

Article

Ownership, Enjoyment, Arousal Troubles, and Robust Education: Pleasure in LGBTQ+ Alt-Sex Members' Responses to Consent Violations

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Abstract: Background: Alt-sex practitioners are a diverse group with diverse unconventional sexual behaviors including consensual non-monogamy (CNM), kink, fetishism, and bondage/discipline dominance/submission, sadomasochism (BDSM). Perhaps because of their openness to non-normative sexuality, these communities often comprise a large proportion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, among others (LGBTQ+) individuals. LGBTQ+ individuals experience higher rates of sexual violence and consent violation than their cisgender, heterosexual peers both inside and outside of formalized alt-sex communities. Pleasure, including but not limited to sexual pleasure, is often a motivator for engaging in sexual and alt-sex activities. This study examines how consent violations influence pleasure among LGBTQ+ alt-sex members. Methods: We conducted an electronic one-time survey of LGBTQ+ alt-sex practitioners (N = 1354). In this study, we analyze open-ended responses for ways pleasure was described in response to questions about consent violations. We use thematic analyses in Dedoose online software. Results: Two subthemes emerged related to the violation itself, (a) pleasure as a motivator for violating consent and (b) pleasure in spite of consent violation. As the second theme that emerged, pleasure was a component of the aftereffects of the violation in two ways: (1) pleasure was reduced or inhibited by consent violations; (2) pleasure was a motivator for healing and advocacy. Conclusions: We discuss practical and research implications based on the complex relationships between violations and pleasure reported by participants.

Keywords: BDSM; LGBTQ+; alt-sex; pleasure; consent

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1. Introduction

1.1. Alt-Sex Practitioners

Alt-sex practitioners are a diverse group with diverse unconventional sexual behaviors including consensual non-monogamy (CNM), kink, fetishism, and bondage/discipline dominance/submission, sadomasochism (BDSM). Many of these individuals may practice privately, but thriving kink communities can be found across the U.S. These kink communities offer education, resources, support, and social connections through virtual spaces, individual mentorship, workshops, play parties, and other semi-public events [1]. Perhaps because of their openness to non-normative sexuality, these communities are often composed of a large proportion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, among others (LGBTQ+) individuals. Previous research indicates that roughly 60% of those involved in kink communities identify as sexual minorities while nearly 10% describe their gender identity as genderqueer, transgender, genderfluid, or agender [2]. Comparatively, only 7.1% of the general US population are estimated to identify as LGBTQ+ while only 0.7% are thought to identify as trans [3].

1.2. Consent Violations

Consent is paramount within many different segments of the broader alt-sex umbrella. As the very name implies, CNM relationships are differentiated from infidelity by the explicit consent of all involved parties [4]. Many scholars and non-academic community members alike claim consent is the defining line between BDSM and abuse [1]. This emphasis is typified through community mottos such as Safe, Sane, and Consensual (SSC) and Risk Aware Consensual Kink (RACK) which guide responsible conduct and emphasize knowledge and skill building [5]. However, despite their emphasis on consent, formalized kink communities are not free of consent violations and sexual violence.

Many existing definitions of sexual violence fail to recognize the full scope nonconsensual experiences experienced by alt-sex practitioners. We define “consent violations” as adverse experiences involving being subjected to activities without previous mutual agreement, or failure to respect safewords. However, the most prevalent consent violations fit traditional definitions of sexual assault, including nonconsensual penetration of the vagina or anus and touching of the genitals or breasts [6]. Bauer (2021) has proposed that the progressive consent narratives presented by formalized kink communities may be a defensive reaction to the broad stigmatization and pathologization they have experienced. This reaction as well as legal definitions of sexual assault may create a barrier for alt-sex practitioners reporting violations to authorities [7]. This tension between public image and lived experience may create interpersonal complications, particularly for marginalized people.

LGBTQ+ individuals experience higher rates of sexual violence and consent violation than their cisgender, heterosexual peers both inside and outside of formalized alt-sex communities. LGBTQ+ emerging adults (18–25) experience sexual violence almost twice as frequently as their cisgender, heterosexual peers (e.g., [8–11]). Previous research on consent violation among alt-sex practitioners indicates that over 40% of respondents who described their gender identity as genderqueer, transgender, or other (46%, 42%, and 44%, respectively) had been touched nonconsensually during a BDSM event compared to 39% of cisgender women and 18% of cisgender men [2]. Similarly, up to 38% of sexual minority (LGBTQ+) respondents stated their pre negotiated limits had been violated compared to 18% reported by heterosexual individuals [2]. The pattern of LGBTQ+ people experiencing sexual violence at roughly twice the rate of cisgender heterosexual individuals seem generally consistent in alt-sex communities and the general population.

