

## Systematic or Integrative Review

**Trauma- and violence-informed physical activity and sport for development for victims and survivors of gender-based violence: A scoping study**Julia Ferreira Gomes<sup>a</sup>, L. M. C. Hayhurst<sup>a</sup>, M. McSweeney<sup>b</sup>, T. Sinclair<sup>c</sup>, F. Darroch<sup>d</sup><sup>a</sup>Department of Kinesiology and Health Science, York University, Toronto, Canada<sup>b</sup>School of Kinesiology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA<sup>c</sup>Department of Social Science, York University, Toronto, Canada<sup>d</sup>Department of Health Sciences, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada

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**Abstract**

Recent literature has highlighted the need for trauma-informed programming and research in sport. Specifically, studies have noted the importance of developing trauma-informed approaches to sport for development (SFD) initiatives that work with victims and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). The purpose of this scoping review was to: (1) examine the synergies between trauma-and violence informed physical activity (TVIPA) programs and sport for development (SFD) programs globally for survivors/victims of GBV; and 2) assess the implementation of TVIPA in future SFD programming for survivors and victims of GBV. Guided by Arksey and O'Malley's scoping review framework, we systematically reviewed three electronic databases: ProQuest, EBSCO, and Web of Science. Following thematic analysis of the selected articles revealed that TVIPA should be further explored in SFD programming as a possible approach for victims and survivors of GBV. Taken together, we suggest the need for trauma-and violence-informed SFD, especially: 1) for vulnerable SFD program participants; and 2) to better understand and prevent GBV experiences in SFD and sport more broadly. This is one of the first studies to explore the synergies between TVIPA and SFD, contributing to novel trauma research in the context of sport, development and physical activity.

**Trauma- and violence-informed physical activity and sport for development for victims and survivors of gender-based violence: A scoping study**

In recent years, organizations in the sport for development (SFD) sector that work with populations who have experienced violence have increasingly recognized the need for trauma-informed approaches to sport (e.g., Doc Wayne,

Swiss Academy for Development). The SFD sector is comprised of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), corporations, communities, international organizations (e.g., United Nations), and individuals who adopt sport to intentionally achieve development priorities often associated with the Sustainable Development Goals (e.g., gender equality, conflict resolution) (Kidd, 2008; 2011). Organizations use SFD as a tool to help support marginalized and impoverished communities (Whitley et al., 2013). Notably, numerous SFD organizations seek to work with populations who may have experienced violence and trauma, particularly women, including cis, transgender and nonbinary people, and members from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community (e.g., AKWOS, Kolkata Sanved, Women Win). Relatedly, there has been growing empirical research into sport, gender, and development (SGD), a substream of SFD focused on the gendered dynamics, relations, and (in)equalities within SFD programs (Chawansky, 2011; Collison et al., 2017; Hayhurst et al., 2021; Oxford & McLachlan, 2018; Zipp, 2017). Indeed, SFD programs have aimed to challenge gender and health inequities by improving gender relations and reducing gender-based violence (GBV).

GBV is defined as violence against people based on their gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender (Cotter & Savage, 2019; Government of Canada, 2022). Some common forms of GBV include intimate partner violence, violence against women, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and domestic violence. Emerging data about lockdowns and COVID-19 stay-at-home orders have revealed that violence against women and girls, including both domestic violence and sexual abuse, has increased in several countries, such as France, Argentina, Singapore, Canada, the UK, and the USA (Sri et al., 2021). The

**Keywords:** trauma-informed, trauma- and violence-informed physical activity, gender-based violence, sport for development

COVID-19 pandemic has thus resulted in a ‘shadow pandemic’ or ‘a pandemic within a pandemic’, whereby GBV has intensified and been exacerbated. At the same time, Hall et al. (2021) have suggested that there is now a pandemic of physical inactivity and sedentary lifestyles that “will persist long after we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic” (Hall et al., 2021, p. 108). With the onset of COVID-19 ‘shadow pandemics’ and physical inactivity trends, the need to create and manage safe and equitable sport and physical activity interventions for people who have experienced GBV is thus a pressing issue.

