Elemental: From the VBC to BSU and the USA

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

Hayley Wolf

Primary Thesis Advisor

Richard Shoemaker, Department of Journalism

Secondary Thesis Advisor

Mellisa Holtzman, Ph.D, Department of Sociology

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

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Elemental is a sexual assault protection program which was developed through a Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry project in Spring 2011. It is a multimedia self-defense training program based on social science, student-specific research and modern martial arts. It is currently taught each semester at Ball State University by Dr. Chad Menning, Dr. Mellisa Holtzman and a group of student volunteers.

Elemental will soon begin certifying instructors at other universities to be able to reach even more student participants. This strategic communications plan first outlines ways for Elemental to promote its program to more students at Ball State University, which serves as a prototype for other schools' implementation. The second part of this plan illustrates a tiered approach to reach university faculty members at a regional and then a national level.
Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my former Elemental Virginia B. Ball Center classmates. This project would not exist without our hard work, long nights, and wonderful memories from the VBC mansion in Spring 2011.

I also would like to thank Dr. Chad Menning and Dr. Mellisa Holtzman: since my sophomore year, these two educators have helped me grow, learn, challenge myself, and discover some of my true passions in life. I thank them for being so dedicated to Elemental since its inception and taking so much time to help me make this project a reality.

Many thanks, also, to my primary adviser, Professor Shoemaker. His advice and feedback in this project helped me combine the public relations skills I have learned over the years with a topic I care deeply about.
Author's Statement

This project has been nearly three years in the making. In Fall 2010 I received an email about participating in a semester-long, 15-credit hour project through the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry. Frankly, I was stuck in a rut and thought a semester away from regular classes sounded cool. I had no idea what I was getting into when I accepted a spot in the VBC seminar.

I worked in a group of 15 students from a variety of majors for an entire semester. We laughed, we cried, we argued and we ate lots of junk food. Most importantly though, we came together to create a product is truly revolutionary. We created a new kind of self-defense program that is realistic, student-centered and engaging. The skills I learned and the memories I made are things I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Elemental is inclusive of all genders, sexual orientations and minorities. It focuses on acquaintance rape, which is, unfortunately, much more common, especially among college student populations. The defenses are less physical, less damaging and easier to perform in a high-stress scenario than typical self-defense techniques.

Currently, Elemental runs programs each semester on campus. I have helped with these in some capacity since Fall 2011 when they began. These training sessions have helped more than 150 young women and men learn about consent, communication, the realities of sexual assault in college environments, and how to defend themselves in such a situation.

When I set out to begin my thesis, I knew I wanted to do something with Elemental. It has been such an instrumental part of my college career and shaped so much of who I am. This plan will help Elemental thrive on Ball State's campus in the future as well as take the program to new universities and institutions. Creating this strategic communications plan for Elemental allowed me to employ the public relations skills and tactics I have learned over the years to help an organization that is near and dear to my heart.

I feel that this project is a great representation of what I've learned at Ball State University. It perfectly combines my public relations skills, my semester with the Virginia B. Ball Center, and my passion for helping people and seeing Elemental succeed in the future.
Elemental Sexual Assault Protection Program
Communications Plan and Awareness Campaign

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Introduction

Sexual assault is, unfortunately, still a very prevalent issue, especially amongst college student populations.

"Being a victim of sexual assault is one of the most violating experiences anyone can endure and can cause immediate, as well as long-term, physical and mental health consequences. Of rape victims, 25 percent to 45 percent suffer from nongenital trauma; 19 percent to 22 percent suffer from genital trauma; up to 40 percent get sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); and one percent to five percent become pregnant, resulting in an estimated 32,000 rape-related pregnancies in the United States annually. Four out of five rape victims subsequently suffer from chronic physical or psychological conditions, and rape victims are 13 times more likely to attempt suicide than non-crime victims and six times more likely than victims of other crimes." (Kreb et al. 2007, 9, internal citations excluded).

Elemental Sexual Assault Protection Program began as a Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry immersive learning project. In the spring of 2011, an interdisciplinary group of 15 students came together to research and develop a new kind of sexual assault protection program.

These students conducted three IRB-approved surveys on Ball State students, the LGBTQ community, and others. Then, they used this information, as well as social science concepts and To-Shin-Do martial arts to create realistic defense techniques to deal with acquaintance rape. The resulting program is interactive, uses multiple pedagogical media, and is based on social and psychological science.