1.3. Pleasure

Pleasure consists of emotional, cognitive, and physical domains as well as mind–body connections (e.g., sub headspace; [12,13]). Sexual pleasure can be defined as “perceptions of physical and emotional positivity and enjoyment accompanying sexual experiences” [14,15]. Though pleasure has been under-researched within the domain of sexual health [16–18], it is often a motivator for engagement in sexual activity [19–21]. Alt-sex experiences may not be confined to sexual acts [22], and pleasure may extend beyond sexual pleasure. We draw upon literature related to sexual pleasure as sexual pleasure shows similarities to other pleasures from rewarding stimuli in its mechanisms [23].

LGBTQ+ individuals may have unique experiences of pleasure. Research with trans individuals and sexual satisfaction points to both universal experiences as well as trans-specific experiences, such as pleasure as a distraction from body dysmorphia, and effects of hormone replacement therapy on pleasure sensation [24]. Sexual minority cisgender women (e.g., lesbian, bisexual, queer) were more likely to describe entitlement to self-pleasure than heterosexual cisgender women [13].

Expansive definitions of pleasure are crucial to defining alt-sex practices. Early definitions of BDSM include the idea that the “infliction and reception of painful stimuli that is experienced as pleasurable by those involved” is one of the essential characteristics of a BDSM scene [25]. The eroticization of intense sensations remains a crucial component of defining BDSM decades later [26]. Further, many of the most common kink activities

center on “intense sensations” including impact play, temperature play, and sensation play. Spanking, hair pulling, biting, and scratching are among the most common BDSM behaviors among women; up to 95.7% of women engaging in kink reported participation in such practices [1].

Sprott et al. [26] describe various motivators for involvement in BDSM including emotional intimacy, personal growth, or non-genital pleasure as well as sexual desire. The sexual and non-sexual factors of pleasure in BDSM engagement suggest variable ways consent violations may affect pleasure for alt-sex practitioners. Further, trans participants more often viewed sex and kink as distinctly separate as compared to cisgender individuals. More broadly, LGBTQ+ participants were more likely than cisgender, heterosexual participants to prioritize kink over sex [26]. The differential prioritization of kink calls for examinations of LGBTQ+ individuals’ experiences in alt-sex and pleasure.

Outside of these physical sensations and direct connections to sex, alt-sex communities offer alternative perspectives on relationship satisfaction. In 24/7 power exchange relationships, also known as total power exchange dynamics, submissive partners willingly relinquish much of their agency to their dominant, often through carefully negotiated rules and responsibilities for all involved, before beginning the relationship [27]. Individuals in such relationships describe them as important for learning about personal boundaries, emotional awareness and communication [28].

Another example of ways alt-sex practitioners may conceptualize and prioritize non-sexual pleasure can be found in consensually non-monogamous (CNM) relationships. Compersion is a concept used by many in CNM relationships [4]. While no singular formal definition exists, compersion is “generally understood as a feeling of warmth, satisfaction, joy, or pleasure from knowing/imagining that your partner is emotionally or sexually involved with another person.” [4]. This concept highlights pleasure can be enhanced through non normative relationship structures.

1.4. Pleasure and Consent Violations

A large, longstanding body of research has demonstrated a connection between sexual victimization and a loss of pleasure [29–33]. However, little of this research is explicitly focused on *pleasure* but rather sexual health, or sexual dysfunction [34]. Early research revealed that 59% of female survivors of sexual assault reported problems with sexual functioning; of them, 69% attributed these problems to their assault [30]. Both men and women who experienced unwanted sexual contact report long-term impacts on sexual function, with arousal disorders being particularly prevalent among female survivors [31]. Overall frequency of sexual activity as well as sexual pleasure and sexual satisfaction has been found to decrease for at least a year after sexual assault [33]. Further, some research suggests that perpetrators of sexual violence may also experience sexual dysfunction. Laumann et al. [31] found that men who reported having sexually assaulted women were over three times more likely to report erectile dysfunction. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms have also been shown to have a direct negative effect on sexual satisfaction [35].