Researchers have recently investigated the use of trauma- and violence-informed physical activity (TVIPA) to support individuals who have experienced GBV (Darroch, et al., 2022a; van Ingen, 2021). TVIPA is an approach to physical activity programming, adapted from a trauma- and violence-informed care (TVIC) perspective in health care (Darroch et al., 2018; Darroch et al., 2022a). TVIC accounts for the intersecting impacts of: (a) broader structural and social conditions, (b) ongoing violence, and (c) institutional violence (Wathen et al., 2021). TVIPA utilizes a TVIC approach to prevent re-traumatization of participants and staff involved in physical activity programs (Darroch, et al., 2022a). Despite the growing research on the use of TVIPA and the prevalence of GBV around the world, there have been no comprehensive studies examining the ways in which TVIPA is utilized by, or taken up within, SFD programs serving people who have experienced GBV.

In light of these gaps, our two research questions guiding our scoping review included: 1) What are the synergies between SFD and TVIPA programs serving victims/survivors of GBV; and 2) How has TVIPA been used within, or to inform, SFD programs for people who have experienced GBV? We conducted a scoping review of existing literature on SFD and TVIPA, focusing on programs that serve survivors and victims of GBV. The purpose of this scoping review was thus to summarize the research that has taken place within this area and offer future directions for research, policy, and practice. Given that many SFD programs and organizations aim to respond to social issues and – as will be evident from this review – work with populations that have experienced GBV, several recommendations from this review are applicable to SFD management and practice. We hope that these recommendations will be useful in stimulating discussions among stakeholders of SFD, regarding how TVIPA can inform programming for victims/survivors of GBV.

In the next section, we provide an overview of our methods for the scoping review. Following this, we describe the results of our scoping review, including common themes

identified across the 21 articles examined in relation to TVIPA and SFD for survivors of GBV. In conclusion, we discuss key recommendations based on the scoping review that are relevant for policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners, and suggest future directions for empirical analysis.

## Methods

While there is no universal or clear-cut definition of scoping reviews, they are generally understood to map out key concepts and research in an area that has not been comprehensively reviewed before (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). Scoping reviews are defined generally to, “map *rapidly* the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available” (Mays et al., 2001, p. 194, emphasis in original). As Arksey and O’Malley suggest, a key difference between a systematic and scoping review is that the latter focuses on examining a wide variety of studies without an analysis of the quality of studies (as in a systematic review) to better respond to guiding research questions and provide insights into a specific area of study. Regardless of the differences between scoping and systematic reviews, both studies must be conducted in a rigorous and transparent way (Mays et al., 2001). For this study, we followed the recommendations outlined by Arksey and O’Malley (2005) for scoping reviews, which we detail in the following sections.

### Stage 1: Identifying the Research Question

In this study we used two research questions to guide our review of the literature:

1. What are the synergies between SFD and TVIPA programs serving victims/survivors of GBV?
2. How has TVIPA been used within, or to inform, SFD programs for people who have experienced GBV?

It is important to highlight which terms or components of a research question are significant for a scoping review (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005). For these questions, we define GBV, SFD, and TVIPA as outlined in the Introduction section. While there is no universal term for GBV, SFD, or TVIPA, we adopted these terms to determine the extent of the literature included in this review. At the same time, the definitions we utilized are broad in nature – thus allowing us to begin our review with a wide lens and limit the possibility of overlooking potential articles for the review.

### Stage 2: Identifying Relevant Studies

Identifying relevant studies progressed in two phases. Following a consultation with a research librarian, the

authors conducted a search across three databases including Web of Science, ProQuest, and EBSCO in August 2022. Using the search terms (trauma\* OR "trauma- and violence-informed" OR "trauma-informed" OR "trauma-sensitive") AND ("sport development" OR "sport for development" OR sport\* OR "physical activity") AND ("gender-based violence" OR "domestic violence" OR "sexual violence" OR "violence against women") yielded 144 results.

Third, as described in Arksey & O'Malley's (2005) framework for scoping reviews, we utilized existing networks to identify additional articles that may have been missed in the previous phases. This included discussing with Author 2 and 5 any existing literature, organizations, and conferences related to GBV, TVI, and sport and physical activity, as they have done work in this area. An additional 14 peer-reviewed articles were retrieved based on this phase. The various phases of identifying the literature led to 158 articles being identified for the review (prior to inclusion/exclusion criteria and elimination of duplicates).