Elemental differs from other self-defense programs because it deals primarily with date and acquaintance rape, which is much more prevalent than the feared "stranger in the bushes". Because it deals with assaults perpetrated by friends or intimate partners, Elemental focuses on verbal defenses, communication, and being in control of one's situation. By communicating consent, asserting boundaries and watching for "red flags", the goal is that an individual won't need to physically defend him or herself because the situation will not escalate to that point. However, sometimes a physical defense is warranted, and Elemental teaches participants these techniques as well.
The program is taught on Ball State's campus each semester; this began in Fall 2011. Elemental is currently a seven-hour training seminar. Participants either attend one session on a Saturday or two sessions on Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday evenings.

Dr. Chad Menning and Dr. Mellisa Holtzman, professors from the Ball State University Department of Sociology, are the two leading instructors. Dr. Menning was the faculty fellow of the Virginia B. Ball Center seminar and was directly involved in the development of the program. Dr. Holtzman has since become involved and is the main instructor, largely because she is a female and most of Elemental's participants are also young women. Both are trained in To-Shin-Do and continue to train weekly at the Quest Center in Dayton, Ohio, one of the leading Dojos (formal training centers for martial arts) in the Midwest.

Students also are involved in teaching and helping at Elemental training sessions. One of the hallmarks of the program is the use of “creepers”, or individuals in padded attacker suits who simulate the assaults. These padded attackers have been members of the martial arts club or students who were a part of the Virginia B. Ball Center seminar. They are trained to simulate attack scenarios and allow the participants to fight back full-force and carry out the physical defenses in a high-stress yet safe environment.

Elemental’s self-defense program has been very successful at Ball State University, helping more than 150 young women and men learn how to protect themselves from the very real threat of acquaintance or date rape. In Fall 2012, Elemental partnered with Freshman Connections to promote the program to incoming freshman. Otherwise, Elemental receives no formal university support or funding. The instructors and student helpers receive no monetary compensation for their involvement or time spent training others.

At each session of Elemental, participants have been given pretests and post-tests to evaluate their level of confidence in their ability to protect themselves. Every item on the questionnaire has proven to be statistically significant, meaning that the program indeed does boost participants' confidence in their abilities and they do feel as if their training would help them in a potential sexual assault situation.

Elemental is in the process of collecting longitudinal data to see whether those who have participated in the program remember what they learned and whether they
have had to use the skills taught by Elemental. Ultimately, Elemental wants to
determine whether those who have participated in training seminars experience a
decreased rate of sexual assault relative to the general population.

Elemental is poised to take its training program to other universities through the
use online training modules and interactive software created in cooperation with Vizi
Courseware, an organization more commonly known for online textbooks. This
communications plan will describe how Elemental should go about marketing itself to
the Ball State University student population as well as other universities at a regional
and national level.
Where do university faculty receive information about new programs?

Early in the research process, I met with Dr. Melinda Messineo, Chairperson of the Department of Sociology and director of Freshman Connections. She told me that the major source of information about new programs for orientation, welcome week, and first year programs is the Conference on Continuing Education: Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience (http://www.sc.edu/fye/annual/).

This is a national, annual conference where different programs give presentations and set up as vendors to distribute information and freebies. She said this is where university personnel network and discuss what programs they have tried, liked and disliked.

Another less prestigious conference is the Midwest First-Year Conference (http://www.mfyc.org/schedule.php). This conference is smaller but it has high attendance from regional universities, which would allow Elemental to network with professionals in the area who may be interested in the program. Training certified instructors within a smaller geographic area would be more feasible and cost-effective for Elemental, at least initially. This would also help to create buzz and build credibility as more universities host the program and, hopefully, see positive results.
Problem Statement

Sexual assault is an issue that greatly affects college students. According to the 2007 Campus Sexual Assault Study, 28.5 percent of female college students reported having experienced an attempted or completed sexual assault either before or since entering college (Krebs et al. 2007, 13). Figures for heterosexual men are lower, but it is highly possible that men underreport their sexual assault experiences even more than women. Homosexual men report rate similar to women, but this population is largely ignored in literature and in self-defense programs.

Elemental's primary goal is to educate young people about the risks of sexual assault and to provide them with tools to protect and defend themselves in the event of a potential attack. Elemental is different from many sexual assault protection programs because its defense techniques are based on deflection, taking control of the situation, and stopping your partner or attackers' actions before it gets to the point of being an assault. It is also unique because men and women of any sexual orientation are encouraged to participate in the training seminars.

