016; Myketiak, 2016) garner considerably more publicity than other violent crimes that occur with greater frequency, such as homicides (Rocque & Duwe, 2018; Shultz et al., 2014).

Mass shootings have predominant features that distinguish them from other violent crimes. With regard to perpetrator demographics, mass shootings are frequently carried out by single, white males who commit suicide following their attacks (Roque, 2012; Lankford, 2015).

Specifically, 62% of American mass shooters identify as white and 97.7% identify as male (Bridges & Tober, 2016). Regarding the suicidality element of mass shootings, approximately 30% of perpetrators take their lives following their shooting rampage (Lankford, 2015). Additionally, mass shootings often take place in locations that are characterized by low crime rates and have a reputation for low rates of violence (Roque, 2012; Scott-Coe, 2017; Shultz et al., 2014). Highlighting the pervasive nature of these events, mass shootings have occurred in a variety of these types of historically safe settings, including, but not limited to, school campuses, places of worship, and concert venues (Elsass et al., 2014).

Mass shootings have an extensive history in the United States. The first documented mass shooting occurred on September 6, 1949 when Howard Unruh killed 13 people and wounded three others in his "Walk of Death" rampage in Camden, New Jersey (Sauer, 2015). Although attacks such as Unruh's continued to occur, a mass shooting committed by Charles Whitman at the University of Texas on August 1, 1966 changed the landscape of this country's relationship with large-scale gun violence. In what was then America's most fatal mass shooting, Whitman opened fired at the University of Texas bell tower, killing 18 and wounding 30 before he was taken down by authorities (Rocque & Duwe, 2018). Aside from cultivating widespread awareness of mass murder in public arenas, this watershed event marked the beginning of a spike in mass shooting sprees. In fact, some regard this incident as an inauguration of a nationwide mass murder wave (Fox & Levin, 2011). Specifically, before the 1966 spree, 24 mass shootings took place in the United States. Comparably, according to Gun Violence Archive, 268 mass shootings were committed in 2014 alone. In 2015, 335 mass shootings were carried out, followed by 382 in 2016, and 346 in 2017 (Gun Violence Archive, 2019). These include the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016 where 49 died and over 50 were injured;

the Route 91 Harvest Festival shooting in Las Vegas, Nevada on October 1, 2017 that resulted in 58 deaths and over 500 injuries; and the First Baptist Church shooting in Sutherland Springs, Texas on November 5, 2017 that led to 26 deaths and 20 injuries (Nestel, Miller & Keneally, 2018). Most recently, from January 1, 2021 to May 6, 2021, 130 mass shootings have occurred that resulted in 205 deaths and 728 injuries (Gun Violence Archive, 2021).

Mass Shootings at Schools

The upsurge of mass shootings carried out in schools has compelled researchers to focus more intently on the impact of these attacks in academic communities (Boykin & Orcutt, 2018; Elsass et al., 2014; Fox & Savage, 2009). Following Whitman's 1966 shooting spree, 49 mass shootings at schools have occurred; specifically, four have been carried out at elementary schools, four at middle schools, 25 at high schools, and 16 at colleges and universities (Paradice, 2015). Namely, from the mid-1990s to present day, mass shootings that involve former or current students opening fire on multiple victims in school communities have seemingly increased (Roque, 2012). One of these events was the notorious 1999 mass shooting spree at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. What eventually became a euphemism for threatening school safety (i.e., "doing a Columbine"), this mass shooting conducted by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold resulted in 15 fatalities and over 20 injuries (Hawkins et al., 2004). Perhaps unsurprising given the graphic nature of this episode, the resulting amount of news coverage served as a contributor to this event's consolidation into our nation's collective psyche (Fox & Savage, 2009; Myketiak, 2016). For example, CNN aired six hours of uninterrupted coverage when the Columbine story initially broke, and ABC, CBS, and NBC reserved over half of their evening airtime to report on the event in the month following the attack (Myketiak, 2016). In sum, 319 news stories were broadcasted over news networks in 1999 and over 10,000

print articles were published in the year following the attack (Myketiak, 2016). Other high-profile mass shootings that demanded the public's attention surrounding school violence included attacks at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012 and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018 (Nestel et al., 2018).

Mass Shootings at Colleges and Universities

Like nationwide mass shooting trends, mass shootings on or near college campuses are occurring with increasing frequency (Lowe & Galea, 2015). Guns are most frequently utilized by mass shooting perpetrators given their high case fatality rate, but knives and other weapons have also been used (Fox & Savage, 2009). Since the first collegiate mass shooting in 1966, 16 more mass shootings have occurred on or near college and university campuses (Paradice, 2015).

Institution	Date of Mass Shooting	Deaths and Injuries
University of Texas at Austin	August 1, 1966	15 deaths, 31 injuries
Rose-Mar College of Beauty	November 12, 1966	5 deaths, 2 injuries
Gonzaga University	November 11, 1971	2 death, 4 injuries
University of South Carolina	October 6, 1979	2 deaths, 5 injuries
New York City Technical College	August 12, 1985	1 death, 4 injuries
University of Iowa	November 1, 1991	5 deaths, 1 injury
Appalachian School of Law	January 26, 2002	3 deaths, 3 injuries
Virginia Tech	April 16, 2007	32 deaths, 25 injuries
Northern Illinois University	February 14, 2008	5 deaths, 18 injuries
Youngstown State University	February 6, 2011	1 death, 11 injuries
Oikos University	April 2, 2012	7 deaths, 3 injuries
University of Southern California	October 31, 2012	0 deaths, 4 injuries
UC Santa Barbara	May 23, 2014	3 deaths, 13 injuries
Umpqua Community College	October 1, 2015	9 deaths, 9 injuries
Northern Arizona University	October 9, 2015	1 death, 3 injuries
Tennessee State University	October 22, 2015	1 death, 3 injuries

Table 1. Mass shootings on or near United States college campuses, 1966-2021

Although each of these acts of gun violence resulted in tragic outcomes, the massacres at VT and NIU played a crucial role in elevating the specter of mass shootings in collegiate communities (Fox & Savage, 2009). First, on April 26, 2007, VT student Cho Seung-Hui fatally

shot 32 people and injured 25 more, before taking his own life (Hawdon & Ryan, 2012). At the time, this mass shooting was regarded as the worst civilian shooting and worst campus shooting incident in United States history (Hawdon & Ryan, 2012; Hughes et al., 2011; Fallahi & Lesik, 2009). Less than a year after the VT spree, a similar incident happened when Steven Kazmierczak opened fire in a NIU geology lecture hall (Vicary & Fraley, 2010). In his February 14, 2008 rampage, Kazmierczak killed five NIU students and injured 18 more, before fatally shooting himself (Vicary & Fraley, 2010). In addition to increasing the threat of large-scale gun violence on college campuses, these historic events occurring with striking temporal proximity served as the catalyst for researchers to study the precipitating factors and consequences of this type of mass shooting (Fox & Savage, 2009).

In their examination of mass shootings on college campuses, Fox and Savage (2009) explore several characteristics that distinguish these types of attacks from ones at middle and high schools. First, colleges face unique safety related challenges in regard to responding to these violent events. Compared to middle and high schools that are typically housed in a single building, colleges are spread across much larger campuses that encourage the free flow of individuals. This geographical and social landscape makes locking down college campuses in the wake of gun violence a near impossible task. Second, there are notable differences in the life experiences of perpetrators that carry out shootings at these respective campuses. High school shooters often endorse feeling bullied or excluded by their peers whereas the perpetrators of higher education mass shootings at college and universities are often graduate students that turn to violence in response to an overwhelming pressure to succeed. For example, of 14 multiple fatality shootings at American colleges and universities between 1991 and 2008, eight attacks were committed by current or former graduate students, compared to three by more traditional

undergraduate students (Fox & Savage, 2009). While these distinguishing factors have interested scholars, the current literature places much more emphasis on the impact that mass shootings have on the members of the community in which they occur.

The Aftermath of College and University Mass Shootings

      Mental health sequalae of mass shootings. In their respective meta-analyses, Shultz et al. (2014) and Lowe and Galea (2017) identify several predictive factors for adverse mental health outcomes in individuals exposed to mass shootings, including college students. These predictive factors can be conceptualized as risk factors and protective factors with respect to post-shooting mental health consequences. First, gaining empirical insight into risk factors for post-shooting mental health consequences is possible due to the research methodology that is often employed to study mass shootings. Since mass shootings are impossible to predict, many studies compare pre-shooting data from unrelated studies, such as research conducted on pre-shooting sexual trauma (e.g., Bardeen et al., 2013) to post-shooting data collected from a sub-sample of the population studied (Shultz et al., 2014). Next, protective factors for post-shooting mental health outcomes primarily include findings related to the level of exposure to the mass shooting (e.g., Hughes et al., 2011), coping mechanisms (Littleton, Axsom & Grills-Taquechel, 2011), and the role of resources (e.g., Littleton, Kumpula, & Orcutt, 2011). Taken together, the categories that are used to predict mental health outcomes following mass shootings fall into three domains: demographics and pre-shooting characteristics, incident exposure, and post-incident functioning and psychosocial resources (Lowe & Galea, 2017).

     Post-exposure trauma. The majority of the research on the mental health outcomes following college mass shootings explores post-traumatic stress-symptoms (PTSS) (i.e., sub-threshold PTSD) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Findings consistently indicate that

college students report increased levels of PTSS following exposure to a mass shooting on their campus, at least in the short term (Lowe & Galea, 2017; Shultz et al., 2014). Although one study on PTSS assessed college students up to 31 months post-shooting (Orcutt, Bonanno, Hannan, & Miron, 2014), and two others investigated students one year after their campus mass shooting (Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012; Littleton, Axsom & Grills-Taquechel, 2011), the bulk of studies assess post-exposure trauma in the weeks and months following campus mass shootings. Thus, this limited understanding about long-term shooting related PTSS and PTSD presents an opportunity for future research.

Demographics and pre-incident characteristics. Five studies to date assess demographics and pre-incident characteristics with respect to shooting related PTSS among college women (Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012; Littleton, Kumpula, & Orcutt, 2011; Orcutt et al., 2014; Kumpula, Orcutt, Bardeen & Varkovitzsky, 2011; Bardeen et al., 2013). Consistent with the cumulative nature of trauma exposure, VT women who experienced prior sexual trauma reported significantly more shooting-related PTSS one-year post-shooting as compared to their peers without a sexual trauma history (Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012). Similarly, among NIU women, greater pre-incident trauma was predictive of higher levels of PTSS eight months post-shooting (Littleton, Kumpula, & Orcutt, 2011), as well as a higher likelihood of having a non-resilient trajectory of PTSS in the 31 months following the event (Orcutt et al., 2014). In another longitudinal study of NIU women, pre-shooting experiential avoidance predicted greater peritraumatic dissociation (i.e., a risk factor for PTSS) approximately one-month post-shooting and higher scores on four PTSS clusters (i.e., intrusions, avoidance, dysphoria, hyperarousal) eight months post-shooting (Kumpula et al., 2011). Similarly, in an aforementioned NIU study, Orcutt et al. (2014) found that women who

endorsed higher rates of experiential avoidance, or the tendency to disengage from challenging

emotions, thoughts, and memories, experienced prolonged PTSS symptoms in the 31 months

following the shooting compared to their peers who displayed an ability to effectively emotional

regulate (e.g., ability to access emotional regulation strategies, ability to be clear about emotions

that are being experienced). To assess the temporal relationship between trauma exposure,

emotional regulation difficulties (ERD) and reported PTSS, Bardeen et al. (2013) conducted a

longitudinal study with three time points with a sample of NIU women and found that ERD

predicted severity of PTSS between pre-shooting (T1) and the acute aftermath of the shooting

(T2), as well as between T2 and eight months post-shooting (Bardeen et al., 2013). In sum, these

findings suggest that pre-incident trauma, experiential avoidance, and emotional regulation

difficulties are associated with increased PTSS among college students following campus mass

shootings. Noteworthy, is that to the researcher's knowledge, the current studies examining

demographics and pre-incident characteristics with respect to PTSS following college mass

shootings focus exclusively on female students.

     Incident exposure. Previous empirical literature indicates that the type and degree of

incident exposure that college students experience during campus mass shootings may play a

role in their reported levels of PTSS. Mercer et al. (2016) found that having direct exposure to

the NIU mass shooting, as indicated by experiences such as hearing gunfire or witnessing the

gunman shoot, was associated with increased PTSS severity in female respondents from the

institution seven months following the attack. Similarly, in another NIU study, Orcutt et al.

(2014) found that undergraduate women who endorsed a high level of incident exposure (i.e.,

direct exposure) to the mass shooting experienced more prolonged PTSS in the 31 months

following the event compared to their peers who experienced a lower level of incident exposure.

In a study conducted among VT students, 15.4% were found to have probable PTSD at four to five months post-shooting, with the prevalence of probable PTSD being significantly higher among women than men (Hughes et al., 2011). The authors posit that this gender difference (23.2% vs. 9.9%) is possibly due to females having more extensive social networks, and thus, a higher likelihood of experiencing shooting-related interpersonal loss. To that point, stressors pertaining to interpersonal loss (i.e., injury/death of someone close) and inability to confirm the safety of friends predicted the highest levels of PTSS among respondents (Hughes et al., 2011). When focusing on the students with these exposure types, a 42.5% prevalence of probable PTSD was observed (Hughes et al., 2011). In sum, these findings suggest that students who had a high level of incident exposure to their campus mass shooting and female students who endorsed shooting-related interpersonal loss experience higher levels of PTSS than their peers exposed to the same events.

Post-incident functioning and psychosocial resources. The utilization of maladaptive coping strategies (e.g., high dose alcohol consumption) and psychosocial resource loss (e.g., social isolation) is associated with PTSS among college women exposed to campus mass shootings (Littleton, Axsom, & Grills-Taquechel, 2011; Holzman et al., 2017; Littleton, Kumpula, & Orcutt, 2011). In a cross-lagged study, female students at VT who endorsed shooting-related PTSS were more likely to utilize maladaptive coping strategies following the event, including rumination and social withdrawal (Littleton, Axsom & Grills-Taquechel, 2011). This study followed participants one-year post-shooting, but the authors highlighted the aversive consequences associated with the chronicity of maladaptive coping over a longer period of time, including depressive and anxiety symptomology (Littleton, Axsom & Grills-Taquechel, 2011). To gain a better understanding of how high dose alcohol consumption (HDAC) could affect

processing of trauma-related information (i.e., a mass shooting), Holzman et al. (2017) examined whether post-shooting HDAC affected the relationship between exposure to a mass shooting and PTSS. Results indicated that NIU women who endorsed HDAC one-month post-shooting displayed less resolution of PTSS eight months post shooting, as compared to female respondents who did not engage in HDAC (Holzman et al., 2017). In another NIU study, psychosocial resource loss predicted PTSS among women, both immediately following the shooting as well as eight months later (Littleton, Kumpula & Orcutt, 2011). Interestingly, psychosocial resource loss continued to predict PTSS among women, even after controlling for factors such as pre-incident characteristics, incident exposure, and post-shooting general distress (Littleton, Kumpula & Orcutt, 2011). Taken together, these studies highlight both immediate and longer-term effects of maladaptive coping strategies and psychosocial resource loss with respect to levels of PTSS in college students exposed to a campus mass shooting.