### Stage 3: Study Selection

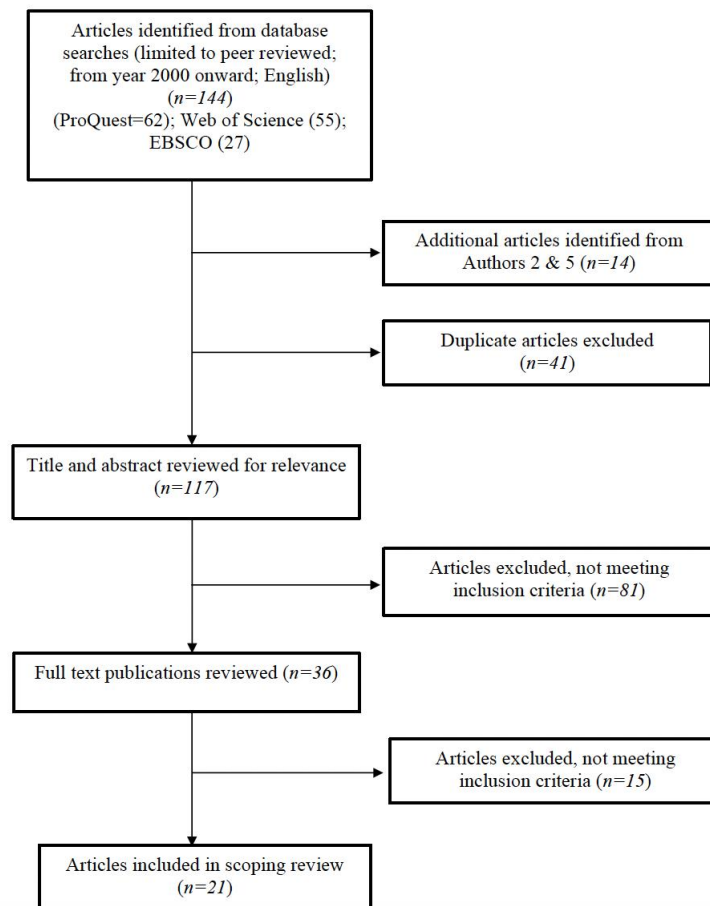
For this study, the eligibility criteria for articles included in the scoping review was as follows: (a) Articles published between the year 2000 and August 2022; (b) English language peer reviewed articles; (b) studies that focused on (1) trauma- and violence-informed approach (including trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive practices); and/or (2) served communities with experiences of GBV; and (c) studies using SFD, physical activity (e.g., yoga, exercise), or a sports-based intervention/program. The decision to restrict the language of the study to English was due to the extra time commitment and costs required for translation. The selected timeframe of 2000-2022 reflects the emergence of TVIPA terminology and literature on SFD programs specifically designed for survivors of GBV.

Based on the literature search, a total of 144 articles were identified. After excluding duplicate articles ( $n=41$ ), Authors 2 and 5 identified additional articles ( $n=14$ ) that met the eligibility criteria but were not identified in the literature search. Therefore, a total of 117 articles were eligible for review, including those identified in the literature search ( $n=103$ ) and those identified by Authors 2 and 5 ( $n=14$ ). The remaining articles were independently reviewed by Authors 1 and 4. Article abstracts that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded ( $n=81$ ). Authors 1 and 4 read the remaining articles ( $n=36$ ) full-text publications and excluded an additional 15 articles based on inclusion criteria. When uncertainty arose, Authors 2 and 5 determined the final inclusion of an article in the scoping

study given their experience and knowledge in GBV, TVI, and sport and physical activity. Following the full article review, 21 peer-reviewed articles remained in the scoping study. Figure 1 summarizes the results of the search strategy and our study selection approach.

**Figure 1**

*Article Selection Flow Chart*



### Stage 4: Charting the Data

Authors 1 and 4 entered study information for each article (e.g., title, year/author/region, objective/aim, study population and sample size, method(s), theoretical and conceptual framework, type and duration of study, and terminology used) into a Word document. This table was then used to collate, summarize, and report the results of the scoping review.