Elemental also wants to broaden its reach by training instructors across the nation. Elemental needs to promote its programs to administrators and faculty at other universities in order to certify instructors to teach Elemental at those universities or private facilities. Several university faculty members from various parts of the country have already expressed interest in bringing Elemental to their respective campuses.

The most effective and feasible approach for Elemental is a tiered approach in its promotional efforts. First, Elemental should use Ball State as the prototype according to this new communications plan. Elemental would benefit by increasing on-campus recruitment and promotion so that it can guide other universities' communications efforts once they adopt the program. Elemental also needs to fine-tune the content of the program before finalizing any online training programs or modules such as the Vizi.

Then, Elemental can focus its marketing efforts on regional, Midwestern universities as they will be most feasible to communicate with and begin the training process. Finally, Elemental will begin marketing itself on a national scale. Elemental's national efforts will begin with attending the Conference on the First Year Experience in order to boost awareness and hopefully create some "buzz" amongst attendees.
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strengths:
- Elemental soon will be one of the only self-defense programs with longitudinal data to prove its effectiveness
- Students react more positively to programs which are created by or presented by other students; Elemental was developed by college students based on research on college students
- Elemental's program is technologically-driven, which attracts more students than traditionally-taught programs
- There are many opportunities for university faculty or student organizations to partner Elemental with other programs, such as “Red Zone” campaigns, safe sex programs and even alcohol awareness programs

Weaknesses:
- Elemental is a smaller, newer program and thus less recognizable or credible
- Because its content is so different from most self-defense programs, its messages are more difficult to convey
- Because Elemental uses realistic props, such as couches and mattresses, to simulate the assault scenarios, there is a high initial cost to other institutions wishing to put on the program

Opportunities:
- Currently, many sexual assault protection or prevention programs use victim-centric language; in other words, they put the emphasis on the victim preventing the attack. Elemental emphasizes consent, communication and respecting boundaries as a way to prevent a potential acquaintance rape
- Elemental is an inclusive program in that it includes both heterosexual and homosexual males as potential victims of sexual assault
- In accordance with Title IX legislation, universities are required to provide sexual assault protection programs to students

Threats:
- In general, university administrators and faculty are bombarded with information about new programs; it is difficult to make a particular program stand out
- Elemental may face resistance because its content is so realistic; Elemental confronts the issue of date and acquaintance rape, which is very uncomfortable for many to discuss.
Project coordinator: Hayley Wolf  
Client contact: Mellisa Holtzman, Ph.D.  
  mkholtzman@bsu.edu

**Written tactics:**  
- Email communications  
- FAQ/Key messages document  
- Media Pitch  
- Press Release  
- Fact Sheet  
- Backgrounder

**Promotional materials needed:**  
- Business cards  
- Fliers or handouts for use at conferences  
- Video clips  
- Direct mail pieces to send to university offices  
- Informational pieces about Elemental's Vizi program, training modules, etc.

I. **Communications objective:**  
- To raise awareness of the Elemental program and reach out to potential instructors at other universities.  
- To increase interest and participation in Elemental's seminars on Ball State's campus.

II. **Target Audiences:**  
- Ball State University students  
- University faculty  
  - Counseling centers  
  - Housing and residence life  
  - First-year programs  
    - Conference on the First Year Experience  
    - Journal of the First Year Experience  
- Academic Advisors  
  - NACADA
IV. Suggested headline and one-sentence synopsis:
“Elemental Teaches Self-Defense against Acquaintance Rape”
Elemental, a recently developed sexual assault protection and self-defense course, teaches students innovative self-defense techniques such as persuasion, verbal cues and simple physical tactics.

V. Competition/programs that deal with sexual assault on college campuses
- R.A.D. programs
- Impact
- Sex Signals
- “I Will” campaign
- Martial Arts Clubs
- Student organization activities

VI. Key Messages:
- Elemental was created by students for students.
- Elemental is based on social science and has data to prove its effectiveness.
- It focuses on the incidence of date and acquaintance rape, which make up the vast majority of sexual assaults, especially in the target audience.
  - Most self-defense courses largely ignore this issue.
- It deals with less violent, more intimate scenarios in which typical self-defense methods may be less appropriate; i.e. a woman’s long-term boyfriend pressuring her for sex after a night of drinking.
- Elemental gives participants a variety of responses for each given scenario; participants can choose which response they feel most comfortable with. This give participants a more true-to-life experience; participants are then more apt to remember and use their training if they experience an assault.
Elemental Student Recruitment Campaign

Goal 1: To increase interest and participation in Elemental's programs at Ball State.