Some attention has been paid to the impact sexual victimization has on intimate relationships, though it has almost exclusively focused on cisgender women survivors and their cisgender men partners (O’Callaghan et al., 2019). However, this research demonstrates the important role supportive, understanding partners may play in the survivors’ recovery [33,36]. Affirming, communicative relationships may be even more important for cisgender women who are survivors of sexual assault and develop PTSD [35]. Further, extant research highlights the pain and difficulty sexual violence inflicts not only on the survivor but also their partners and relationships [36,37]. While the majority of sexual assault survivors report positive sexual experiences after assault, they are not without complication; survivors often report being triggered, revictimized, or relationships dissolving due to their history of sexual victimization [38].

Despite all these difficulties, sexual assault can increase communication between romantic partners and may engender feelings of closeness [36]. The explicit communication necessitated by past trauma increased sexual pleasure for some cisgender women with a history of sexual assault [39]. Further, some cisgender women expressed that healthy relationships with explicit conversations about consent following sexual assault empowered them to verbalize and prioritize their sexual needs and desires [39].

1.5. Purpose of This Study

This study seeks to examine how consent violations influence pleasure among LGBTQ+ alt-sex members. Identifying how alt-sex members perceive this may point to opportunities for strengths-based approaches to enhance resilience and support positive health outcomes.

2. Materials & Methods

We conducted a multi-method electronic survey using Qualtrics with alt-sex members ($N = 2888$). Of the total sample, 1354 (46.9%) individuals identified as LGBTQ+ and are the focus of this paper. The largest gender category was women ($n = 879$; 65%), followed by men ($n = 202$; 15%), nonbinary individuals ($n = 111$; 8%), genderqueer ($n = 63$; 5%), "other gender" ($n = 57$; 4%), and trans ($n = 37$; 3%). In terms of sexuality, most participants identified as bisexual or pansexual ($n = 840$; 62%), with heteroflexible ($n = 246$; 18%), "other sexual identity" ($n = 136$; 10%), gay/lesbian ($n = 88$; 6%), and asexual ($n = 44$; 3%) constituting the remaining. The largest age group was between 36–50 years ($n = 515$; 38%), followed by 25–35 years ($n = 480$; 35%), 51–69 years ($n = 184$; 14%), 19–24 years ($n = 144$; 11%), 18–19 years ($n = 18$; 1%), and 70+ years ($n = 12$; 1%). It is worth noting that due to a survey error, participants were allowed to select only one response in each identity category.

Participants provided electronic consent and the survey took approximately 20 min. This study was conducted in partnership with the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF), an international organization advocating for education and policies related to alt-sex behaviors between consenting adults. NCSF emailed recruitment messages to their member organizations listserv ($N = 8452$), who were requested to share the recruitment with their members through email and social media. The survey included questions about participants' experiences with consent violations, reporting of violations, and suggestions for addressing violations.

The survey included both open- and closed-ended questions. For this paper, we focus on open-ended responses using qualitative analyses. We analyzed open-ended responses using Dedoose qualitative analysis software (SocioCultural Research Consultants: Manhattan Beach, CA, USA) [40]. This study examines the ways in which pleasure was discussed across questions, such as "What were the consequences of consent violations?"; "What words stood out to you from the person who violated your consent?" or "What suggestions do you have for how society/the alt-sex community should address consent violations?". We analyzed responses using a combination of content analysis and thematic analyses. An initial codebook was created from the survey questionnaire and by reading a sample of 50 responses. The coding team consisted of four members who confirmed reliability through Dedoose "test" function, with any codes of a Kappa of less than 0.7 discussed and refined. After responses were coded for content, subthemes were analyzed with thematic analyses by grouping common ideas together (axial coding) and identifying divergences from patterns. Each response was coded by two members of the coding team.

In the overall sample, violations were both kink-related as well as fitting typical definitions of sexual assault [41]. LGBTQ+ individuals reported higher rates of both kink-related and sexual assault types of violations [41].

3. Results

3.1. Violation and Pleasure

Two subthemes emerged related to the violation itself, (a) pleasure as a motivator for violating consent and (b) pleasure in spite of consent violation.

3.1.1. Pleasure as a Motivator for Violating Consent

Participants discussed their violator's pleasure as a reason for violating their consent. In the following quote, the participant's violator unapologetically emphasizes the pleasure they were experiencing. "[What words stood out from the person who violated your consent?] *"But you felt soooo good" and no apology"* (25–35 years, Queer, Bi-Racial, Gender dyslexic). This is presented in a complimentary way by saying "you" felt good rather than "it" or "I", as if the participant was providing the pleasure by choice.