**Table 1***Articles Selected for Review*

| Author & Year                                      | Location of Data Collection | Aims   | Study population and sample size   | Method        | Program Type  |
|--|-----------------------------|--|--|---------------|---|
| Smith-Marek, Baptist, Lasley & Cless (2018)        | United States               | To explore and describe the lived meaning of the experience of exercise among women survivors of sexual violence   | Eight women aged 31 - 61 years old who self-identified as survivors of sexual violence       | Qualitative   | A trauma-sensitive yoga and mindfulness informed program at a rape crisis center                  |
| Maniccia and Leone (2019)                          | United States               | To evaluate the effectiveness of Strong Through Every Mile (STEM), a 10-week structured running (exercise) program designed to increase psychological, social, and physical well-being among survivors of intimate partner violence  | Persons receiving services from domestic violence shelters in the Capital Region of New York | Mixed methods | STEM is a trauma-informed running program specifically for survivors of intimate partner violence |
| Shors, Chang & Millon (2018)                       | United States               | To determine whether the combination of meditation and aerobic exercise during mental and physical (MAP) training would reduce trauma-related thoughts, ruminations, and memories in women and if so, whether the combination would be more effective than either activity alone | 105 adult women aged 18 – 32 years old. Thirty-two women had a history of sexual violence    | Mixed methods | Meditation and aerobic exercise sessions  |
| Özümerzifon, Ross, Brinza, Gibney, & Garber (2022) | United States               | To explore the feasibility and benefits of a 12-session dance/movement program for intimate partner violence survivors' mental   | 45 women aged 23-48 years old who were survivors of intimate partner violence                | Mixed methods | A dance/movement program for intimate partner violence survivors                                  |



|                                      |        |   |  |                          |   |
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|                                      |        | health and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic   |  |                          |   |
| Gammage, van Ingen, & Angrish (2022) | Canada | To measure the health-related outcomes of participation in a 14-week trauma-informed non-contact boxing program known as Shape Your Life  | 56 women-identified (cis and trans) survivors of gender-based violence aged 18 years or older                          | Quantitative             | A non-contact trauma-informed boxing program for survivors of gender-based violence   |
| van Ingen (2020)                     | Canada | To examine how boxing has been redesigned, through a trauma-informed approach, into a non-contact sport so that it plays a role in the lives of women recovering from gender-based violence (GBV) | 11 women-identified (cis and trans) survivors of gender-based violence aged 18 years or older                          | Qualitative              | A non-contact trauma-informed boxing program for survivors of gender-based violence   |
| van Ingen (2016)                     | Canada | To explore a series of paintings completed by Shape Your Life participants, a project called "Think Outside The Ring"   | 63 Shape Your Life participants and two assistant coaches  | Post-qualitative inquiry | A recreational sport for development and peace (SDP) program  |
| van Ingen (2011)                     | Canada | To articulate the spatiality and sociality of emotion through a research project that teaches recreational boxing to women and transgender survivors known as Shape Your Life                     | 78 women and trans participants aged 16 – 58 from diverse social locations and who identified as survivors of violence | Qualitative              | A recreational boxing program for women and transgender survivors of violence   |
| Frisby, Reid & Ponc (2007)           | Canada | To discuss the interaction between poverty and policies in hindering women from participating in health-promoting recreation and physical activity  | Women living in poverty  | Qualitative              | A community organization known as Women Organizing Activities for Women (WOAW) that organized recreational activities for other poor women in the community |

|   |                               |  |  |              |  |
|---|-------------------------------|--|--|--------------|--|
| Rhodes (2015)   | United States                 | To explore the role of yoga in healing for adult women with complex trauma histories   | 39 women with complex PTSD aged 18-58 years old  | Qualitative  | A trauma-informed mindfulness-based hatha yoga class   |
| Clark, Lewis-Dmello, Anders, Parsons, Nguyen-Feng, Henn, & Emerson (2014) | United States                 | To evaluate the feasibility of a trauma-sensitive yoga in group therapy for female victims of partner violence – study testing for improved symptoms of anxiety, depression, PTSD, beyond what was achieved with therapy alone | Women aged 18 or older who has completed Domestic Abuse Project (DAP) group therapy seeking DAP's aftercare group<br>Exclusions: pregnancy unable to read/write English, behavioural issues, injury, heart condition       | Quantitative | A trauma-sensitive yoga program adjunct with group therapy sessions                              |
| Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno (2019)                                | Nicaragua                     | To explore the experiences of young Nicaraguan participating in a sport, gender and development (SGD) program used to promote environmentalism and improve their sexual and reproductive health rights                         | Three organizational staff members from local non-government organizations (LNGOs) and eleven young women in the LNGO program were interviewed<br>18 young women participants took part in photovoice and poster collaging | Qualitative  | LNGO focused on empowering young women through futbol by also including curriculum and workshops |
| D'Andrea, Bergholz, Fortunato, Spinazzola, & Pond (2013)                  | United States                 | To examine the sports-based intervention model known as Do the Good (DtG) for adolescent females in residential treatment with complex trauma histories  | 88 adolescent females from residential treatment facilities, 62 enrolled in DtG and 26 enrolled in treatment as usual  | Quantitative | A trauma-informed sports curriculum adjunct with residential treatment                           |
| Spaaij, & Schulenkorf (2014)  | Brazil, Israel, and Sri Lanka | To examine three sport for development (SFD) programs in Israel, Sri Lanka, and Brazil, involved in cultivating safe spaces  | Local community members, international organizers, program participants and staff members, and other sports event stakeholders (volunteers, sponsors, etc.)  | Qualitative  | SFD programs   |