Objective 1: Elemental will host a series of five training seminars early in the fall semester in order to train at least 150 students.

Tactics:
1. Confirm dates and times to hold each seminar throughout August and September 2013.
2. Determine the appropriate venue locations depending on room size and location.
3. Reserve the venue for the necessary time slots.
   - Do this at least three months before the sessions.
4. Fine-tune the instructional materials and presentation slides.
5. Determine volunteer staffing needs ("Creepers", volunteers to administer pretests and post-tests).
6. Recruit volunteers to assist with the seminars.
   - Send information to past participants
7. Hold training/rehearsal sessions for instructors and volunteers.
   - Do this at least two weeks prior to the sessions.
8. Confirm the venue one week prior to the sessions.
9. Arrive at the venue two hours before the session begins in order to set up and brief volunteers of any last-minute changes.

Objective 2: Elemental will create partnerships with Freshman Connections, Housing and Residence Life, Student Government Association, Greek Life and the Office of Student Life for Fall 2013.

Tactics:
1. Gather contact information for each of these offices and/or faculty from the Ball State University website.
2. Send an initial email to set up an appointment with the appropriate persons in order to develop a partnership.
3. Develop promotional materials highlighting these partnerships in order to build credibility and attract different groups of students.
Objective 3: Elemental will increase its on-campus promotional activities to generate awareness, interest and participation.

Tactics:
1. Create and distribute fliers to be placed in all residence hall mailboxes during the first week of classes.
   • These need to be approved by Housing & Residence Life at least two weeks ahead of time.
2. Contact the Office of Student Life to include information about the Elemental sessions in the weekly events email.
   • If possible, include this information in the email for four weeks leading up to the sessions.
3. Create and hang posters in every building on campus as well as on the designated outdoor boards.
   • These posters should go up the week prior to the registration deadline for the sessions.
Elemental Awareness Campaign
for University Faculty

Goal 1: To create awareness and interest in Elemental among university administrators and faculty members (potential instructors).

Objective 1: Elemental will contact 10 percent of university administrators, faculty and staff at Midwest universities through email communications by January 2014 in order to host programs during Fall 2014.

Tactics:
1. Compile contact information of faculty from university websites.
   - First-year programs
   - Welcome week, orientation
   - Housing/residence life
   - Greek life
   - Student life/student affairs
   - Counseling centers
2. Send out an introductory email (as soon as possible, in the beginning of summer or late spring) detailing what Elemental is, what the program offers and details on how to set up meetings, presentations or training sessions.
3. Send a follow-up email to those who have not responded or shown interest by late July/early August.
4. Elemental will send biannual direct-mail pieces to Offices of Student Life, Student Affairs, First-Year Programs, Greek Life and other relevant campus organizations or offices.

Objective 2: Elemental will have a presence at the Conference on the First-Year Experience in February 2014 and 2015 as a vendor.

Tactics:
1. Register as a vendor by the deadline.
2. Determine if any sponsorship opportunities would be beneficial.
   - If so, apply for the appropriate sponsorship opportunity.
3. Fine-tune any promotional materials for use at the conference.
   - Poster
• Digital presentation materials if allowed
  • Video clips from the instructional film
  • Testimonials from past participants
4. Create an informal script and talking points for use at the conference.
5. Allow attendees to sign up for more information or for Elemental's mail or email list.
  • Provide cards for attendees to fill out with their contact information.
  • Hand out business cards with information about Elemental
6. Within one month of the conference, contact those who expressed interest in order to potentially set up training sessions before the fall semester.
  • Send out a mass email blast to all who signed up for information
  • If contact has already been established or an attendee was particularly interested, conduct a follow-up phone call.

Goal 2: To establish Elemental as a credible program which has statistical significance and proven effectiveness.

Objective 1: Elemental will give a poster presentation on current pretest and post-test data at the Butler Undergraduate Research Conference on April 12, 2013.

Tactics:
1. Sign up for the conference by the deadline.
2. Determine what materials will be needed.
3. Create an informal script and talking points for the conference.
4. Attend the conference on April 12, 2013.
5. At the conference, network with other student leaders and faculty who express interest in Elemental.
6. Provide business cards or fliers to those who express interest in having an Elemental program at their university.
7. Attend other presentations on relevant issues, such as sexual assault at college campuses.
Objective 2: Elemental will gain credibility by creating partnerships with influential university personnel. Elemental will have at least two certified instructors at different universities by Fall 2013.

Tactics:

1. Using the network of connections that Elemental already has through the Dojo training center and the martial arts community, particularly the Quest Center in Dayton, distribute promotional material to individuals with university connections.