Another facet involved the assumed pressure to give a partner an orgasm or help them ejaculate. "We were engaging in negotiated oral sex, then I felt like I was pressured to make them cum and that felt squicky and violating to me" (36–50 years, Queer, White/Latinx, Non-binary). The prioritization of the partner's pleasure (or ejaculation) over the participant's desire to engage in the act further is perhaps not verbally said, but nonetheless felt like a violation.

The dynamics specific to power play or Domination/submission relationships changed consent for some. In the following example, a dominant partner appears to assume that the participant no longer has the ability to deny acts from the dominant. "[What words stood out from the person who violated your consent?] *You don't get a no. You're mine. I made/created you I can do anything I want to you"* (36–50, Pansexual, Chicana, Cis woman). Power play relationships vary from a specific negotiated scene to living in the dynamic 24/7 [42]. Although the dominant partner may have their pleasure prioritized, submissive partners report high levels of satisfaction in the relationship [27].

3.1.2. Pleasure in Spite of Consent Violation

If the participant experienced pleasure during the violation, they reported challenges in advocating for their boundaries. "The act itself was enjoyable for me but was outside my risk-tolerance at the time (unprotected PIV) and I would not have consented to it if I had been asked while calm but found myself unable to say no in the heat of the moment" (36–50 years, Pansexual, White, Non-binary). Further, some experienced internal conflict in reporting the violation if they experienced pleasure. "Didn't want them to get in trouble, and it didn't bother/traumatize me. I enjoyed it, although it was without consent". (18–19 years, Pansexual, Latino/Hispanic, Other gender).

3.2. Effects of the Violation

As the second theme that emerged, pleasure was a component of the after effects of the violation in two ways: (1) pleasure was reduced or inhibited by consent violations; (2) pleasure was a motivator for healing and advocacy.

3.2.1. Pleasure Reduced/Inhibited by Consent Violations

Unsurprisingly, pleasure was reduced for some participants after experiencing a consent violation. This affected some participants in a way that was core to their sense of self. "I would attempt to masturbate and cry bc felt incapable of experiencing sustained sexual pleasure or reaching orgasm. Feelings of low self worth, failure as a human being because I cannot sustain sexual relationships. Feeling that my entire sex life had ended with no possible way for it to return". (25–35 years, Bisexual, White, Genderqueer).

In relation to kink, some participants described a loss of pleasure in their kink involvement. One of the most common domains of kink that was affected by violations were power relationships. The following participant describes arousal difficulties as well as limitations on enjoyment of a submissive role. "I'd say the best description of our sexual relationship is that . . . I love him and if he's there I'll involve him but I don't get into sub space or feel strongly aroused during sex with him". (19–24 years, Bisexual, Black and White, Cis woman). One participant's involvement in consensual non-consent (CNC) was inhibited by their experiences with consent violations. CNC refers to negotiated play in which one partner suspends their consent during certain behaviors or relationships [43], and is differentiated

from violations by the prenegotiation [44]. *“Scared to enjoy CNC [consensual non-consent] as kink” (25–35 years, Pansexual, White, Cis woman).*

3.2.2. Pleasure as a Motivator for Healing and Advocacy

When asked about recommended steps to address consent violations, participants discussed pleasure in relation to education. Education was described both within alt-sex communities as well as general societal education. The incorporation of pleasure in consent education was important for some in achieving a cultural change. *“Continue to promote consent culture. Especially the ‘consent can be sexy’ type of dialogue.” (36–50 years, Pansexual, White, Genderqueer).* Another aspect of education addressed by participants included mutual pleasure, as opposed to a prioritization of male pleasure. *“Good, robust sex education that emphasises autonomy and mutual pleasure and tackles the idea of male entitlement”. (51–69 years, Pansexual, White, Cis woman).* The male entitlement connects to the aforementioned results in which violators’ pleasure was prioritized in consent violations.

Beyond educational approaches, some participants suggested individual advocacy that focused on pleasure to address consent violations. *“Have ongoing discussions about what you like/don’t like throughout the relationship so you can quickly remedy practices that aren’t mutually enjoyable”. (19–24 years, Bisexual, Other race, Cis woman).* The use of ‘ongoing discussions’ expands some consent education that depicts limited dialogues as restricted to a sexual context (e.g., “agreement to participate in a sexual activity”) [45] rather than a larger conversation.