Mood disorders. After PTSS and PTSD, a substantial portion of the research on the mental health outcomes following college mass shootings explores symptoms characteristic of mood disorders, including depression and anxiety. Although one study on mood disorder distress investigated students one year after their campus mass shooting (Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012), the bulk of studies assess post-shooting depression and anxiety in the weeks and months following campus mass shootings. Thus, this limited understanding about long-term shooting related mood disorder distress presents an opportunity for future research.

Demographics and pre-incident characteristics. One study to date assesses college women's demographics and pre-incident characteristics with respect to shooting related depression and anxiety (Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012). In a sample of VT women, those who experienced pre-shooting sexual trauma reported higher levels of

depression and anxiety one-year post-shooting compared to their peers without a sexual trauma history (Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012). Similar to pre-incident characteristics pertaining to post-shooting PTSS, this finding suggests that pre-incident trauma is associated with increased mood disorder symptoms among college students following campus mass shootings.

Incident exposure. Previous empirical literature explored how indirect exposure to college mass shooting influenced post-shooting mood disorder symptoms. In a study of vicarious trauma exposure in CCSU students, as television viewing of VT shooting coverage increased, so did the probability that they would endorse symptoms of depression in the first few weeks following the attack (Fallahi & Lesik, 2009). Specifically, for each hour of television a CCSU student watched, they were approximately one and a half times more likely to experience acute depression than their peer who did not watch that hour of coverage (Fallahi & Lesik, 2009). This finding indicates that media exposure of campus shootings, namely through viewing television news coverage, is associated with an increase in short-term depressive symptoms in college students from nonaffected institutions.

Post-incident functioning and psychosocial resources. Resource loss and negative beliefs regarding self-worth and self-control are associated with higher levels of mood disorder distress among college women exposed to a campus mass shooting (Littleton, Axsom, & Grills-Taquechel, 2009; Grills-Taquechel, Littleton, & Axsom, 2011). As hypothesized, Littleton, Axsom, and Grills-Taquechel (2009) found that intrapersonal and interpersonal resource loss (e.g., hope, intimacy) among VT women two months post-shooting prospectively predicted depression and anxiety six months post-shooting. Put differently, women who endorsed more resource loss experienced more post-shooting depression and anxiety than respondents who

endorsed less resource loss (Littleton, Axsom, & Grills-Taquechel, 2009). In another VT study, post-shooting levels of self-worth and self-controllability emerged as predictors of reported anxiety levels in female students two months after the campus mass shooting (Grills-Taquechel, Littleton, & Axsom, 2011). Specifically, VT women who endorsed lower levels of post-shooting self-worth and having a sense of less control over their lives also reported higher level of anxiety than respondents who did not hold these beliefs (Grills-Taquechel, Littleton, & Axsom, 2011). Collectively, these studies highlight the short-term effects of resource loss and negative beliefs about oneself with respect to levels of mood disorder symptomatology in college women exposed to a campus mass shooting.

Fear. Despite the notable body of literature on fear of crime (e.g., Grinshteyn, Eisenman, & Cunningham, 2016), including fear of crime among college students (e.g., Grinshteyn, Valencia-Garcia, & Couture, 2018), there is limited research about fear following mass shootings on college campuses. The existing studies include college students from non-affected institutions who were vicariously exposed to mass shootings through media sources, which demonstrate gender differences pertaining to fear (Fallahi et al., 2009; Kaminski et al., 2010). In a survey of CCSU students three weeks following the VT shooting, 43.2% of respondents indicated that they were fearful of being harmed on campus, and 31.8% feared being harmed off campus (Fallahi et al., 2009). Female CCSU students were more concerned about being harmed or attacked both on and off campus as compared to their male counterparts (Fallahi et al., 2009). A positive correlation between endorsed fear of a mass shooting occurring at their campus and psychiatric symptomatology (e.g., anxiety) was also observed (Fallahi et al., 2009). In another CCSU study, as television viewing of the VT shooting increased, so did students' self-ratings of fear; after 10 hours of viewing, participants had a 9.4% chance of experiencing increasing feelings of fear that

something like the VT shooting could either happen again somewhere else or at CCSU, whereas after 25 hours of viewing, this percentage increased to 30.7% (Fallahi & Lesik, 2009). Similarly, female CCSU students experienced significantly more fear symptoms as compared to male respondents (Fallahi & Lesik, 2009). In a study at the University of South Carolina (USC), students reported significantly more fear of being attacked with a weapon and fear of being murdered on campus following the VT and NIU mass shootings, as they did before the two mass shootings (Kaminski et al., 2010). Although increased levels of fear following both shootings was endorsed by participants, female students reported significantly more fear than their male counterparts (Kaminski et al., 2010). Perhaps due to the closer geographical proximity between USC and VT, the VT shooting was uniquely associated with increased fear about walking alone on campus after dark among female students (Kamisnki et al., 2010). Taken together, these findings suggest that college students, and in particular, female college students, report more fear than usual following mass shootings that occur on campuses other than their own.

Coping. Four studies to date have assessed coping mechanisms among college students who were exposed to a campus mass shooting (Vicary & Fraley, 2010; Boykin & Orcutt, 2018; Palus, Fang & Prawitz, 2012; Hawdon & Ryan, 2012). To explore the role of Internet use in post-shooting coping and wellbeing, Vicary and Fraley (2010) conducted a quantitative study of more than 200 students at VT and NIU at two time points following the mass shootings that took place at their respective universities. Two weeks post shooting, 71% of the sample endorsed significant depressive symptoms and 64% exhibited significant PTSS. Although the students reported that connecting with others through Facebook made them feel better, there was no significant statistical relationship observed between Internet and psychological distress symptoms two-months post shooting (Vicary & Fraley, 2010). Thus, as far as post-shooting

depression and PTSS were concerned, Internet use did not have a beneficial or detrimental effect on student recovery in this combined sample (Vicary & Fraley, 2010). To assess the relative effectiveness of virtual interactions (i.e., interacting with friends and family members through email, text messaging, or other form of online communication) and face-to-face interactions on post-shooting emotional and behavioral wellbeing in VT students, Hawdon and Ryan (2012) found that face-to-face interactions significantly improved wellbeing. Emotional wellbeing was measured by items on self-report screeners for depression and emotional and psychological distress, self-reported levels of productivity at work and/or school (Hawdon & Ryan, 2012). Similar to Vicary and Fraley (2010), online communication was unrelated to post-shooting wellbeing. In a longitudinal study on treatment utilization among NIU women, students with probable PTSD were significantly more likely to seek formal treatment (i.e., psychotherapy, medication, psychotherapy plus medication) six months post-exposure than students at minimal or no risk for PTSD (Boykin & Orcutt, 2018). Although only 15.4% of the sample sought formal treatment, across all PTSD risk groups, NIU women elected to participate in psychotherapy at higher rates than engaging in medication treatment or combined treatment (Boykin & Orcutt, 2018). With regard to differences in coping styles by gender and over time, Palus et al. (2012) found that NIU women used more religious- and emotion-focused coping than men, both in the immediate aftermath of the incident (T1) as well as three to six months post-shooting (T2). Highlighting a gender difference, NIU men reported that they used more active coping (e.g., concentrating efforts on doing something about the problem) at T1, but their reliance of active coping decreased by T2 (Palus et al., 2012). Additionally, students tended to rely most on acceptance-focused coping strategies at T1, which increased at T2, whereas their use of avoidance coping decreased from T1 to T2 (Palus et al., 2012). In sum, these studies indicate that

communicating via online or technology-based platforms does not impact post-shooting wellbeing while one's level of PTSS, gender, and the time elapsed after the shooting all affected how college students attempted to cope with post-shooting distress.

Voices of the community. Written reflection pieces from members of affected academic communities offer rich insight into the aftermath of college mass shootings. Although these pieces are non-empirical, they contribute to the field's understanding of how members of collegiate institutions experience and attempt to heal from exposure to campus mass shootings. Specifically, a subset of literature features personal narratives from individuals who experienced the VT mass shooting firsthand, including students, faculty, mental health providers, and spouses who lost their loved one in the attack (e.g., Cox, 2008; Geller, 2008). While some accounts are written solely from the author's perspective, others integrate principles or tenets from their scholarly interests (e.g., Nowak & Veilleux, 2008) as a way to convey their experience of the campus massacre. The following themes highlight the main commonalities among this body of narrative work: psychological reactions, community solidarity, and media intrusiveness.

Psychological reactions. The emotional reactions, symptoms, and coping mechanisms that grieving community members experienced and utilized revealed general consistencies. In terms of emotional responses, authors experienced and witnessed in others feelings of shock (Cox, 2008; Geller, 2008; Keeling & Piercy, 2008; Nowak & Veilleux, 2008; Piercy et al., 2008; Yoder, 2008), confusion (Geller, 2008; Immel & Hadder, 2008; Keeling & Piercy, 2008; Piercy et al., 2008), and sadness (Cox, 2008; Geller, 2008; Gervich, 2008; Immel & Hadder, 2008; Nowak & Veilleux, 2008; Yoder, 2008) following the VT mass shooting. In response to experiencing shock, confusion, and sadness, among other emotions, community members endorsed sleep disturbances (Nowak & Veilleux, 2008), concentration issues (Nowak &

Veilleux, 2008; Yoder, 2008) and emotional and physiological fatigue (Piercy et al., 2008; Yoder, 2008). When sharing how they dealt with these aforementioned emotions and symptoms, the authors highlighted distraction tactics, such as watching movies (Keeling & Piercy, 2008), and resuming pre-shooting academic activities to restore normalcy as primary coping strategies (Keeling & Piercy, 2008; Piercy et al., 2008).

Community solidarity. The VT contributors overwhelmingly cited the role of the school community as a key component of their post-shooting experience and healing process. Namely, they touched upon the shared experience of facing a campus-wide trauma, the compassion and support exhibited by their fellow community members and attending campus memorial events. With regard to experiencing a collective trauma, the authors noted how the mass shooting happened to each member of the community, irrespective of their relationships to the victims or gunman (Geller, 2008) or where they were during the attacks (Keeling & Piercy, 2008). Next, the contributors emphasized the unity, compassion, and support exhibited by fellow students, faculty, and staff as they came together to comfort one another (Keeling & Piercy, 2008; Nowak & Veilleux, 2008; Piercy et al., 2008; Ryan & Hawdon, 2008; Yoder, 2008). For example, when describing the community post-shooting, a therapist at the campus family therapy center noted, "I have a picture in my mind of people at their best in the middle of the worst moment of the university's history" (Keeling & Piercy, 2008, p. 22). Lastly, campus memorial events and vigils appeared to serve a crucial role as they provided a chance for community members to mourn alongside one another during an emotionally laden time (Cox, 2008; Geller, 2008; Keeling & Piercy, 2008; Piercy et al., 2018; Yoder, 2008).

Media intrusiveness. The VT community regarded the media's presence on campus as understandable, albeit intrusive and inaccurate to some degree. While contributors articulated the

importance of getting a story after a large-scale tragedy (Jones, 2008), they labeled the degree of reporter involvement as unwanted (Geller, 2008), unsettling (Jones, 2008), and frustrating (Piercy et al., 2008). Specifically, contributors felt that the media's agenda was insensitive as, "cameras… zoomed in to catch a closer shot of the next falling tear" (Rodgers, as seen in Piercy et al., 2008, p. 216) without considering the mental wellbeing of the community members they were profiting from (Piercy et al., 2018). Finally, the media's coverage of the mass shooting did not appear to accurately capture the emotional experiences of the school's community. As expressed by a VT marriage and family therapy graduate student, he believed that the media incorrectly focused on publicizing anger and blame responses well past the time that community members ceased their expression of anger and searching for blame (Ciafardini, as seen in Piercy et al., 2008). Although these aforementioned themes characterize the experience of community members from another collegiate institution, they are important to consider as they will inform this project's interview guide to understand the lived experiences of female UCSB students following the Isla Vista mass shooting.

Role of Gender in Mass Shootings

Research has begun to focus more intently on the role of gender in violence, and mass shootings in particular (Myketiak, 2016). The greatest similarity among perpetrators of mass shootings is male gender, as nearly 98% of mass shooters identify as male (Bridges & Tober, 2016; FBI, 2013; Myketiak, 2016; Vito et al., 2018). For example, of 160 mass shootings that were committed between 2000 and 2013, 154 were carried out by male perpetrators (FBI, 2013). Due to these statistics, male gender has been proposed as the most salient risk factor for the occurrence of mass shootings (Kimmel & Mahler, 2013). While acknowledging this gender

commonality is crucial, Kiesel (2018) noted that without an analysis of masculinity and its relation to violence, our understanding of the gendered natured of mass shootings is incomplete.

To approach this gendered analysis, scholars have leveraged the connection between hegemonic masculinity and aggrieved entitlement to explain the occurrence of mass shootings (Tonso, 2009; Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford & Weaver, 2008; Vito et al., 2018). This typology offers a socially informed explanation for mass shootings, which is a stark contrast to earlier, psychologically informed theories that cite mental illness as the primary cause of these violent attacks (Blum & Jaworski, 2016; Rocque, 2012). Masculinities are not inherent conditions; they are socially constructed and reinforced by the expectations and meanings attached to them (Vito et al., 2018). Our country's dominant conceptualization of masculinity is known as hegemonic masculinity, which is defined as "the configuration of gender practice […] which guarantees the dominant position of men and subordination of women" (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Moreover, hegemonic masculinity is a practice that legitimizes a "singular version of masculinity that symbolizes authority over other forms of masculinity (i.e., marginalized and subordinate masculinities) as well as a collective privilege over women" (Vito et al., 2018, p. 88). Thus, hegemonic masculinity earns meaning from its relationship to femininities and non-hegemonic masculinities (Myketiak, 2016), as it "requires all other men to position themselves in relation to it" (Connell & Messerschmidt; 2005, p. 832). With regard to practicing masculinity, hegemonic masculine attributes include aggressiveness, toughness, and competitiveness (Whitehead, 2002), and a "presumed dominance to women as sexual objects" (Vito et al., 2018, p. 89). As such, hegemonic masculinity favors heteronormative, privileged norms that makes its status unachievable by most men in society, including to many mass shooting perpetrators (Vito et al., 2018).

Kalish and Kimmel (2010) propose that the culture of hegemonic masculinity produces a sense of aggrieved entitlement that condones the use of violence to display and reclaim one's masculine status. Put differently, masculinity may not be the experience of power, but instead, the experience of entitlement to power and invincibility (Scott-Coe, 2017). Therefore, when one's masculine status is challenged, men who experience aggrieved entitlement may feel justified, or even expected to, rely on violence as a revenge tactic to alleviate their gender-based social injuries (Shultz et al., 2014; Vito et al., 2018). Other scholars note that when one's masculine status is threatened, men may respond to a cultural script that equates manhood with violence as a problem-solving technique (Pappas, 2018). As such, unprovoked masculinity does not call for a violent gender performance; put differently, only when one's traditional male (i.e., hegemonic masculine) status is denied or threatened in some way is violence regarded as a warranted response (Rocque, 2012; Vito et al., 2018). Regarding gun violence in particular, scholars posit that guns symbolize bravery and strength, which emphasizes the ideals of hegemonic masculinity (Myketiak, 2016). In sum, male perpetrators of mass school shootings are embedded in a culture that permits violence as a legitimate strategy to mitigate threats to their masculine identity and restore their sense of perceived powerlessness (Rocque & Duwe, 2018).