2. Make appointments with faculty from Antioch, Florida, Butler, Indiana University, and Miami of Ohio who have expressed interest in Elemental.

2. Offer a limited number of free instructor certifications to a handful of specially-selected university faculty who have expressed interest.

   - By doing this, Elemental will gain the "seal of approval" from these personnel and be able to use their testimonial statements in marketing materials.
Recommendations

Elemental may benefit from tailoring the training program into different subsections which could be taught independently or in a series. One of the major problems with recruiting Ball State students to participate in the past has been the time commitment; many students don't want to commit to several sessions on different nights for multiple hours each night. Elemental could trim its program down to several one-night seminars; participants could participate in one, some or all of the seminars.

In the future, Elemental may wish to focus on recruiting certified instructors from private institutions such as fitness clubs, churches or youth organizations. These organizations may be more willing to spend the money to certify instructors because they can then charge participants, while universities must provide these programs free due to Title IX legislation.
Appendix

Backgrounder- The Story of Elemental

On the first day of the 2011 spring semester, 15 students walked into a garageturned-classroom in the Kitselman house, more commonly called the Virginia B. Ball Center. They had a dream: to create a unique and effective self-defense program for college students like themselves.

These students went about the daunting task of recreating the wheel of self-defense. They poured over existing research, met with experts at the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, and even fielded three IRB-approved surveys for Ball State University students and the LGBTQ community.

Once the research was done, their focus narrowed: dating violence, acquaintance rape and their extreme prevalence on college campuses. They found that about 1 in 5 BSU students had experienced a sexual assault; most sources concur that about 85 percent of assaults are perpetrated by friends or romantic partners.

To create awareness of this problem and how individuals can protect themselves from such assaults, the Elemental team created a film called “All in a Night”, which follows an interconnected group of friends throughout an evening of typical college life: parties, going out to dinner with your long-time boyfriend, or meeting a few friends at a bar. Each of these encounters then turns sour and the characters are faced with choices, which the film then addresses. A variety of defense techniques are given for each decision point; participants learn multiple techniques in order to find one he or she would be comfortable carrying out in real life.

Elemental is based on social science and the physical and verbal techniques of To-Shin-Do, a modern martial art grounded in the tenets of ninjutsu, an ancient Japanese martial art form. It is all about choosing a response that one feels is appropriate and realistic. For example, if a woman’s partner was “in the mood” and exerting pressure, it might not be appropriate for all people to jab him in the eye as a first line of defense. However, most people would like to know how to respectfully but firmly deflect the situation or talk about boundaries and consent.

For more information about Elemental, how to bring the program to your campus, or how to become a certified instructor, contact Dr. Mellisa Holtzman.
Elemental Teaches Self-Defense against Acquaintance Rape

Muncie, Ind. — Elemental, a recently developed, multimedia sexual assault protection and self-defense course, is looking for faculty at other universities to become certified instructors to teach the program.

Instructors Dr. Mellisa Holtzman and Dr. Chad Menning have taught more than 150 students innovative self-defense techniques such as persuasion, verbal cues and simple physical tactics.

This program deals with the reality of date and acquaintance rape. According to the National Center for Victims of Crime & Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, one in eight female college students is raped each year and 85 percent of those assaults are by acquaintances or intimate partners. Smaller numbers are estimated for men, but they are also at high risk for acquaintance rape. Many sources concur that at least 25 percent of sexual assaults occur in dating or marital relationships, a subject that most self-defense programs ignore.

For this reason, Elemental deals with more intimate, less violent scenarios needing alternative defense mechanisms. For example, most college students wouldn’t feel comfortable punching their partner in the face if he or she became forceful in their sexual advances. They would, however, be willing to deflect the situation or talk to their partner about consent, preferences, and boundaries.

The technical aspects of Elemental are based on To-Shin-Do, a modernized martial art grounded in the tenets of ninjutsu, an ancient Japanese martial art form. Ninjutsu is based around the four elements; earth, water, wind and fire, which represent different personality types and response models. A variety of possible responses are taught for each given scenario, and participants get to choose which they are most comfortable with or think is most effective.
Elemental's scenarios and responses are based on extensive study of social science, psychology and IRB-approved surveys of Ball State University students. Pretest and post-test data from past Elemental participants has shown that Elemental is effective. After Elemental, participants are more confident in their ability to stand up for themselves and report that, if they were faced with a potential sexual assault situation, they would know how to defend themselves and that their responses would be effective.