4. Discussion

This study points to complex relationships between pleasure and consent violations for LGBTQ+ alt-sex practitioners. As we did not ask participants to comment on their pleasure specifically, our findings point to the perceived importance of pleasure in experiences of consent violations based on naturalistic responses. Participants spoke to their involvement in kink as relevant in this relationship, but we did not find gender or sexual identity-specific (i.e., LGBTQ+ focused) experiences within this sample. Further studies may be needed to identify significant differences in the experiences of pleasure and consent violations for cisgender heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals.

Our findings align with several discursive flaws in consent conversations pointed out by other researchers [46]. First, there appears to be a gap between the idealized, publicly lauded focus on explicit consent and the lived reality of many alt-sex practitioners. A belief that body language or cues can be used for implied consent is a misconception that can fuel consent violations [44]. This may be especially problematic in uses of power relationships, force, or restraints. Pleasure further complicates individuals’ understanding of and action after consent violations (e.g., experiences that are unwanted but consensual, or orgasmic but unpleasant), particularly when power exchange is involved. The complexities of, and distinctions between, sexual and psychological pleasure in power exchange dynamics may be beneficial topics for further research.

However, our research diverges from the existing body of knowledge, which primarily focuses on heterosexuals, in a few significant ways. Previous research has shown that kink practices and spaces may afford heterosexual, cisgender women a unique opportunity to subvert heteronormative sexual expectations and prioritize their safety and sexual pleasure [44]. While it does appear that heterosexual women experience fewer instances of consent violation or sexual violence within kink communities than society at large [2], the rates of victimization for LGBTQ+ individuals are similar in both contexts. This may imply that LGBTQ+ people are not empowered and/or protected by kink communities in the same ways. Previous research with kink practitioners reported lower coping self-efficacy and worse mental health among trans practitioners, and queer individuals having lower abilities to stop negative thoughts and higher rates of anxiety compared to heterosexual and cisgender individuals [47]. While increasing attention is being paid to the way cultural contexts, including experience, social capital, and historic marginalization, may play in

the process of negotiating BDSM scenes, closing this disparity must be prioritized by community advocates and researchers alike.

Alt-sex practitioners may be wary of stigmatization of alt-sex by the general population, which may lead to strategies to avoid negative imagery (e.g., consent violations) of the community [46,48]. Conversely, when the alt-sex community has a reputation for prioritizing consent among others, all activities happening in alt-sex spaces or with alt-sex members may be viewed as consensual [44,48]. This may be especially relevant for newer members. NCSF has identified a risky period for consent violations as before joining alt-sex communities and the first three years in the community, when a person learns about consent norms and their own boundaries. This is supported by 72% of violations occurring during this period in the Consent Violations Survey [2].

4.1. Implications for Practice

Participants in this study reported experiences of pleasure as complicating their response to the violation. Academic literature has widely documented the rape myth that if a victim experienced pleasure or enjoyed the act (sometimes described as physical arousal rather than pleasure), the act does not count as rape or a violation [49–52]. Rape myths are associated with likelihood to perpetrate violations [53], and have been the basis for laws related to assault as recently until 2003 [49]. Our findings suggest that this myth also operates in muddying the perceived options after experiencing a violation if the victim experienced pleasure. Given the potential harms of endorsing this type of rape myth, education is needed to nuance the distinction between consent and pleasure or arousal.

Fava and Fortenberry's [54] framework for trauma-informed sex positive approaches links sexual pleasure with sexual justice. Connecting pleasure with justice is part of the ongoing and necessary work of the alt-sex communities as both alt-sex practitioner and LGBTQ+ identities are marginalized by general society. The framework also delineates event, partner, and context-related pleasure and future alt-sex pleasure research may benefit from these distinctions. We acknowledge that consent violations are not always traumatic, as seen in participants' responses, and may as such provide individuals with opportunities to learn about themselves and desires for future boundaries. Screening for trauma in relation to both sexuality and alt-sex specific experiences may be needed for mental health providers serving alt-sex members who are LGBTQ+.