Men who prioritize their attainment of hegemonic masculine ideals and experience aggrieved entitlement often enact violence towards targets with less social status, such as men of color, gay men, and women (Kimmel, 2013; Vito et al., 2018). Regarding the latter, hegemonic masculinity condones the victimization of women when men see themselves as failing to meet masculine standards (Scott-Coe, 2017; Vito et al., 2018). In turn, men who face sexual rejection, and therefore fail to live up to dominant male stereotypes, often view and subsequently utilize violence as a way to alleviate these gender-based threats (Vito et al., 2018). This justification of

violence as revenge seeking towards women is exemplified in Rodger's manifesto when he states, "I will punish all females for the crime of depriving me of sex. They have starved me of sex for my entire youth and gave that pleasure to other men. In doing so, they took many years of my life away. I cannot kill every single female on earth, but I can deliver a devastating blow that will shake all of them to the core of their wicked hearts" (Rodger, 2014, p. 132). Taken together, hegemonic masculinity and a sense of aggrieved entitlement reinforces the notion that women are seen as objects worthy of desire and control (Scott-Coe, 2017).

Research on the Isla Vista Mass Shooting

On May 23, 2014, Elliot Rodger killed six students and wounded 14 others before taking his own life in the unincorporated beachside town of Isla Vista, California adjacent to UCSB. This mass shooting is unique from other rampage attacks that have occurred in collegiate communities. First, unlike other mass shootings that were carried out on campus grounds (e.g., VT, NIU), this mass shooting took place in the unincorporated town of Isla Vista which is adjacent to UCSB. Isla Vista houses approximately half of the student population, and is a place where students spend much of their free time (Felix, Dowdy & Green, 2018). Next, Rodger was not affiliated with UCSB and was not a former or current student at the university. However, he did reside in Isla Vista and completed courses at Santa Barbara City College, an institution that is approximately 10 miles from Isla Vista (Rodger, 2014; Santa Barbara City College, 2019). Lastly, Rodger distributed electronic collateral in the form of a manifesto and a self-produced video that detailed his motivations and plans to carry out the mass shooting. While it is not uncommon for mass shooters to circulate manifestos in advance of carrying out their attacks, Rodger's YouTube video titled "Retribution," that was uploaded minutes prior to his rampage was the first of its kind (Blum & Jaworski, 2016; White, 2017).

Research on the Isla Vista mass shooting fall into two domains: Rodger's manifesto and student healing and recovery. To the researcher's knowledge, four studies have been published solely on this event, but others have included Rodger in analyses of the psychosocial histories and profiles of mass shooters (e.g., Murray, 2017). Although this project does not seek to investigate Rodger's manifesto, it is possible that the content discussed in this written account played a role in the lived experiences of female UCSB students who were targeted victims on the basis of their gender. To that point, Rodger's 137-page autobiographical manifesto entitled "My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger," provided a written account of his life and thoughts and feelings towards his hopeful female victims (Vito et al., 2018; White, 2017). In the narrative, he oscillates between disparaging and complimenting himself. At times he regards himself as a lonely, inferior celibate while at others he emphasizes his wealth and ownership of material goods in attempts to highlight himself as an appealing romantic prospect (Vito et al., 2018, White, 2017). Although Rodger's self-concept shifted throughout the manifesto, his opinion of success remained constant. Specifically, he believed that the benefits he would reap from having a physically attractive girlfriend would be two-fold: he would earn well-deserved social capital as a sexually active man and his suffering from years of being sexually "starved" would be remedied (White, 2017). Lastly, he described how his lack of success in enticing a girlfriend fueled his hatred towards women and envy of sexually active men. Looking for a solution for his overwhelming rage and suicidal ideation, he outlined his vengeful plans for his "Day of Retribution" in Isla Vista (White, 2017). Ultimately, the goal of his killing spree was to retaliate against the injustices he experienced by slaughtering women, and secondarily, the men that the perceived unattainable females chose over him (Myketiak, 2016; White, 2017).

In their analysis of Rodger's manifesto, Myketiak (2016) explored the role that gender inequality played in the Isla Vista mass shooting. Using critical discourse methodology, Myketiak (2016) proposed that Rodger's relationship to masculinity was rooted in gender inequality and served as a justification for his use of violence to assert his self-worth. First, Rodger linguistically depicted women as sexualized objects whose sole purpose was to elevate the status of the men with whom they were involved (Myketiak, 2016). For example, Rodger displayed a linguistic slippage when he noted that he "deserved it [a woman] more", suggesting that women and sex are one in the same (Myketiak, 2016, p. 296). Similarly, Rodger refers to his stepmother as his "father's acquisition" (Rodger, 2014, p. 11), highlighting his view that women are possessions obtained for men's benefit (Myketiak, 2016). Moreover, Rodger also used language to rationalize his violent retribution as the ultimate demonstration of manhood in response to his failures (Myketiak, 2016). In doing so, he frames his violent retribution as a way to reclaim masculine power that he believed was unjustly denied to him (Myketiak, 2016).

In their thematic content analysis, Vito et al. (2018) describe how Rodger's manifesto replicates attributes of hegemonic masculinity. While there are many ideals that characterize hegemonic masculinity, Rodger's manifesto depicts two in particular: physical embodiment and sexual prowess (Vito et al., 2018). First, Rodger viewed boys and men who attained physical superiority through height, strength, and athleticism as dominant, which left him feeling "small, weak, and above all, worthless" due to his small physical stature (Vito et al., 2018, p. 93). Next, he placed continued emphasis on the sexual conquest over women. As such, he regarded his status as a "lonely virgin" as a substantial contributor to his anguish (Vito et al., 2018, p. 94). In response to his failures to measure up to these hegemonic masculine ideals, Rodger experienced a crisis of masculinity (Vito et al., 2018). To avert this crisis, Rodger compensated by

emphasizing his intelligence as "gentleman-like" and attempting to enhance his physical appearance (Vito et al., 2018). Eventually, this gender-based crisis fueled by a misdirection of rage towards women and the men they supposedly favored, contributed to his reliance on mass murder as the ultimate masculine display (Vito et al., 2018).

The second research domain pertains to UCSB student healing and recovery following the Isla Vista mass shooting. One mixed-methods study has been conducted to explore student psychosocial adjustment following this event (Felix et al., 2018). Using conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001) as their guide, Felix et al. (2018) surveyed UCSB students who participated in a study of college adjustment a year before the mass shooting and were re-contacted six months post-shooting. As hypothesized, UCSB students who reported resource loss (e.g., lost sense of optimism, lost time for adequate sleep, lost feeling of control) had greater post-shooting depression and anxiety than those who did not endorse post-shooting resource loss (Felix et al., 2018). Resource loss was significantly associated with post-tragedy depression and anxiety, and it was a stronger predictor of post-tragedy mental health outcomes than other aspects of event experiences, including degree of incident exposure and level of concern over one's safety (Felix et al., 2018). Interestingly, there were no gender differences pertaining to the students' objective exposure to the mass shooting, reported resource loss, or post-shooting adjustment (Felix et al., 2018). Despite Rodger primarily targeting females in his attack, this finding suggests that male and female students had comparable experiences of the campus tragedy. Next, from pre- to post-shooting, UCSB students noted an increase in their psychological sense of school membership (Felix et al., 2018). When queried on their experiences and opinions on university- and student-led memorial events, UCSB students rated student-led events as most helpful, including a candlelit vigil and memorial paddle out in the

ocean off-campus (Felix et al., 2018). Other strategies that were helpful in the wake of the

shooting, albeit less helpful than student-led memorial events, included attending drop-in

counseling services, talking individually with professors, and utilizing academic support services

(Felix et al., 2018). Taken together, the empirical knowledge about the Isla Vista mass shooting

places considerable emphasis on the shooter, which results in a gap in the literature pertaining to

the lived experiences of UCSB community members both during and after this tragedy,

especially in the long-term.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The targeted population for this project were women who were enrolled students at

UCSB during the 2014 mass shooting in Isla Vista, California. Since the majority of the college

mass shooting literature involves participants who were students enrolled at the affected

institutions (e.g., VT, NIU), this project sought to similarly recruit UCSB students due to their

ability to share about their lived experiences on both a personal- and university-wide level. Thus,

the project's inclusion criteria included: (1) identifies as a female; (2) enrolled student at UCSB

during the 2013-2014 academic year; and (3) 18 years of age or older. The exclusion criteria

included: (1) does not identify as a female; (2) was not an enrolled student at UCSB during the

2013-2014 academic year; and (3) 17 years old and younger. The researcher screened 13

individuals, all of whom met the project's inclusion criteria and were interviewed for the project.

Sampling Methodology

This project utilized purposive and snowball sampling methodologies to recruit

participants. Often used in qualitative research, purposive sampling emphasizes theoretical

saturation and the deliberate choice of participants due to the characteristics they possess, which

lends itself to learning about the lived experiences of individuals who are proficient and well

informed on a phenomenon or event of interest (Etikan, 2016). This project employed purposive

sampling as the researcher was interested in interviewing participants who share similar traits

(i.e., gender identity) and life experiences (i.e., UCSB student during the 2013-2014 academic

year). Given the project's emphasis on a specific university community that might be difficult to

recruit, the researcher also used snowball sampling by employing participants as referral sources to recruit others to participate (Naderifar, Goli & Ghaljaie, 2017).

This project utilized targeted recruitment techniques. The recruitment flyer (see Appendix A) was shared electronically via social media platforms that feature UCSB alumni groups (i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram). Per the data saturation model (Saunders et al., 2018), the researcher stopped collecting data when they got a sense of informational redundancy with respect to the material expressed by the participants in the interviews, which occurred following 13 participant interviews. Participants in the study received a one-time monetary incentive in the form of a $20 gift card for their time and contributions.

Procedures

As noted on the recruitment flyer, individuals expressed their interest in the project by contacting the researcher via phone or email. Once the researcher received this initial communication, they conducted a phone screening and asked questions to determine eligibility (see Appendix B). The researcher notified each participant of their eligibility and scheduled their interview either in person or via VSee, a HIPAA-compliant video conferencing service. While scheduling, each participant was informed that their interview will be conducted in a private room at the University of San Francisco. For participants doing in person interviews (i.e., 1 participant), the researcher requested their phone number and/or email address to provide them with a reminder notice and to send interview location information. For participants doing VSee interviews (i.e., 12 participants), the researcher requested their email address to share with them the VSee meeting link and consent form, and to provide them with a reminder notice.

Before their respective interviews, participants were provided with the project's consent form (see Appendix D). For the participant who did an in person interview, the researcher gave

them a hard copy of the consent form to review and sign. For participants doing VSee interviews, the researcher shared the consent form with them via email to review, electronically sign, and return in advance of their interview. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, the researcher asked each participant to select a pseudonym that will serve as a safeguard to prevent disclosure of any identifying information. The semi-structured interviews took 45 minutes to 90 minutes to complete. Interview topics included the participants' experiences at UCSB, the gender-based component of the mass shooting, and their current thoughts and feelings about the event (see Appendix E).

After each interview, each participant was invited to engage in snowball sampling on a voluntary basis by reaching out to individuals who might be interested in participating in the project. Participants who completed in person interviews were provided with both e-copies and hard copies of the project's recruitment flyer to distribute, and participants who completed VSee interviews were provided with an electronic copy of a flyer via email to distribute. After each interview concluded, the researcher took detailed field notes as it is a common and important step in qualitative work.

Data Analysis

This project employed a thematic analysis framework to identify and interpret themes in the data to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of college women following a gender-based mass shooting in their university community (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Given the gaps in the literature pertaining to the long-term impact of gender-based mass shootings in collegiate communities, this analytic approach lent itself to supplementing our field's limited interpretation of these types of events (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The researcher took an inductive and data-driven approach to analysis by identifying a priori and post

hoc themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Specifically, the researcher utilized a six-step framework

for conducting a high-quality thematic analysis to qualitatively explore the project's research

questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The six steps included: familiarizing yourself with the data;

generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes;

and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 1. The researcher sent the interview audio files to Rev, a professional audio

transcription service. Since transcription is a crucial foundational step in the analysis process, the

researcher devoted a substantial amount of time to review the transcriptions for accuracy and

completeness. For each interview, the researcher simultaneously read the transcriptions and

listen to the audio recording to ensure consistency between what the participants expressed and

what was transcribed. Afterwards, the researcher immersed themself in the data by reading the

transcriptions several times and searching for initial meanings, patterns, and ideas that emerged

(Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 2. Using Atlas.Ti, a qualitative data and analysis software, the researcher worked

systematically throughout the data set to identify repeated patterns of meaning in order to

generate initial codes. Specifically, the researcher utilized manual coding strategies by taking

notes on the transcriptions and then color-coding the written data to match the generated initial

codes to data extracts that demonstrate the code (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 3. Once the researcher initially coded the data by hand, they thought about the

relationship between codes and themes. The researcher first sorted the codes into preliminary

themes and then gathered and organized the data that is relevant to each identified theme and

subtheme. In order to consider how different codes can combine or co-exist to create different

themes, the researcher utilized visual representations to organize their thinking, such as mind-maps (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 4. The researcher reviewed, modified, and developed the preliminary themes that arose from the previous analytic stages. First, the researcher reviewed each theme and its associated data to confirm that the data in fact supports the theme. Next, the researcher analyzed the themes in the context of the entire data set to make sure the themes are comprehensible and do not considerably overlap with each other (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 5. The researcher refined the themes by offering a definition that captured the essence of each theme. Specifically, the researcher concluded what each theme refers to, how subthemes interact with and informed the main themes, and the relationships between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher then created a final codebook that delineated the definitions for each of these themes and related subthemes.

Step 6. The researcher reported the findings from the thematic analysis in their final dissertation manuscript, as presented in the subsequent chapter (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The interview guide was designed to address the following four research questions: How did UCSB women experience the Isla Vista mass shooting; how did UCSB women respond to the gunman's intention to target female students; in what ways did the Isla Vista mass shooting impact the rest of their time at UCSB; and in what ways does the Isla Vista mass shooting currently impact their lives? In total, six overlapping themes and 17 sub-themes were constructed that depict the 13 participants' lived experiences associated with the Isla Vista mass shooting. Themes organically formed into four gross-level categories: pre-shooting, day of shooting, gender, and post-shooting. The first theme captures the participants' pre-shooting experiences, the second presents their day of shooting experiences, the third highlights their reactions to the gendered nature of the event, the fourth details their post-shooting reactions, the fifth explores how they integrate the event into current events and pursuits, and the sixth and final theme describes their reasons for research participation. The themes, sub-themes, and relevant interview passages will be presented below, in addition to one outlier theme about the role of broadcast media given its relevance to future research efforts.