There are also some very obvious differences in Elemental's teaching strategies. The last two training sessions include a bed and a couch for participants to practice the defenses on. "It adds another element of realism," said Dr. Holtzman, "In real life, you probably aren't going to be standing and you aren't going to be on a hard floor...it helps to practice these moves on a soft surface so you can be prepared to do them on a soft surface, like a bed."

The scene is set for each response by a short film called "All in a Night", which was written by a Ball State student. The film follows an interconnected group of college-age individuals as their evenings progress and their sexual encounters turn sour. Some of the scenarios include: an aggressive stranger in a parking garage, a long-term relationship on their anniversary, a newly "out" gay man looking for a fling, and a woman making a move on her drunken best (male) friend. Elemental is an inclusive program which addresses the problems that men, sexual minorities and the LGBTQ community face regarding sexual assault.

Morgan Roddy, former graduate assistant for Dr. Menning and member of the Elemental team, said of the program's unique teaching strategies, "I don't think I can overestimate the value of its creativity...you always think of the 'poke them in the eye, knee them in the groin' and that's it. But there's so much more."

Elemental is a sexual assault protection program developed by students at the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry at Ball State University. It teaches self-defense techniques based on ninjutsu and social science research. Elemental teaches seminars each semester on Ball State's campus. Soon, Elemental will begin certifying instructors to teach Elemental at other campuses. For more information, contact Dr. Menning or Dr. Holtzman.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is Elemental?
- Elemental is a sexual assault protection program focusing on the realities of acquaintance rape, particularly around college campuses

How was this program created?
- Elemental was developed in the spring semester of 2011. Fifteen Ball State University students worked for one semester to create the program as a project of the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry at Ball State University.

What exactly does this program teach?
- Elemental focuses on less violent, more intimate scenarios between friends and partners
- The tactics taught in Elemental are based on To-Shin-Do, a modernized martial art based on four elements: Wind, water, fire and earth, representing different fighting styles and personality types

Why is a program like this important for me?
- About one in eight female college students is raped each year (National Center for Victims of Crime & Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center)
- About 85 percent of these assaults are by acquaintances or intimate partners
- Of the BSU LGBTQ community, 57 percent of lesbian women, 31 percent of gay males, and 44 percent of bisexual individuals reported that they had nonconsensual sexual experiences
- To our knowledge, Elemental is the only sexual assault self protection program that deals specifically with LGBTQ assaults

Will participating in this program really decrease my risk of being assaulted?
- Pretest and post-test data collected from past Elemental participants is statistically significant; participants report feeling more confident in their ability to defend themselves using verbal and physical techniques
- Research on Elemental's longitudinal effectiveness is being developed
- Studies have shown that resisting or using self-defense techniques does not aggravate the level of violence by the assailant in sexual assault situations
- Prior to participating in a self-defense program, the vast majority of survey respondents say they would not feel comfortable fighting back in such a situation
Facts about Elemental

• Elemental is a sexual assault protection program focusing on the realities of acquaintance rape
  • Chad Menning, Ph.D., and Mellisa Holtzman, Ph.D., instruct the Elemental training sessions

• Elemental was developed in the spring semester of 2011 by 15 students as a project of the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry at Ball State University
  • Since then, more than 150 students have participated in the program

• Tactics taught in Elemental are based on To-Shin-Do, a modern martial art
  • To-Shin-Do is based on four elements: Wind, water, fire and earth, which represent different fighting styles and personality types

Why the Program is Important

• It is estimated that one in eight female college students is raped each year (National Center for Victims of Crime & Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center)
  • About 85 percent of these assaults are by acquaintances or intimate partners

• Studies have shown that resisting or using self-defense techniques does not aggravate the level of violence by the assailant in sexual assault situations
  • Prior to participating in a self-defense program, the majority of survey respondents report that they would not feel comfortable fighting back in such a situation

• Women in particular who have completed a self-defense class report feeling more confident that they could defend themselves

• This program gives participants a variety of possible responses to a given situation.
  • Participants can chose which response they are most comfortable with and are most likely to succeed with

• In the LGBTQ community, 57 percent of lesbian women, 31 percent of gay males, and 44 percent of bisexual individuals reported that they had nonconsensual sexual experiences
  • Elemental addresses the issues LGBTQ individuals face and some of the differences they experience in a sexual assault situation.

• For more information on bringing Elemental to your campus, or to schedule a training session, email Dr. Holtzman: mkholtzman@bsu.edu.
Bibliography