Sex education advocates have long called for more pleasure-inclusive sex education for youth and general society [18,55,56]. Community-based education within alt-sex communities represent an opportunity for incorporating more pleasure. NCSF suggests that during demonstrations of BDSM activities, educators include a negotiation prior to activity. By combining consent and pleasure information, audiences can learn how to replicate practices at both levels. It also sets up the expectation that all people involved determine what happens, and that there is a safeword that anyone can use at any time. NCSF also advocates for demonstrating check-ins to show ongoing consent, along with pleasurable aftercare (i.e., intentional connection after the scene) to show that each person can decide how a scene is concluded, so as to bring all parties back to a normal frame of mind after the stimulation [57]. The nuances of pleasure in consent violations can perpetuate victim blaming, or call for personal responsibility [48]. Personal responsibility has become increasingly discredited in alt-sex communities but vestiges can be seen in online discussions related to CNC and a lack of consent reversal [58,59]. Educators within alt-sex communities have been navigating consent discussions when power inequities exist between parties, such as those who are new versus those who are experienced, those who are group organizers versus those who are not, those who have traditionally experienced marginalization versus those who do not [60]. NCSF [61] also recommends awareness of how words may change by cultural contexts (e.g., use of "slave").

The reach of alt-sex community educational approaches may be limited, given the high proportion of individuals who engage in alt-sex activities (such as 30% who enjoy spanking and 20% who enjoy bondage) who are not active within the alt-sex community

(4% attending a workshop on sex and 3% who attended a BDSM party) [62]. Furthermore, 30% of participants in this study who reported committing a violation said they did it before attending a BDSM event. As such, a sizeable proportion of violations may be occurring prior to individuals learning within communities about consent.

Existing sexual scripts prioritize male pleasure (also termed the “phallogentric imperative”) [63], specifically male orgasm. Cisgender women often report the importance of helping a cisgender man achieve orgasm during sex, regardless of their own pleasure [64]. We found a subtheme of violations occurring with a focus on the violator’s pleasure. This is a believed cause of violations; in this study, 10% of violators’ reasoning for the violation was because they got caught up or thought they could get away with it [6]. Conversely, one study reports that both cisgender men and women feel responsible for giving their partner an orgasm [65]. Indeed, sexual satisfaction has been linked to mutual sexual pleasure [66].

This study adds to existing evidence [67] that general populations may benefit from perspectives in alt-sex contexts. Specifically, a shift from focusing on orgasm to pleasure for both/all parties may increase the range of possible positive (sexual) experiences. The reported diminution of self-worth and sadness at reduction in pleasure have been documented for cisgender women’s orgasms [68,69].

4.2. Implications for Research

Connectedness between partners has been shown to be linked to sexual pleasure [15]. The relationship with connectedness of partners in alt-sex contexts and pleasure may be similarly important, or even more so [22]. Findings from this study suggest that pleasure and connectedness may reinforce one another (such as previous consent violations reducing ability to connect with a partner or get into a sub headspace). However, research is needed to examine the importance of connectedness in relation to subjective experiences of pleasure.

Research on cisgender women’s sexual pleasure identifies the importance of self-efficacy in achieving pleasure [70]. Alt-sex practitioners may be navigating their self-efficacy in relation to kink practices or non-monogamy. Research may be needed to determine whether self-efficacy in achieving pleasure in alt-sex contexts differs from achieving sexual pleasure, or if the skill is transferable.

4.3. Strengths and Limitations

Our study was cross-sectional and retrospective, asking about the most recent consent violation. Research on sexual pleasure points to variance in pleasure by event [71]. Therefore, we would suggest future research examine a range of consent violations to examine the relationship with pleasure further. Although we did not directly assess pleasure in this study, we find benefits in examining the naturalistic occurrence of pleasure in response to consent violations. Our sample was predominantly White, reflective of many organized alt-sex communities. Examinations of pleasure and/or consent violations among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) LGBTQ+ alt-sex practitioners may point to different prioritization of factors. For instance, the discrimination against BIPOC individuals within alt-sex communities [72] combined with an emphasis on HIV, men’s pleasure, and pregnancy prevention among Black communities [73,74] may call for intersectional analyses.

5. Conclusions

This study points to how pleasure influences perceptions of consent violations both in relation to the violation itself as well as the aftereffects of the violation. Alt-sex practitioners’ involvement in community may offer opportunities for education, but the stigmatized nature of alt-sex communities also may influence their response to consent violations. Our findings support additional research focused on pleasure for this population, including pleasure in consent educational approaches.

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