Theme	Sub-Themes
#1: Pre-Shooting Community	
#2: The Day of the Shooting	- Survival-based emotional processes - Battening down the hatches (security-seeking) - Going into detective mode (information-seeking) - Role of social media and technology - Existential thoughts
#3: The War on Women	- Gender-based safety concerns - Gender-based emotional processing - Gender-based identity development
#4: Post-Shooting Experiences	- Post-traumatic stress disorder - Healing together

	- Welcome to adulthood
#5: Impact on Current Happenings	- Learning about subsequent mass shootings - Career relevance
#6: Motivation for Research Participation	- Corrective emotional experience - Advocate for UCSB student community - Advocate for women as a woman - Make a difference in our country's mass shooting epidemic
Outlier: Unwelcome Exposure of Broadcast Media	

Table 2. Table of themes and sub-themes

Theme 1: Pre-Shooting Community

The participants expressed their opinions about their perceptions of and experiences in the pre-shooting UCSB community. They unequivocally described the community as a light-hearted, fun, carefree, safe, and welcoming place to be.

> *"I think, things were very light. People were generally happy. It's a beautiful place to live."* (Participant 2).

> *"I think being a part of UCSB, and more specifically, Isla Vista… I think it was light-hearted, fun, carefree. People were just going about their days, enjoying spending time with friends. There was this carefree, light-hearted attitude that everyone had… it didn't seem like anything was really weighing on anyone."* (Participant 3).

> *"Overall, what I thought of it was a great place to be. I felt safe."* (Participant 4).

> *"I'd describe it as welcoming, fun, and safe."* (Participant 8).

> *"It was definitely a really nice community. I felt really welcomed from the minute that I got to school. People are really chill there. And they seem to be easygoing, and just easy to talk to."* (Participant 9).

Theme 2: The Day of the Shooting

The participants shared their reflections from the day of the mass shooting. Ten participants were in Isla Vista at the time of the attacks, and three were outside of Isla Vista in either downtown Santa Barbara or their respective hometowns. All ten participants who were in Isla Vista reported being in the presence of fellow UCSB students while learning of the mass shooting. Two participants personally knew a student that was killed in the attacks, one

participant knew a surviving victim who Elliot Rodger struck with his vehicle, and one

participant knew someone who was in Elliot Rodger's line of fire at a crime scene but was not

physically injured. Their day of shooting recounts fell into four sub-themes that included both

emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components, including the participants reported survival-

based emotional processes, collective efforts to batten down the hatches (security seeking),

attempts to seek out information about the attacks, their existential thoughts, and the role that

social media and technological communication played in their day-of experiences.

Survival-Based Emotional Processes

The participants endorsed experiencing intense emotions when learning of the news of

the mass shooting, primarily confusion, fear, and shock. While experiencing these emotions that

were often co-existing with one another, the participants also recounted the sensory elements of

their emotional processing with respect to how sound was salient in their experiences. The

participants reported feeling confused, both in terms of their uncertainty about the details of the

mass shooting, as well as what they should do or not do in response to the violence unfolding in

their backyards.

> *"I think the chaos and confusion was probably something that stood out."* (Participant 1).

> *"I was so confused… we just had no idea what was going on."* (Participant 2).

> *"It was more confusion… I would say at that point. We just didn't know what was happening. It was just a very surreal experience, almost like an out of body experience."* (Participant 3).

> *"So, lots of confusion, not really knowing how to process or what to do."* (Participant 8).

Six participants reported feeling afraid, particularly when hearing gunshots.

> *"It [hearing gunshots] was an immediate visceral shoot to your heart. I was so scared."* (Participant 7).

"I remember it like so easy. Like it was yesterday. It was just so scary. We were listening to music and just having some fun and we just heard five or six pops, so it really didn't sound like gunfire and it didn't not sound like gunfire, but everyone stopped. Because everyone kind of knew that wasn't a good sound and I looked around, no one was doing anything. We all froze. And then we all freaked out." (Participant 8).

"Honestly, when I think back to it, it's just the fear that was amongst my friends and myself, just that initial feeling of not knowing what was going to happen when we heard the popping [of the gunshots] ... I can't remember the word that I'm looking for, but my first thoughts are just fear when I think of it. We were all so emotional. We didn't know what was happening. You know, it was just scary, it was really scary. It was a scary, scary sight, and again, we were just so scared." (Participant 11).

The participants reported feeling shock and disbelief at the news, which appeared to contribute in part to their delayed processing until the day after the event.

"I was just so preoccupied trying to listen to the online police scanner because I was in such shock. I was just mostly in shock in the beginning, but I felt like my mind was preoccupied listening to this scanner... I don't think I understood the severity of the situation and what exactly had happened until maybe the next day. I was just in such shock." (Participant 4).

"I didn't believe them [friends that got shot at and told her to stay home]. I didn't think that it was possible. I was like that stuff doesn't happen. So, we kind of like, whatever, we'll stay [at home], because if its real then we really shouldn't leave, but we didn't believe them. There was a group of four or five of us that were getting ready to walk down, and they were like, "Well, better safe than sorry, but there's no way our friend is telling the truth." Shock would be the only way to describe it." (Participant 12).

"I was in disbelief honestly. I was completely shocked. It took a bit to process because, again, I was 19 years old. So, it was you don't really expect this to happen. So, it was kind of still like the story was unfolding in front of me, but at first, I was kind of detached from it. It was like wait, what happened?" (Participant 13).

Battening Down the Hatches (Security Seeking)

The participants reported engaging in community-level survival strategies, including conducting safety checks with friends and peers and alerting others to the news of the mass shooting in an effort to ensure their wellbeing.

"I saw all of those texts, people being like, "where are you?" and "what's happening?". I was making sure that we were making the rounds. I was making mental checklists of everybody that I knew to make sure they were okay. It was just word of mouth and people were hearing things and texting other people about what they were hearing. It was kind of like, battening down the hatches, making sure that everybody you cared about was alive." (Participant 6).

"I remember my first reaction was just to make sure that everyone was okay. So, it was really just getting that communication out. It was just really just ensuring that everyone was accounted for I think was our first initial reaction after figuring out what had happened. but it was kind of like we're each other's family right now, like we were really like each other's support system in a situation like that. We had to make some adult decisions to make sure everyone is okay and really take on this responsibility of you don't have your parents to rely on, you don't have your professors or whoever at the time. Our college friends were who we relied on for survival in this case." (Participant 11).

"We were actually walking down to the 66 Block of Del Playa to go see some friends that night, and they called and said, "Don't leave…we think we just got shot at… do not leave your house and don't come to ours. Go back home." (Participant 12).

"We were all texting people trying to find out if she [a victim who lost their life to the mass shooting] was okay. I remember looking at her Facebook and one of her cousins wrote, "Katie, wake up, sleepyhead, we're all worried about you." (Participant 13).

Going into Detective Mode (Information Seeking)

The participants reported engaging in information seeking strategies in hopes of

providing themselves with a sense of understanding and safety about what was occurring.

"I just tried to figure out what was happening…. I definitely went into detective mode where I was just like, lets figure this out, lets solve this issue. So, a lot of little bits of information we were gathering here and there, and I couldn't really focus on anything else." (Participant 8).

"I just remember that day just wanting to know more information I guess, I wanted to know more because maybe knowing more would provide some sense of safety." (Participant 1).

"I was frantically Googling stuff. And it was just really weird. You know, before [the shooting] we were having fun partying, and not caring about anything. And then, all of a sudden, you're like, "how..." and "what's going on?" and "why would people do this?" and "who else is out there… who else is hurt?" And then, trying to make connections. You

would hear on that online police scanner like, "code blue this…" And it was constant. It was the only thing I could think about." (Participant 9).

Role of Social Media and Technology

The participants reported that their use of social media platforms (i.e., YouTube, Facebook), television, websites (i.e., news sites, online police scanner), and cell-based communication (i.e., calling, text messaging) were integral in engaging in the aforementioned community-level safety checking and information gathering strategies, in addition to corresponding with loved ones outside of the UCSB community.

> "I remember I think people were also talking about the manifesto that he [Elliot Rodger] had posted, and people were watching the YouTube video. I think I also watched it and I was also reading it and I guess how eerie and sick it seemed. It was on the news and Facebook too… I knew people who spoke to newscasters. I think I also had family members they were texting me like, hey, where are you, are you okay?" (Participant 1).

> "Everyone in the Greek community started to text each other that the car had crashed right outside of Tiki [a student house] where we were going to. We turned on the news… and we just stayed inside watching TV and just texting everyone that we knew. I think just like I remember watching the news of certain people were reporting that they had seen people being shot, and running into other people's houses for protection, and just hearing all these different accounts and reports." (Participant 3).

> "And so, all of a sudden, some of my friends, they were on their phones. And because like a lot of them were connected with sororities and other frats and stuff, they started texting and saying, "Oh, there's a shooter! There's a shooter. But one of my suitemates was in Alpha Phi, and so she had her Alpha Phi group text. And they're saying all sorts of things, like saying, "Oh," like, "There's people hurt; there's someone out there." And so, everyone's just like texting really fast. And we weren't really sure who was saying the correct information or what was going on." (Participant 9).

> "I felt like I needed to call my parents and tell them what happened before they heard it in the news. So as soon as I heard what happened that night, that evening, I immediately got on the phone to make sure that my parents and my family, my grandma, knew. Like, you're going to hear about this in the news, and when you do you need to know that I'm here and I'm safe." (Participant 12).

Existential Thoughts

The participants reported experiencing existential thoughts the day of the mass shooting, particularly surrounding the possibility that they could have easily been a victim in the attacks.

> *"Your heart just stops where things could've been so different so easily. I feel like so many other women have these types of stories of like, oh, I could've been there. I was so close to there, because we were all living on top of each other, and we're always outside walking around, biking, going to get food. That it really felt like an attack like it could have been any of us, and it was like an attack on our community."* (Participant 7).

> *"When we heard it happened at IV Deli Mart, and because we also heard the noises, we obviously just all jumped to hypotheticals and said, "Oh, what if we wanted to get a snack down the street? What if we decided to leave the party early and were biking down the road when it happened?" And it was just like all these what ifs. What if I died?"* (Participant 9).

> *"It's like all the what ifs. I think the strongest what if, is what if I was not at work at the time and what if I was driving home instead when he [Elliot Rodger] was shooting?"* (Participant 6).

Theme 3: The War on Women

The participants discussed their responses to the gunman's intention to target female students in his self-proclaimed "War on Women." Their reflections around the gendered component of this attack are comprised of three sub-themes that include gender-based fear, gender-based grief processing, and gender-based identity development. It is important to note that this theme includes implications for the participants both in the aftermath of the shooting during their time at UCSB and in present day.

Gender-Based Fear

The participants reported experiencing increased fear as woman after they learned that the gunman was targeting female-identified students in his attack. This increased fear not only was directed at Elliot Rodger himself, but also at men in general, and was most notably about being shot, treated as a sexual object, and being viewed as a vulnerable target on account of their gender identity.

"Yeah, as a woman and knowing that he was specifically targeting women obviously played a role in I guess… wow, I guess just being really scared for my safety as a woman." (Participant 11).

"I was scared, not just towards him, but a lot of guys." (Participant 7).

"You know, being a woman, there's a lot of risks just in general. There are benefits but there's also risks. And him trying to kill us was just another one. It's just like, "Okay. Well, now if you turn down a guy maybe he'll want to shoot and kill you." You just add it to the bucket of things you need to be afraid of as a woman." (Participant 10).

"I don't know, I feel like I haven't healed from knowing he was going after females. I feel like I have more just had to accept it as a way of life." (Participant 13).

Gender-Based Emotional Processing

The participants reported and needing to work through feelings of disgust, sadness, and defeat about misogyny after learning that the gunman was targeting female-identified students in his attack.

"But his primary frustration was women not appreciating him and showing him enough love by having sex with him. And that was really hard for me. It made me really disgusted" (Participant 1).

"It was just so sad and just gut wrenching to watch knowing that he had this hatred for us and that [women] is who he was targeting even though he didn't know them [the particular victims]." (Participant 11).

"Maybe as a female you or I feel maybe a little… I guess also disempowered a little bit that somebody would think that they are entitled to having us just because you are a female, and they are a male and that's one thing. I guess I kind of felt disempowered because you kind of feel you can't do anything about it. I think a lot about that, the way that society teaches men that they are superior in that way and that they are entitled to certain things in life and that as women we are supposed to provide whatever that is." (Participant 1).

Gender-Based Identity Development

The participants reported that learning that the gunman was targeting female-identified students in his attack led them to realize, ponder, and in turn, begin to negotiate or re-negotiate

aspects of their gender identity. The identity-based exploration that resulted from the gendered

component of this attack generated realizations around what it means to be a woman in society,

led them to ask questions about how they wanted to present themselves, and shifted their concept

of womanhood to include the notion that they were and would continue to be a victim of

emotional and/or physical violence due to their gender identity.

> *"I felt like that was an eye opener, a realization of the real world that just because you were born as a girl someone would not like you sort of thing. That was the first like I realized that this is... because you hear stories about racism or people being discriminated because of their sexuality or these things, but you just hear about it. I have never actually been a victim of it, but I felt at that time like this is real and this does happen to people and it can really change someone's life or take their life in this situation."* (Participant 1).

> *"This event really made me start to think, "oh," like, "what does it mean to present myself as a woman? And "what are the consequences of that?"* (Participant 9).

> *"This attack was kind of affirming these deeper cultural struggles between what it means to be a young woman in college that I think that I felt, and a lot of my friends felt, like these expectations of how we're supposed to perform in college as young women, and if we don't meet certain expectations the outcome could be violent. Again, I think that I'd already struggled significantly with living up to whatever gender roles I felt like I needed to, or the expectations that I felt. I felt like there were high expectations on what it meant to be a successful, thriving, young woman. I'd already experienced a lot of strife with that, and I think this attack, you know, because he was so not just painfully disappointed by women, that they couldn't fulfill his fantasies, that it got... He was so angry at that that he wanted to kill women. It kind of affirms these feelings, like, okay, if I can't be... this perfect woman, who's so attractive, and funny, and smart, and I have to make men feel good, stroke their ego, be nice and not too provocative or else I'm going to get hurt. Yeah, or else I'm going to be hurt, whether that's be violently hurt or psychologically hurt."* (Participant 7).

Theme 4: Post-Shooting Experiences

The participants shared their reflections from the day of the mass shooting. Their post-

shooting reactions recounts fell into four sub-themes that include Post-Traumatic Stress

Disorder, their recognition of the Isla Vista mass shooting as a developmental marker of

adulthood and signal of individuation from their family of origin, and their experiences healing in their collegiate community.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The participants shared their post-shooting reflections both in the immediate aftermath of the mass shooting as well as five years post-shooting that were illustrative of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnostic criteria. The specific criteria include intrusion symptoms, persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the mass shooting, negative alterations in cognition and mood associated with the mass shooting and marked alterations in arousal and reactivity associated with the mass shooting.

Intrusion. The participants endorsed experiencing recurrent, involuntary intrusive thoughts and memories of the event; dissociative reactions in which they feel as though the event is recurring; and marked physiological reactions following exposure to external cues that symbolize an aspect of the mass shooting. The participants detailed examples of their intrusive thoughts and memories that were and continue to be triggered by both physical landmarks and anniversary milestones associated with the event.

> *"Everywhere you went, when [I] went out in public, especially near campus or going through IV, it was just always on my mind. Because then, you start to look around, and you think, "well that guy could also be suffering from sort of mental illness, or this person could have violent thoughts"."* (Participant 9)

> *"During the annual memorials, I always replay the memories [of the shooting] over and over again."* (Participant 10).

The participants detailed examples of their dissociative reactions (e.g., flashbacks) that were and continue to be triggered by internal and external reminders of the event, including experiences suggestive of depersonalization and derealization.

> *"I was in a complete state of disconnection from what was happening."* (Participant 2)

"I felt like I saw him [Elliot Rodgers] sometimes… I just know that seeing his face… even just it coming to my mind evokes this uneasiness in me." (Participant 3)

"Someone once asked if anything significant or traumatic ever happened to me, and my response was "no," and then I was like, "wait, there was actually a mass shooting when I went to college. When I think about the feelings associated with it, I think it's similar to derealization… it just doesn't seem like it actually happened." (Participant 3).

"It's kind of feels like it is a movie that I watched." (Participant 5).

"There is no way to explain it to you, it's like war in your mind. I know it's not the same as war, but in war, terrible things happen. Your brain can't handle it, so it just goes to depression and anxiety." (Participant 8).

The participants detailed examples of marked physiological reactions, namely panic, following exposure to external cues that symbolize an aspect of the mass shooting, including the gunman, a sorority house (i.e., a location where the gunman broke fire), and IV Deli Mart (i.e., a location where the gunman broke fire).

"I think just hearing his name or imagining his face [Elliot Rodger]…,you kind of feel your heart beat faster, kind of like a panic attack." (Participant 1)

"I didn't go to as many sorority events because I would get panic attacks on my way to and from the sorority house." (Participant 2)

"And then even biking by IV Deli Mart, even a couple of weeks after it happened… you could see the broken glass. So that was something that you looked at and immediately knew that was a gunshot that made all the glass shatter. So that was an immediate trigger that made me panic." (Participant 10)

Persistent avoidance of stimuli. The participants endorsed persistent avoidance and efforts to avoid external reminders that arouse distressing memories of the mass shooting. The participants endorsed avoidance strategies that ranged on a continuum from limiting social media engagement and navigating Isla Vista differently to avoid reminders of the gunman and human blood at various crime scenes, to leaving Isla Vista altogether and finding a new residence in a neighboring town.

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"I remember not really wanting to walk through IV because I didn't feel safe. I didn't go to as many sorority events because I would get panic attacks on my way to and from the house." (Participant 2)

"After that [the mass shooting], I definitely didn't leave my house late at night. Even though it [the event as a whole] happened during the day too, I didn't leave late at night." (Participant 5)

"You know, everyone started sharing the YouTube videos that the guy [Elliot Rodger] had made. And I remember my friends that had posted it [online] said, "Hey, like this is crazy." And then I had some friends saying, "Don't watch it, you don't want to watch it. It's just too much." I ended up watching a little bit [of the video], and I was like, "No, I can't. I can't do this anymore. It's just like too creepy." (Participant 10)

"Seeing the shattered glass at IV Deli Mart and the blood on the ground was really, really hard. I stopped biking home that way. I would go down towards Embarcadero Hall instead. I'd never seen human blood on the ground before honestly. I'd never really even seen crime. I'm from a small town. So that was really difficult. There was a lot of tears and a lot of... that was just really tough... they waited a really long time to fix that glass. I don't know why it took so long... That was pretty indescribable, I think. I stopped biking that way because I didn't want to see it. I wanted to remove myself from that and detach completely." (Participant 12)

"I ended up moving out of Isla Vista that summer. I moved to Goleta because I couldn't deal anymore because walking past her door every day was rough because I didn't see her. She had one roommate, I feel so bad for her because she had to spend that time by herself in this apartment and her car was there for the longest time. It was constant reminders of her that being in Isla Vista is kind of a sore subject for me." (Participant 12)

Negative alterations in cognition and mood. The participants endorsed negative alterations in cognition and mood associated with the mass shooting, including persistent and exaggerated expectations about others and the world, negative emotional states, and feeling of detachment from others. Negative alternations in cognition will be presented first, following by negative alterations in mood. The participants reported their current negative alterations in cognition that primarily involve exaggerated negative beliefs about presumably innocent bystanders enacting acts of violence in high-traffic spaces, similarly to Elliot Rodger's mass shooting in their densely populated student community.

"I think about the possibility of getting shot every single day… my sense of safety has been completely shattered. (Participant 2)

"I have an acute awareness whenever I'm in a major public place of what exactly anybody could do to kill us all." (Participant 6)

"Now you just never know if someone will just pull out a gun and shoot you." (Participant 7)

"I catch myself even now sitting in a movie theater thinking, oh man is this the one where someone's going to stand up and shoot all of us? And I think that a lot actually." (Participant 8)

The participants reported their current negative alterations in mood that can be categorized by three mood state categories: sadness, fear, and shock. Sadness and fear were most frequently reported and were endorsed by participants in both the immediate aftermath, as well as five years post-shooting. Comparatively, shock was only endorsed in the immediate aftermath of the shooting. The participants reported feeling persistent sadness both in the days and weeks following the shooting. The level of impairment associated with each participant's reported sadness varied from experiencing sad feelings to experiencing a depressive episode.

"I was really sad. No one really had any answer as to how to not be." (Participant 5)

"I was just so depressed and kind of numb and I didn't really know what to do or how to fake being happy. Because I wasn't happy at all." (Participant 7).

"I personally went through a depression." (Participant 13).

The participants reported feeling sadness when faced with external reminders, including being asked about their post-shooting reactions in this project's semi-structured interview.

"I am still getting upset and teary talking about it. I think it still evokes emotion. You can still carry it years later, yeah." (Participant 1)

"I feel like I still get really sad about it. It is still something I think about a lot. I just started doing therapy and it comes out almost immediately because you do think about it all the time." (Participant 2)

"It's weird talking about it because I still feel so affected by it. I feel very sad right now and I don't know." (Participant 8).

The participants reported feeling persistent fear both in the days and weeks following the shooting, both in processing the details of the mass shooting as well as anticipatory fear about another act of violence being enacted in the community.

"I felt like the whole community was terrified..." (Participant 4).

"It wasn't until la few days later until I was really able to sit with how scary it was." (Participant 7).

"We were all actually scared there was going to be a copycat. I remember me and my friends being afraid that it was going to happen again because there were a lot of online things that were supporting him [Elliot Rodger].. (Participant 12).

The participants reported feeling fear five-years post-shooting, specifically when they are taking preparations to enter into public spaces. This fear is closely related to current negative alterations in cognition that primarily involve exaggerated negative beliefs about presumably innocent bystanders enacting acts of violence in high-traffic spaces as previously presented, as well as with increased hypervigilance and safety checking behaviors.

"I'm so afraid still that I am always taking note of if someone looks suspicious or threatening. And that's constant, literally every day. Every time I get into Uber I don't know, anytime I'm walking in, or if there's a man walking behind me, I make sure that he knows that I see him. I have not gotten to events because I don't want to get home too late. Or I've spent $40 on an Uber because I don't want to take public transportation after nine o'clock." (Participant 2).

"There is fear within me at all times when I am out." (Participant 3).

"I feel scared in public. More so than before, more than I would like to be… just like at movies or at the mall or wherever I might be I always look for the closest exit because of the shooting." (Participant 9).

Five participants reported feeling shock in the days and weeks following the shooting.

"I was shocked and didn't really know how to handle it or what to think about it. (Participant 4).

"First it was disbelief. The disbelief carried on, even after reality set in." (Participant 12).

Marked alterations in arousal and reactivity. The participants endorsed symptoms consistent with hypervigilance in response to the mass shooting. The participants detailed increased hypervigilance after the shooting while navigating Isla Vista, primarily depicted as being more cautious and aware of their surroundings.

"I think I was hypervigilant… just very aware of my surroundings." (Participant 3).

"I became more cautious when we would go out. I was just more cautious and more aware, I think, of my surroundings." (Participant 10).

Healing Together

The participants reported their belief that community ties and sense of comradery strengthened post-shooting and their viewpoint that the UCSB student community played an integral role in their individual- and university-wide grieving and healing processes. Relatedly, the participants also endorsed an increased, and at times, unspoken in-group bias following the shooting, as they preferred the company of fellow UCSB students over non-community members who were not privy to the intimate details of their lived experiences.

"Everyone just collectively experiencing grief, that just was the mood of the entire community, I felt. I had never felt grief like that before. And so, it was a really powerful thing to have been able to experience that with the whole community. And just knowing that everyone felt the same way and was just as sad or heartbroken or whatever emotions were being felt. It felt really important and to have had the whole community experience it together. And it was very comforting in that time to have those community events where

everyone was there supporting each other and saying we hear you and we're grieving together, and this should not be happening again." (Participant 2).

"I think just having that safe space to say like, "That was really scary, or I'm really mad, or I just don't understand." To have someone that's like, "Yes, I feel that. I understand. I feel what you're feeling," even if we didn't have a sense of closure per se of that this traumatic event happened and there's nothing that we can do about it now for that one single event. Just knowing that other people feel what you feel was helpful… I think everyone came together, whether we knew what we were doing or what we didn't. Just sitting there with one another, just checking in with people mattered. I felt supported by others. I think that was probably the biggest impact on me." (Participant 3).

"Throughout my time at UCSB I would meet people after that event, and it would come up. People I didn't know when that event happened, when the shooting happened, but we were all living in that one square mile, and we're all relatively the same age… Even if I didn't know them when the event happened it was like we all kind of understood something about that event and how it affected us. I remember more of just my friend group just becoming significantly more bonded with the people around because of that shared experience. It was just relationships of more depth and understanding." (Participant 7).

"I feel like a big process [of healing] was my UCSB friends who went through it because it's like when you talk to an outsider, they kind of try to justify your feelings and stuff, but that doesn't help you. It helps you to heal with other people who get it because they are also broken." (Participant 13).

"We went to this party afterwards, and it was this weird barrier between us and the rest of the people at the party who all knew what had happened but were not going to talk about what had happened. We felt special but not in a good way and like, distinct and different but also very foreign, even though in theory, we were aware of these things and as prepared as people can be mentally for possibility of something like this happening… I think I was looking for a word like, different isn't quite right either. The other people, as much as they tried hard to empathize, and they were present, and they were supportive, and they were wonderful, couldn't bridge that gap. It was like an event that happened and that we had all experienced and that we were all internally processing together, you know." (Participant 6).

Welcome to Adulthood

The participants indicated that they regarded their survival and related experiences associated with the mass shooting as a developmental marker of adulthood. Their reactions to this aforementioned transition to adulthood appeared to be met with resistance over the

unplanned and tragic nature of the event. Concurrent with this transition were the participants'

re-frame of their friendships from peer bonds to surrogate family bonds as their respective family

of origins were not physically present for this unwelcomed developmental progression.

> *"I feel like it was kind of this is real... like a door opening, welcome to adulthood sort of situation. That's how I feel about it and when I look back on it, I felt like we got a real introduction to adulthood."* (Participant 4).

> *"But it's funny how you think you are kind of untouchable, and then you hear about how these people that are dying from the shooting are your age, and you realize well, now you're an adult."* (Participant 5).

> *"I don't think I was ready to grow up yet. So, it was this major moment where it forced me to grow up… when people get killed like that, you just grow up."* (Participant 7).

> *"So, I think it made me feel more like an adult. It's a huge thing that brings you together with your friends in a weird way. It's like they are your family that helped you survive it."* (Participant 11).

Theme 5: Impact on Current Happenings

The participants shared their experiences about how their exposure to the Isla Vista mass

shooting influences their response to current events and career pursuits. First, the participants

shared that their experiences associated with the mass shooting contribute to their current

cognitive and somatic responses when learning about the occurrence of additional mass

shootings. Second, the participants noted that their experiences associated with the mass shooting

played an integral role in choosing their career paths and making intentional efforts to

incorporate their shooting take-aways into their pursuits as young professionals in their

respective fields.

Learning About Subsequent Mass Shootings

The participants discussed their responses when learning about mass shootings that have taken place after the Isla Vista attack, which include increased emotionality, desensitization, and perceptions consistent with selective attention bias when learning about the news.

Increased emotionality. The participants reported experiencing anger, sadness, and anxiety and related somatic symptoms when learning about mass shootings that have taken place since the Isla Vista attack.

"Every time a shooting happens, I'm just so angry. I'm like again, are you kidding me? It just makes me angry. More and more angry and less and less sad. It's obviously heart wrenching but my first emotion that comes up is anger. Because like I said it's like, we haven't figured this out yet, this isn't enough for our government to say this is enough. They don't care if more lives are lost." (Participant 8).

"When is it going to fucking stop? Like, it's not going to stop until someone does something. Well, the people who should be doing something aren't. It really affects me and sometimes I'll see the news and start crying because I'm so sad… or getting emotional and I'm like, another one, what are we going to do about it? (Participant 2).

"Whenever it happens, I obsess over it. Like, again, I'm like, "Who do I know there?" Is always my first question and "Are they okay?" And I'm checking my community. Even if it happened in Texas and I've never been to Texas, it's just my mind tends to do this thing where it ruminates over them. Sometimes they're far from home and sometimes they're way too close for comfort. I think there's still this sense of anxiety every now and then when something happens, that exists because it is unresolved in a way. It happens every time." (Participant 4).

Desensitization. The participants reported experiencing a presumed lack of emotional response due to being desensitized to news about mass shootings.

"I don't feel that much. Which is pretty sad when I say that out loud because it just feels like I've heard about another one… it isn't as shocking as it probably used to be. It sounds like another day in the news." (Participant 5).

Selective attention bias. The participants reported experiencing perceptions consistent with selective attention bias when learning about mass shootings that have taken place since the Isla Vista attack.

"Isla Vista wasn't the first one that started this barrage of mass shootings. But it was one that impacted me, and it made me more conscientious of them. I think if I hadn't been affected by one, it would be like noise, right? I don't know. Just another day, but because I'm more aware and was directly impacted, I'm like, oh. It's like when you buy a car, and now you see every car on the freeway is the same as yours. They were always there, but now that I have one, I see them all the time." (Participant 12).

Career Relevance

The participants noted that their experiences associated with the mass shooting played an integral role in choosing their career and making intentional efforts to incorporate their shooting take-aways into their pursuits as young professionals in their respective fields. The specific fields included education (3), psychology (2), and law (2).

Choosing career. The participants shared that their experiences with the Isla Vista mass shooting led them to pursue their respective career paths.

"Well, this is also why I think a huge part of why I have decided to go into psychology. I wanted to be able to help women or help people who have experienced things that I guess were out of their control. Nobody chooses to be affected by a mass shooting, so I wanted to help there because trauma is all around us." (Participant 1).

"I work in politics. I worked for Hillary in 2016. I worked on a reproductive rights organization. And then since then I've been raising money to elect democrats who support women's rights. That's my professional path that I've chosen. And what I've chosen to do in my career relates a lot to what I experienced at UCSB." (Participant 2).

"I think it has framed my entire, not my entire, but a big chunk of my future career of what I'm working towards and my education of wanting to be there for college students [as a psychologist]. I know how big of an impact it has on individuals who are this pivotal moment of their life, and developing this sense of identity, and when that's disrupted, I want to be able to, you know... give back. And to do something about mass shootings, as well. But the matter of the fact is it has impacted my identity to be a young woman, a young adult, who is affected by a mass shooting, and has taken the step to make a difference in other people's lives because it made such an impact on me, even though I still kind of struggle to make sense of what happened." (Participant 3).

Approaching career. The participants shared that their experiences with the Isla Vista mass shooting have led them to both fully consider and more intentionally integrate mental

health concepts into their career efforts as a way to approach their field of work more holistically and prevent future violence from unfolding.

> *"When I'm in defense court, I think about the role of mental health issues the most because of Elliot Rodger."* (Participant 5).

> *"I've actually discussed this with my middle schoolers before. I talk to them about how school shootings are very real, because at my university it happened. I also talk to them more about mental health. Because a lot of mass shootings happen when people feel unstable or feel like they don't have someone to talk to, and then they resort to violence. We do a lot of community circles and try and... you know, encourage the kids to be able to share their feelings or see a counselor if they need to. We talk a lot about impulsivity, too… like if you don't think about the consequences, it could really hurt people. I have heard the kids say things like, "Oh, wow. That's serious." Because we hear about all these shootings in other states, but wow our teacher actually experienced one."* (Participant 9).

> *"My first year that I started teaching was the year of the shootings in Vegas, and we did a moment of silence for all those that were killed. And then I shared with them afterward my experience and having just gone through this, even just peripherally. And my ultimate sentiment was that we need to care about each other and take care of one another and show love and compassion and understanding. But, even so, I don't need anybody else to be affected by what we went through. I don't need anybody else to feel the guilt and the shame and the sorrow that we all felt. I just want these kids to be kids."* (Participant 12).

Theme 6: Motivations for Research Participation

The participants shared their motivations for research participation in the project. Their rationales subsumed into four sub-themes, which included their desire to provide themselves with a corrective emotional experience with respect to post-shooting healing, to speak on behalf of their fellow UCSB community members, to advocate as a woman for women, and to contribute to the mass shooting literature to eradicate our country's mass shooting epidemic.

Corrective Emotional Experience

The participants reported that they were motivated to participate in this project to freely share their thoughts and feelings about the Isla Vista mass shooting that were largely unaddressed during their time as a student, as well in present day. In doing so, they alluded to the

impact this event had and continues to have on their mental health and their related desire to

channel their past and current challenges in the form of research engagement.

> *"I chose to participate in the project because I didn't feel like people talked about it enough freely when it [the mass shooting] happened. And, even now, we aren't able to express how we felt at the time, even though it's a few years later… it just feels like we needed to get over it."* (Participant 5)

> *"It [the mass shooting] has been something that has affected me. When I saw your flyer, my friend shared it… and then I thought, wow I would like to help because I feel like there wasn't much done for what happened. I feel it was kind of just like brushed under the rug and then people moved on."* (Participant 13).

Advocate for UCSB Student Community

The participants reported that they were motivated to participate in this project to share

the impact they believed this event had on the UCSB student community. The participants

denoted a particular emphasis on feeling compelled to speak on behalf of their peers who had a

trauma history and those who were indirectly exposed to the event.

> *"I think it's important to help you understand how this the event changed students… it just seems really important to do that."* (Participant 1).

> *"I want to share the impact it [the mass shooting] had on people who had experienced trauma in the past, and how they're carrying that to even today. I think this should be part of a larger conversation."* (Participant 2).

> *"I think it's something that the public should know with how it impacts students… especially those that weren't in Elliot's line of fire or anything, but just they were really amongst the community."* (Participant 4).

Advocate as a Woman for Women

The participants reported that they were motivated to participate in this project to

empower fellow women in part by contributing to empirical knowledge base about the gendered

component of this event.

"I think often about how he [Eliot Rodger] targeted women… that's something that I am passionate about, empowering women." (Participant 1).

I think it's important to understand how this impacted women especially." (Participant 4).

This wasn't just gun violence; it was violence against women. We need to talk about it." (Participant 6).

"This topic is also so specific to us being females who went to UCSB and experienced this very singular moment. There's this natural comradery I have with anybody else that shares that experience" (Participant 7).

Make a Difference in Our Country's Mass Shooting Epidemic

The participants reported that they were motivated to participate in this project to be a part of the solution in eradicating our county's mass shooting epidemic in part by bringing awareness to their lived experiences.

"I'm happy you are doing this research because school shootings are such an epidemic in the U.S." (Participant 4).

"I just wanted to be part of the solution and understanding after the event, so if I can be helpful in any capacity, that would be my goal." (Participant 12).

"I feel like it's really important as us, as a mass collective, to all share our experiences about the shooting. Because when we hold on to how we experience situations alone and don't let others know how much it affected us then nothing's going to change and nothing's going to happen… I really feel like changes need to be made in our society and our system." (Participant 13).

Outlier Theme: Unwelcome Exposure of Broadcast Media

The participants expressed their opinions about their perceptions of and experiences interacting with broadcast newscasters who were producing coverage in Isla Vista following the mass shooting. The participants depicted the media's involvement as intrusive and exploitative, as they perceived the media to both intrude upon and commodify their grief and efforts to heal, both in the immediate aftermath of the shooting and in present day.

"A couple of days later, a few of my friends went for a walk, and within the first five minutes, a reporter and stuff had tried to talk to us and be like, "Do you know where the shooter lived? Do you know where he is" and trying to ask us information. And I was just like, "Why do you want to know that? What are you doing?" I was actually on the cover of [national media outlet] following the shooting. A photographer had taken a photo of the candlelight vigil, and then my mom sent it to me like, "You're on the cover." And I'm like, "But this isn't a good thing." There's that photo that's published out there of me, and it's this very weird and vulnerable photo of me, and I don't know what to do with it. I don't know." (Participant 3).

"There was a photo of us watching [a memorial event] from across the street that was on [national media outlet]. So many people saw it and that was a whole different element of, oh my gosh, obviously it was a big deal, but it was like nationwide. It was overwhelming for me… it was just not what I expected. It's still hard to think about that picture. I never thought something like that would happen that close to me." (Participant 11).

"The day of there was this news guy who was circling around us just hovering trying to get a story and there I am… I can't control my emotions. So as soon as I found out that she [her friend] was killed, I was sobbing and he kept badgering us to get us to confirm it already, so we told him to leave and he finally did and then it was just… I don't even know what to say about that man. It was hard, it was a hard day." (Participant 13).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of women who were enrolled students at UCSB during the 2014 mass shooting in Isla Vista, California. This chapter presents the interpretations and clinical implications of the results, considerations pertaining to researcher reflexivity, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretations/Clinical Implications of Results

This section will provide an analysis of the project's results. In total, six overlapping themes and 17 sub-themes were constructed that depict the 13 participants' lived experiences associated with the Isla Vista mass shooting. Themes organically formed into four gross-level categories (i.e., pre-shooting, day of shooting, gender, and post-shooting), in addition to one outlier theme about the role of broadcast media in the immediate aftermath of the mass shooting. The researcher's interpretation of each theme as informed by the existing mass shooting literature and clinical implications for clinicians working with women who were exposed to a college mass shooting or other acts of violence in which they were the intended victims on the basis of their gender identity will be presented below.

Pre-Shooting Community

The participants described the pre-shooting university community as a light-hearted, fun, carefree, safe, and welcoming place to be. This notion of a safe pre-shooting community is both supported by mass shooting statistics and illuminates possible developmental and trauma-informed considerations that are unique to the Isla Vista mass shooting. Specifically, mass shootings often take place in locations that are characterized by low crime rates and have a reputation for low rates of violence (Roque, 2012; Scott-Coe, 2017; Shultz et al., 2014), which

align with the Isla Vista community descriptors provided by the participants. To that point, these descriptors indicate that the participants viewed their pre-shooting community as a secure and "good enough" external object (Horner, 1991) that provided a safe holding environment away from their respective family of origins. Interestingly, these descriptors also highlight a stark contrast to the participants' conceptualization of the Isla Vista mass shooting as an unwelcome introduction to adulthood that fractured the community's aforenoted sense of safety, goodness, and innocence. In sum, it is plausible that the participants' perception of their pre-shooting community was informed by Isla Vista's reputation as a generally safe place in addition to their idealization (i.e., splitting) in response to their challenges to integrate or resolve that Isla Vista was now a place, at least in part, tainted by the gunman's demonstration of violence.

Clinicians who work with female-identified patients who were exposed to a college mass shooting or other act of violence in which they were the intended victims on the basis of their gender can employ elements of this theme by taking a trauma-informed approach to treatment, particularly as it relates to a patient's sense of physical and psychological safety and related coping mechanisms (Tedeschi & Moore, 2020). First, if a patient is exposed to gender-based violence in a community and/or geographical area that they previously regarded as safe, it could be advantageous to assist the patient to work through this shift, particularly if they still reside in or frequent the community and/or geographical area (Tedeschi & Moore, 2020). Second, if a clinician senses that a patient is idealizing aspects of their community before the violence unfolded, taking a detailed inquiry surrounding the patient's possible splitting could allow clinicians to both normalize their response and assist the patient to identify more adaptive ways of conceptualizing the event in present day (Tedeschi & Moore, 2020). Taken together, it is conceivable that intentionally integrating a patient's understanding of their community before a

gender-based violent act occurred can provide an opportunity to deepen their insight regarding the violence, which might in turn inform their process of working through their lived experiences in treatment.

The Day of the Shooting

The participants discussed their survival-based emotional processes (i.e., confusion, shock, fear), security- and information-seeking behaviors, reliance on technology and cell-based communication, and existential thoughts that occurred on the day of the Isla Vista mass shooting. Since the majority of existing research on mass shooting in college and university communities quantitively compares pre- to post-shooting data, these qualitative findings that center exclusively on the day of the mass shooting can be regarded as additions to the literature, with the exception of the participants' depicted emotional experiences. On that note, the participants' reported survival-based emotions that they felt on the day of the mass shooting closely resembled the lived experiences of Virginia Tech (VT) community members in their non-empirical, post-shooting written reflections about the mass shooting on their campus. Specifically, the participants and these particular VT community members, including students, faculty members, mental health providers, and spouses who lost loved ones in the attack, similarly endorsed feelings of confusion (Geller, 2008; Immel & Hadder, 2008; Keeling & Piercy, 2008; Piercy et al., 2008) and shock (Cox, 2008; Geller, 2008; Keeling & Piercy, 2008; Nowak & Veilleux, 2008; Piercy et al., 2008; Yoder, 2008) in response to the violence that unfolded in their respective campus communities. In sum, these results suggest that individuals who are exposed to a college mass shooting can have similar emotional responses to the event despite their relationship to the institution and victims, as well as geographical proximity to the violence.

The participants also described engaging in security- and information-seeking behaviors on the day of the mass shooting. With regard to security-seeking, the participants discussed conducting safety checks with friends and peers and alerting their social networks to the news of the mass shooting in an effort to ensure the wellbeing of others. Several of the participants noted that these community-wide safety checking efforts were the first actions they took after learning of the news of the mass shooting, and one participant reported that their efforts proved unsuccessful when she was unable to confirm the safety of her friend who was killed in the gunman's attack (i.e., Participant 13). It is important to include that this particular participant also disclosed that she was diagnosed with PTSD following the mass shooting. Although correlation cannot be posited from this study, it is of note that Hughes et al. (2011) found that an inability to confirm the safety of friends and experiencing interpersonal loss predicted the highest levels of post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) in women after the VT shooting. Next, with regard to information-seeking, the participants discussed searching for details about the Isla Vista mass shooting by soliciting friends and peers for information as well as engaging in their own web-based research. Tying both of these themes together, participants reported that their use of social media platforms, television, news websites, and cell-based communication were integral in successfully engaging in security- and information-seeking behaviors.

In addition to experiencing survival-based emotions and engaging in security- and information-seeking behaviors, the participants described having existential thoughts when learning about the news of the mass shooting. Their "what if" reflections were accompanied by feelings of anxiety and fear and were primarily centered around the possibility that the participants could have been injured or killed in the gunman's "War on Women" due to their gender identity. Although this theme captures the participants' day of shooting experiences, it is

the researcher's sense that this particular sub-theme threads through the subsequent theme that focuses exclusively on the gendered nature of the Isla Vista mass shooting, as well as the final theme about motivations for participation in this research project.

The findings pertaining to the participants' day of-shooting emotions, behaviors, and cognitions is relevant for clinicians, particularly for those incorporating principals of post-traumatic growth (PTG) in their therapeutic interventions with female-identified patients who were exposed to a college mass shooting or other acts of violence in which they were the intended victims on the basis of their gender identity (Tedeschi & Moore, 2020). To start, PTG-based clinical practice involves the integration of four existing therapeutic approaches to facilitate a client's psychological healing after exposure to a traumatic event; two of these approaches include narrative and existential considerations (Tedeschi & Moore, 2020). In sum, it can be advantageous for clinicians practicing from this approach to assist patients to identify, process, and ultimately integrate the affective, behavioral, cognitive and existential effects associated with their past trauma into a new and more adaptative life narrative that promotes PTG (Tedeschi & Moore, 2020). Keeping the components of this theme and PTG-based practice in mind, it can be inferred that there is value in creating a space for female-identified patients exposed to gender-based violence to discuss their narrative, with particular focus on how issues of safety and survival underscore their emotions, behaviors, and cognitions associated with the event.

The War on Women

Although every mass shooting committed on or near a college campus has been carried out by a male perpetrator (Peterson & Densley, 2020), there has yet to be a study that intentionally integrates the role of gender and the experiences of the affected community

members. Both spontaneously and in direct response to questions on the interview guide about their understanding of the gunman's motive, the participants discussed their reflections around the gendered nature of this attack that they learned about via the gunman's manifesto, videos, media coverage, and word of mouth accounts. Of note is that the participants discussed how the gendered nature of this event affected their lived experiences as UCSB students, as well as in present day. These reflections comprised into three categories, which included gender-based fear, gender-based emotional processing, and gender-based identity development considerations.

Similar to studies that found that female college students report more fear than usual following mass shootings that occur on campuses other than their own (Fallahi et al., 2009; Kaminski et al., 2010), the participants reported experiencing increased fear directed at both Elliot Rodger and at men in general following the mass shooting. Specifically, their fear seemed to revolve around the fear of being shot, treated as a sexual object, and being viewed as a vulnerable target solely on account of their gender identity, which were all elements of Elliot Rodger's "War on Women" depicted in his manifesto. In many ways, the participants seemed to conceptualize this gender-based fear as addictive as one they "add[ed]… to the bucket of things" (Participant 10) they needed to fear as women. In conclusion, experiencing this gender-based fear in response to the mass shooting was not a new concept to these women, but rather, it was additive or exacerbated in response this gendered event that unfolded in their backyards.

Next, participants reported their need to work through feelings of disgust, sadness, and defeat about the gunman's hegemonic masculine ideals (Connell, 1995, p. 77) after learning that he was targeting female-identified students in his attack. Their struggle to work through these feelings occurred in part to their response to the gunman's simultaneous longing for and hatred of women due to their perceived inability to provide him what he desired and felt that he

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believed, including "presumed dominance to [the participants] as sexual objects" (Vito et al., 2018, p. 89). Relatedly, some of the participants discussed how these feelings occurred when they engaged in their own reflections about society's perceived role in creating and upholding tenets of male superiority as they pertained to this attack. In sum, this emotional working through that the participants engaged in occurred on both a micro- and macro- level and appeared to be a necessary yet painful component of their ongoing post-shooting lived experiences.

Lastly, the participants reported that learning that the gunman was targeting female-identified students in his attack led them to realize and in turn, begin to negotiate or re-negotiate aspects of their gender identity as women. The identity-based exploration that resulted from the gendered component of this attack appeared to be a "real eye opener" (Participant 1) for the women. Specifically, this exploration appeared to generate realizations that being a woman in society meant one has to strategically consider how to present themselves in the public eye to prevent psychological or physical hurt by men, and in some ways accept that they were and would continue to be victims of violence due to their gender identity. Taken together, the participants' identity-based negotiations that are still occurring on an ongoing basis appear to be experienced by the women as an attempt to reconcile the presence and associated consequences of hegemonic masculinity in our country.

The findings pertaining to the gendered considerations of this mass shooting is relevant for clinicians working with women who were exposed to a gender-based mass shooting, and more broadly, gender-based violence. While gender-based violence has been widely studied due in part to its designation as global health problem (Russo & Perlot, 2006), this project contributes to the existing gender-based violence literature by exploring a specific gender-based incident. In line with a feminist approach to trauma treatment, female-identified patients who are exposed to

a gender-based act of violence could benefit from therapeutic dialogue that takes a systems-level approach by incorporating tenets of hegemonic masculinity, gender inequity, and societal expectations associated with female gender identity and performance (Brown, 2004). While it is arguable that many, if not all, female-identified patients can benefit from this gender-informed dialogue, taking this approach seems especially relevant for patients who are exploring their gender identity and expression and/or their relationship with male-identified figures in treatment (Brown, 2004). Moreover, although this project did not address the relationship between gender identity and other identity variables (e.g., race), it is important to underscore the intersectionality of oppression when interweaving these aforementioned tenets into therapeutic work. In sum, these findings speak to the importance of exploring subsequent gender-based acts of violence from the perspective of intended victims to enhance our field's understanding of this unique type of violence in order to enhance clinical service delivery for women both directly and indirectly impacted.

Post-Shooting Experiences

The participants shared their reflections from their experiences after the Isla Vista mass shooting. Their post-shooting recounts fell into three sub-themes that include PTSS, their experiences healing in their collegiate community, and their recognition of the Isla Vista mass shooting as a developmental marker of adulthood and signal of individuation from their family of origin. Although one study on PTSS assessed college students up to 31 months post-shooting (Orcutt, Bonanno, Hannan, & Miron, 2014), and two others investigated students one year after their campus mass shooting (Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012; Littleton, Axsom & Grills-Taquechel, 2011), the bulk of studies assess post-exposure trauma in the weeks and months following campus mass shootings. That said, the participants endorsed experiencing

intrusion symptoms, persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the mass shooting, negative alterations in cognition and mood associated with the mass shooting and marked alterations in arousal and reactivity associated with the mass shooting. More specifically, the participants endorsed experiencing the following post-traumatic symptoms solely in the immediate aftermath of the mass shooting: marked physiological reactions following exposure to external cues that symbolize an aspect of the mass shooting; persistent avoidance and efforts to avoid external reminders that arouse distressing memories of the mass shooting; alternations in mood (i.e., shock); and increased hypervigilance in response to the mass shooting. Taken together, these findings are congruent with a breadth of mass shooting literature that indicates that college students report increased levels of PTSS following exposure to a mass shooting on their campus, at least in the short term (Lowe & Galea, 2017; Shultz et al., 2014).

Relatedly, albeit a wider timeframe, the participants endorsed the following post-traumatic symptoms in the immediate aftermath of the mass shooting, as well as in present day: recurrent, involuntary intrusive thoughts and memories of the event; dissociative reactions; marked physiological reactions following exposure to external cues that symbolize an aspect of the mass shooting (e.g., panic); dissociative reactions (i.e., flashbacks, depersonalization, derealization); exaggerated negative beliefs about presumably innocent bystanders enacting acts of violence in high-traffic spaces; and alterations in mood (i.e., sadness and fear). With this aforementioned timeframe in mind, this particular subset of findings that revolves around PTSS symptoms five years post-shooting offers new contributions to the existing college mass shooting literature. In sum, these findings suggest that college women who were exposed to a gender-based mass shooting can experience event-related PTSS not only in the wake of the shooting, but

also up to five years later which speaks to the long-term mental impact these violent attacks can have on affected community members.

The participants reported that their community ties and sense of comradery strengthened post-shooting, and also spoke to the integral role that ongoing in-person interactions played in their individual- and university-wide grieving and healing processes. Specifically, the participants appeared to benefit from having the ongoing opportunity to safely express their thoughts and feelings about the mass shooting with individuals who were also exposed to the event, and in turn, seemed to understand their suffering to some degree, whether that be in informal conversations or by attending campus-wide memorial events. The value that the participants ascribed to their strengthened community ties was achieved at least in part through these in-person peer interactions is reflective of the finding that face-to-face interactions as compared to virtual interactions significantly improved post-shooting wellbeing among VT students, as well as a case study on the Isla Vista mass shooting that found that UCSB students noted an increase in their psychological sense of school membership from pre- to post-shooting (Felix et al., 2018). Relatedly, the participants' discussions about the role of community in their healing closely resembled the lived experiences of VT community members in their non-empirical, post-shooting written reflections about the mass shooting on their campus (Keeling & Piercy, 2008; Nowak & Veilleux, 2008; Piercy et al., 2008; Ryan & Hawdon, 2008; Yoder, 2008). Similar to the participants, the VT contributors overwhelmingly cited the role of the school community as a key component of their post-shooting lived experiences. Namely, the VT contributors touched upon the shared experience of facing a campus-wide trauma, the compassion and support exhibited by their fellow community members and attending campus memorial events, all of which were also spoken about by the participants. Taken together, these

findings reinforce the notion that individuals who are exposed to a college mass shooting overwhelming cite the importance that their university community plays in their grieving and healing processes.

Relatedly, the participants also endorsed an increased, and at times, unspoken in-group bias following the shooting, as they preferred the company of fellow UCSB students over non-community members who were not privy to the intimate details of their mass shooting experiences. While this finding has not been discussed in the existing mass shooting literature, it mirrors homecoming theory, which is a concept that illuminates the lived experiences of World War II veterans returning home after their service (Ahern et al., 2015). The theory posits that military service members often feel a sense of disconnection from their family and friends after returning home due to the time, space, and experiences that differentiate, and ultimately, separate them from their loved ones in some manner. Perhaps unsurprising is that veterans who experience this disconnection often benefit from support groups as they offer a sense of belonging and connection with others who can relate to their experience within a safe interpersonal context (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2021). In sum, in line with a community approach to psychotherapy treatment (Ahern et al., 2015), these findings suggest that women who were exposed to a college mass shooting prefer to heal alongside their peers who can relate to their lived experiences as opposed to others outside of the university community who they believed were incapable of comprehending, and thus, working through, the event in a similar way.

In highlighting the specificity of being exposed to a mass shooting during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000), the participants conceptualized the Isla Vista mass shooting as a developmental marker of adulthood and a signal of individual from their family of origin. More

specifically, the participants noted that the mass shooting prompted them to re-frame their understanding of their college friendships from peer bonds to familial bonds, as their family of origins were not physically present for the mass shooting and the immediate aftermath of the event. While this relational re-frame is developmentally appropriate in some capacity, it appears that this shift happened more abruptly, or at least in a way that the participants did not intend for. Collectively, these findings suggest on some level that being exposed to a gender-based college mass shooting as a young adult is accompanied by unique adversities that may affect one's developmental trajectory and significant relationships during a formative period of growth.

Clinicians who support female patients who were exposed to a college mass shooting or other act of violence in which they were the intended victims on the basis of their gender can employ elements of the two aforementioned sub-themes that center around community and developmental considerations into their clinical work. With respect to the role of community, clinicians may be able to offer additional support to their female patients by encouraging and/or implementing community-healing practices into their patient's treatment plan, whether formally in the case of group treatment or informally via assisting patients to increase their level of socialization with community members who can relate to their experience (Ahern et al., 2015). Moreover, clinicians who are trained in facilitating psychotherapy groups might consider the possibility of creating support and/or process groups for women who were exposed to gender-based violence to foster these opportunities for healing (Ahern et al., 2015. Next, when clinicians work with female patients who were exposed to gender-based violence during emerging adulthood, it may be advantageous to consider how this event of this kind can influence the five features that distinguish this unique developmental period: identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between adolescence and adulthood, and a sense of broad possibilities for the

future (Arnett, 2000). In sum, this sub-theme and the related clinical implications highlight that women exposed to these events may benefit from community- and developmental approaches to psychotherapy treatment due to the unique experiences that are associated with exposure to an act of gender-based violence as an intended victim in emerging adulthood (Ahern et al., 2015; Arnett, 2000).

Impact on Current Happenings

To the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to explore the lived experiences of individuals exposed to a college mass shooting on their campus five years post-shooting. As mentioned, a majority of studies about college mass shootings involve quantitative findings about the short-term mental health consequences of the VT and NIU campus shootings, and there are few outliers with respect to assessing longer terms effects. As alluded to, these aforementioned outliers include one quantitative study on PTSS in NIU students 31-months post-shooting (Orcutt, Bonanno, Hannan, & Miron, 2014), and two other quantitative studies on PTSS in VT students one-year post-shooting (i.e., Littleton, Grills-Taquechel, Axsom, Bye, & Buck, 2012; Littleton, Axsom & Grills-Taquechel, 2011). With these timeframes in mind, this particular theme that revolves around the impact on the participants' current happenings five years post-shooting offers new contributions to the existing college mass shooting literature.

Learning About Subsequent Mass Shootings

The participants reported experiencing increased a range of reactions including emotionality, desensitization, and perceptions consistent with selective attention bias when learning about mass shootings that were carried out following the Isla Vista attack. It is important to note that the participants endorsed these reactions both while learning of mass shootings that were committed on college campuses as well as in other spaces (e.g., concert

venues), which suggests a level of generalizability, albeit not statistically. Reflective of the negative alternations in cognition and mood and intrusion PTSD criteria, the participants noted that they experience anger, sadness, and anxiety as well as marked physiological reactions (i.e., crying, shaking, nausea) when consuming news coverage of subsequent mass shootings. Conversely, some participants reported experiencing a presumed lack of emotional response due to being desensitized to news about mass shootings. Lastly, some participants also experienced perceptions consistent with selective attention bias when learning about mass shootings that have taken place since the Isla Vista attack. Interesting is that regardless of which reaction a participant endorsed experiencing while viewing subsequent mass media coverage, they provided a rationale as for why they believed that was the case. Put differently, it appears that the participants that discussed this component of their current experiences had a certain degree of insight into their reasoning for their reactions, or lack thereof in the case of desensitization. All in all, these findings imply that while the participants' reactions to subsequent mass media coverage vary with regard to their outward presentation, there is a commonality in being emotionally moved by this type of news in some capacity.

Given the range of reactions that consuming mass shooting media coverage that were elicited in the participants, clinicians working with female-identified patients who were exposed to a mass shooting can consider how a patient reacts to learning about subsequent and related acts of violence in the media. Dependent on the patient's potential reactions, it may be worthwhile to foster dialogue about how they can engage in self-care during and after these distressing moments of media exposure in service of their mental health. For example, it could be useful to assist a patient to create boundaries around media consumption, practice distress tolerance skills, or spend a portion of their therapy to work through these aforementioned

reactions in greater detail (Tedeschi & Moore, 2020). Unfortunately, given our country's relationship with mass shootings, it is reasonable to consider that these acts of violence will continue to occur, and in turn, contribute to the current lived experiences of affected community members. In sum, it is conceivable that there is clinical value in conceptualizing mass shooting media coverage as a potential trigger or antecedent to psychological distress for women who have been exposed to a mass shooting.

Career Relevance

The participants noted that their experiences associated with the mass shooting played an integral role in choosing their career and making intentional efforts to incorporate their mass shooting take-aways into their pursuits as young professionals in their respective fields, including education, psychology, and law. With regard to incorporating their takeaways from the mass shooting into their career activities, the participants noted that they more intentionally integrate mental health concepts into their career efforts as a way to approach their field of work more holistically and prevent future violence from unfolding. In addition to offering insight about the long-term impacts of exposure to a college mass shooting, these findings are reflective of the tenet of embracing new possibilities that is depicted in the post-traumatic growth (PTG) literature (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). PTG refers to a psychological phenomenon in which individuals who have struggled with highly challenging life circumstances make favorable life changes that transform the way they view and interact with the world. Pertaining to new possibilities, individuals who experience PTG can find themselves establishing new paths for their lives, including professional endeavors such as the case with the participants (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). While PTG does not eradicate the pain or grief associated with exposure to a highly stressful or traumatic event, it can speak to one's resilience and ability to make adaptive

changes that benefit themselves and others, as was the case with the participants and their own professional progress. All in all, these findings underscore the possibilities with respect to PTG in response to an individual's exposure to a mass shooting and reveal that additional research in this area is warranted to enhance our field's understanding of the long-term impacts of mass shootings on affected community members and those they serve in their post-shooting pursuits.

Motivations for Research Participation

As previously mentioned, to the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to qualitatively explore the lived experiences of individuals exposed to a college mass shooting on their campus five years post-shooting. Therefore, this particular theme that depicts motivation for research participation offers contributions to the existing mass shooting literature, particularly as it relates to the participants' efforts to engage in both individual- and community-oriented healing processes via advocacy. With regard to individual-level healing, the participants described that participating in the project offered them a chance to freely share their unspoken thoughts and feelings in response to how the Isla Vista mass shooting impacted them, as there was limited opportunity to do so as a UCSB student. It appeared that the participants experienced co-existing feelings of frustration that the mass shooting was "brushed under the rug" (Participant 13) and that as a result they "weren't able to express how [they] felt at time," (Participant 5), as well as catharsis in response to their opportunity to share their lived experiences by participating in the project. In sum, it is the researcher's impression that mental health stigma may have been a contributing factor to this aforementioned pressure to quickly move past the violence, which incentivized their participation in a study that offered an opportunity to engage in the type of dialogue they hoped to be a part of as a UCSB student following the Isla Vista mass shooting.

Relatedly, on a community-level, the participants discussed their desire to advocate on behalf of the UCSB student community and women, as well as to make a difference in our country's mass shooting epidemic. First, the participants discussed their beliefs that the Isla Vista mass shooting fundamentally changed UCSB students, and therefore should be part of a "larger conversation" (Participant 2) about the impact that the mass shooting had on the student community at large, regardless of if individuals were in "Elliot's line of fire" or not (Participant 2). Next, speaking to the gendered component of this mass shooting, the participants also specified that their participation in this project was inspired by their dedication to empower fellow women by dialoging about the gunman's "War on Women" to generate both public awareness and societal changes that might address the issue of gender-based violence. Lastly, the participants stated their desire to be involved in this project to become part of the solution in eradicating our county's mass shooting epidemic through formally sharing about their lived experiences associated with the Isla Vista mass shooting. As mentioned with respect to the participant's career-related pursuits, it appears that these forms of community-level advocacy are congruent with the concept of new possibilities in PTG, albeit personally and not professionally (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). Put differently, it appears that the participants' experience with the Isla Vista mass shooting drove them to personally engage in a community-level advocacy to increase awareness and action steps to eradicate gender-based and mass shooting violence. Taken together, the participants' motivation for research participation suggests that on some level they hoped that the changes they were forced to endure via exposure to the Isla Vista mass shooting could be channeled into purposive efforts that would in turn generate positive change for themselves, their respective communities, and the country at large.

Outlier Theme: Unwelcome Exposure to Broadcast Media

Although only three participants discussed their experiences that centered broadcast media, it is the researcher's impression that this theme is a necessary inclusion to the data set for two reasons. First, the participants spontaneously provided this information, and specified that the media's involvement was intrusive and exploitative, which affected them both in the immediate aftermath of the shooting and continues to in present day. It is possible that this information was provided at least in part because two of them were approached by male-identified news reporters and another two had personal photographs taken that featured on two different national news outlets without their knowledge or consent. Next, the participants' recounts of the media's presumed efforts to intrude upon and commodify their grief closely mirrors those of the VT community members in their non-empirical, post-shooting written reflections about the mass shooting on their campus who labeled the degree of reporter involvement as unwanted (Geller, 2008), unsettling (Jones, 2008), and frustrating (Piercy et al., 2008). Keeping these points in mind, it appears that the female participants who already felt vulnerable as a result of being the intended victims of the gunman's attack were left to encounter another quasi-attack in the form of the media's "stalking" (Participant 3) and "hovering" (Participant 13) behaviors in the wake of the Isla Vista mass shooting. All in all, the participants' recounts highlight how the media's involvement impacted them in both the short- and long-term and subsequently calls for future research to explore the role of media in capturing mass shootings, particularly for individuals who are approached by media personal and/or featured in media coverage following this form of large-scale tragedy.

Researcher Reflexivity

Since a researcher is a social being and is an active participant during each stage of qualitative research, my lived experiences, biases, and self-reflection are important aspects to

recognize and integrated into analysis (Dowling, 2006; Lambert, Jomeen, & McSherry, 2010).

This section will discuss my position as a researcher, how I addressed issues my positionality throughout the process, and finally, how my reflexivity may have impacted researcher participation. To start, like all of the participants who qualified for this project, I also identify as a female who was an enrolled student at UCSB during the 2013-14 academic year when the Isla Vista mass shooting occurred. However, unlike a majority of the participants, I was away from the Isla Vista/Santa Barbara area on May 23, 2014 and I graduated very shortly after the mass shooting in June 2014, which differentiated my subjective experiences associated with the attack, both in the short- and long-term. It is important to also note that my identities and shared experiences were contributing factors in pursuing this project, in addition to the aforementioned gaps in the literature that presented an ideal opportunity to expand our field's understanding of the long-term impact of mass shootings from the perspective of intended victims. Taken together, my subjectivity was relevant to this project before I engaged with participants and continued to be long after in the data analysis and writing phases.

As discussed in Berger (2015), a researcher's reflexivity can impact research in a myriad of ways, including when a researcher has shared identities and/or experiences with their participants, as I do. Specifically, being positioned as an "insider" (Berger, 2015, p. 222), offered me three advantages of studying the familiar, including "easier entrée, a head start knowing about the topic, and understanding of the nuanced reactions of participants" (Berger, 2015, p. 222). First, I believe that my identification as a UCSB female alumnus positively impacted the recruitment and retention process with respect to engendering the participants' buy in via an unspoken comradery. For example, some participants alluded to noticing my alumnus status on my social media accounts, whereas others noted their research participation was motivated in

part by learning of the project from a mutual friend on a specific social networking platform who was also a UCSB graduate. Next, knowing about the Isla Vista mass shooting first-hand was an advantage in the literature review phases as I was abreast of details of the event, particularly with regard to the gunman's manifesto and video content he released prior to his attack. Lastly, given my lived experiences associated with the mass shooting and living in Isla Vista for three years, I had a nuanced understanding of the participants, especially when they referred to specific landmarks/crime scenes (e.g., IV Deli Mart, sorority houses) and memorial events (e.g., Paddle Out) held in the wake of the shooting. While this nuanced understanding allowed me to stay connected to the participants' narratives without needing to ask follow-up questions about contextual details, it also may have posed a slight disadvantage in that these questions could have generated additional findings about their lived experiences following the Isla Vista mass shooting. In sum, my positionality appeared to offer advantages, all of which were important to carefully attend to throughout each phase of the project.

Given my shared identities and involvement as a UCSB student following the mass shooting, I used field notes and analytic memo writing to attend to my positionality while conducting data analysis (Fisher, 2009). I completed field notes after I conducted each participant's semi-structured interview, which contained my thoughts, feelings, and general reflections to the content and process of the interview. While analyzing the data, I engaged in memo writing to bracket my own "values, beliefs, knowledge and biases" (Berger, 2015), which allowed me to create an "intellectual workspace" (Thornber & Charmaz, 2014, p. 163) to be deliberately assess how my assumptions were influencing the development of the project's codes and themes meant to answer the project's research questions. In sum, this process of addressing

my reflexivity was ongoing, iterative, and integral in informing how the product of the unique experiences of UCSB female alumni exposed to a gender-based mass shooting was presented.

Limitations of Study

Despite the project's contributions to the college mass shooting literature, there are two main limitations that merit comment and could inform future research. First, despite attaining data saturation, the project's relatively small, purposive sample size (n=13) prevents generalizability of the results which might have been achievable through random sampling and accruing a larger group of participants. Next, all of the participants were high functioning individuals that had a certain degree of mastery over their experiences associated with the mass shooting in order to engage in a semi-structured interview. While the participants' willingness boded well for their ability to thoughtfully articulate the details of their lived experiences, other women that could have offered unheard perspectives about the Isla Vista mass shooting may have been more likely to engage via an anonymous survey, as opposed to a semi-structured interview that necessitates a different level of interpersonal exposure and vulnerability.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research efforts can further diversify the college mass shooting literature by continuing to explore the long-term and gender-based components of this form of community violence. First, future research can assess both pre-shooting and post-shooting data to gather additional findings about psychological changes that occur within subjects over time. Second, although this project was the first to assess individuals exposed to a college mass shooting five years after the attack occurred, future research is needed to explore the potential long-term impacts of mass shootings between the 31-month (i.e., Orcutt, Bonanno, Hannan, & Miron, 2014), and five-year mark, in addition to later than five years post-shooting. Additionally, future

research can seek to incorporate research questions around the concept of gender in mass shootings, particularly with respect to gender-based fear, gender-based emotional processing, and gender-based identity development, in addition to the role that media involvement plays when capturing the individuals exposed to these events. Also, incorporating certain recruiting techniques and study designs that will garner a larger subset of participants, such as surveys, may in turn produce more generalizable findings that generates a greater breadth of data for the existing mass shooting literature. Lastly, despite certain advantages associated with researcher relatability in the sense of shared identities and experiences, future studies about college mass shootings may be enhanced by involving researchers who are not affiliated with the institution as this may elicit findings that can enrich our field's understanding of this type of violence.

Conclusion

This project sought to explore the lived experiences of UCSB female alumni who were exposed to a gender-based mass shooting by examining the long-term psychological impacts of this type of event exposure to contribute to the existing literature and enhance clinical service delivery for women who were exposed to a college mass shooting or other acts of violence in which they were the intended victims on the basis of their gender identity. The themes pertaining to the participants' pre-shooting, day of shooting, gender, and post-shooting lived experiences highlight how the participants experienced the Isla Vista mass shooting, responded to the gunman's intentions to target female students, and lastly, were impacted by the mass shooting during their remaining time at UCSB as well as in present day. Future research can expand upon this project's findings by continuing to explore the long-term and gender-based components of exposure to these events, in addition to the role of media's involvement following this type of violence in order to broaden the scope and diversity of the existing mass shooting literature.

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Attention Female UCSB Alumni

Were you a student at UCSB during the 2014 mass shooting in Isla Vista?

You may be eligible to participate in a study to learn more about this event.

Participation involves a **brief phone screen** to determine eligibility and an **interview** about your experiences

Contact the researcher:
Erin Carpenter
(650) 832-8125
ErinCarpenterDissertation@gmail.com

You will be compensated $20 for your participation

Erin Carpenter
(650) 832-8125
ErinCarpenterDissertation@gmail.com

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ErinCarpenterDissertation@gmail.com

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ErinCarpenterDissertation@gmail.com

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ErinCarpenterDissertation@gmail.com

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(650) 832-8125
ErinCarpenterDissertation@gmail.com

<div align="center">**Appendix B**</div>

Phone Screening Questions

1. How do you identify your gender?

    a. Inclusion criteria: identifies as female

    b. Exclusion criteria: identifies as male

2. Were you an enrolled student at UCSB during the 2013-2014 academic year?

    a. Inclusion criteria: enrolled student at UCSB during the 2013-2014 academic year

    b. Exclusion criteria: not an enrolled student at UCSB during the 2013-2014 academic year

3. How old are you?

    a. Inclusion criteria: 18 years of age or older

    b. Exclusion criteria: 17 years old and younger

Scheduling Questions

1. Do you prefer to complete your interview in person at University of San Francisco or through VSee, a free video conferencing service?

    a. If in person interview:

        i. Which USF campus is the most convenient place to host your interview?

            1. USF, Hilltop Campus 2130 Fulton St, San Francisco, CA 94117

            2. USF, Downtown San Francisco Campus, 101 Howard St., San Francisco, CA 94105

            3. USF, Pleasanton Campus, 6120 Stoneridge Mall Rd. #150, Pleasanton, CA 94588

    b. If VSee interview:

        i. What email address can I use to share the project's consent form and the link to our VSee meeting?

2. Would you prefer that I send you a reminder text or email before your scheduled interview?

Appendix C

Mental Health Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255)
Hours: 24/7
The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support and resources to people who are contemplating suicide or experiencing emotional distress.

NAMI Help Line: (800) 950-6264
Hours: Monday through Friday, 7 am to 3 pm PST
The National Alliance on Mental Illness Help Line offers free and confidential mental health assistance and referrals to nearby treatment and support services.

Psychology Today offers a national directory of therapists, psychiatrists, therapy groups, and treatment facility options.
Visit: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us

SAMSHA Treatment Locator provides referrals to low cost/sliding scale mental health care.
Visit: https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Below is a description of the research procedures and an explanation of your rights as a research participant. You should read this information carefully. If you agree to participate, you will sign in the space provided to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this consent form. You are entitled to and will receive a copy of this form.

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Erin Carpenter, a doctoral student in the School of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of San Francisco. The faculty supervisor for this study is Dr. Rick Ferm, PhD, a licensed clinical psychologist and professor in the School of Nursing and Health Professions at the University of San Francisco.

WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT:

The purpose of this study is to learn about the experiences of women who were enrolled at UC Santa Barbara during a mass shooting in their campus community.

WHAT WE WILL ASK YOU TO DO:

During this study, you will be asked to talk about your experiences as a female student who was enrolled at UC Santa Barbara during the 2014 mass shooting in Isla Vista, California.

DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY:

Your participation in this study will involve one interview session that lasts no longer than 90 minutes. The interview will take place in a private room at one of the University of San Francisco branch campuses or over Skype video conferencing, based on your availability and location. The following locations include:

- **The University of San Francisco, Hilltop Campus** 2130 Fulton St, San Francisco, CA 94117
- **The University of San Francisco, Downtown San Francisco Campus** 101 Howard St., San Francisco, 94105
- **The University of San Francisco, Pleasanton Campus** 6120 Stoneridge Mall Rd. #150, Pleasanton, CA 94588

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

The research procedures described above may involve minimal potential discomfort in discussing some issues while you participate in this study. There are no anticipated risks to you that are greater than those encountered in everyday life. The issues discussed during this interview have each been selected by the researcher and her dissertation committee to minimize the potential for psychological discomfort. Due to the nature of this research topic, you may encounter some emotional discomfort, intrusive memories or

thoughts while responding to questions. If you wish, you may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty. You will be provided with a list of community mental health resources should you need support following the interview or on an ongoing basis.

BENEFITS:

You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, you may gain more insight into your own experiences or perhaps think more critically about mass shootings. The possible benefits for others include increased awareness and insight for mental health providers who provide services to undergraduate students who experienced a mass shooting on their university campuses.

PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY:

Any data you provide in this study will be kept private and confidential unless the law requires disclosure. In any report we publish, we will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or any individual participant. Specifically, we will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

The researcher will ask you to select a pseudonym so that the only place your name will appear in our records is on the consent form and in our data spreadsheet, which links your name to a pseudonym and your data; only the research team will have access to this information. The only exceptions to this are if we are asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board ethics committee.

The researcher will utilize a recording device to capture the responses of the participants. The recordings of this session will be kept in a locked cabinet at the University of San Francisco. The names of participants will not appear in the transcribed records of this study. Certain people may need to see the study records. The only person(s) who will have access to see these records are: the study staff, and the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board, and its staff.

The records of this study may be used in publications and presentations. If the results of this study are published or presented, you will be notified, and we will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or any individual participant.

The researcher has created an email account for the sole purpose of this study. This email account will be used to communicate with participants and will be deactivated following the completion of this study.

The researcher will destroy confidential information, such as the participant's emails, phone number, audio recordings, and other personal information provided within one year following the completion of this study.

COMPENSATION/PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION:

You will receive a gift card valued at $20 for your participation in this study following the completion of the interview.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:

Your participation is voluntary, and you may refuse to withdraw or cease to participate at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. Furthermore, you may skip any questions that make you uncomfortable and discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. The researcher has the right to withdraw you from participation in the study at any time.

OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you should contact the principal investigator: Erin Carpenter at (650) 832-8125 or erincarpenterdissertation@gmail.com. You may also reach the Dissertation Chair of this study, Dr. Rick Ferm, at brferm@usfca.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

I have read the above information. Any questions I asked have been answered by the researcher. I agree to participate in this research project and I will receive a copy of this consent form.

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PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE   *DATE*