|  |                          |   |   |              |   |
|--|--------------------------|---|---|--------------|---|
| Staempfli & Matter (2017)                    | South Sudan              | To examine the impact of project's trauma-informed sport and play-based intervention on women's mental health and perceived availability of social support      | 353 women taking part in "Women on the Move" activities                                   | Quantitative | Trauma-informed sport and play-based activities   |
| Whitley, Donnelly, Cowan & McLaughlin (2021) | Scotland & United States | To explore the lives of soccer players taking part in two SFD programmes that serve populations with high rates of trauma exposure                              | 7 female and 9 male SFD participants  | Qualitative  | SFD soccer programs   |
| Seal and Sherry (2018)                       | Papua New Guinea         | To explore women's experiences of an SFD program delivered in Papua New Guinea  | Young women aged 12 to 18 years old   | Qualitative  | Girls' empowerment through sport cricket program  |
| Hayhurst, Sundstrom, & Arksey (2018)         | Nicaragua                | To explore the barriers and enablers to norm change in SDP program in Nicaragua that use soccer to empower girls and improve gender relations                   | Seven organizational staff members and 19 young women involved in the SDP program         | Qualitative  | SDP soccer programs   |
| Hayhurst, MacNeill, Kidd & Knoppers (2014)   | Uganda                   | To explore how gender relations are influenced by girls only martial arts-based SGD program   | Eleven SNGO staff members who were young women, eight of which were martial arts trainers | Qualitative  | Martial arts-based SGD program  |
| Zipp (2017)                                  | St. Lucia                | To critically examine sport as a tool for youth development among 'at risk' girls   | 16 at-risk adolescent girls participating in SFD programs                                 | Qualitative  | SFD girls-only dance programs and mixed sex, unsupervised football play   |
| Kahan, Noble, & Stergiopoulos (2018)         | Canada                   | To report on the psychosocial intervention known as "Peer Education and Connection through Empowerment" for girls and women ages 16-24 who have experienced GBV | 23 service users  | Qualitative  | A trauma-informed, peer-based program. Psychoeducational sessions interspersed with weeks of recreational activities to promote health, empowerment, resilience and quality of life |



## Stage 5: Collating, Summarizing and Reporting the Results

The research team adopted a qualitative thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to summarize the results and findings of the studies included in the scoping review to identify key themes and areas that were similar across studies. The definitions of TVIPA, SFD, and GBV used in the introduction were applied to code studies and identify relevant themes. In the following sections, we outline the results of the scoping review based on Table 1, before discussing key recommendations and ways forward to explore TVIPA and SFD for survivors of GBV.

## RESULTS

Below, we describe our most pertinent findings. This includes a description of the articles' year of study, location, population and sample size, and program type. Thereafter, using thematic analysis, we describe the key delivery elements and shared perspectives of sport for development and TVIPA serving populations experiencing GBV.

### Year of Study

The nascent academic interest in TVIPA and SFD programs for survivors of GBV is immediately apparent based on the year of study publication for the articles included in this scoping review. Six studies were published between 2007 and 2014, whereas 15 of the 21 studies were published in the year 2015 or later, pointing to the area of TVIPA and/or SFD programs for people who have experienced GBV receiving increasing attention by researchers. In addition, the study publication date of articles suggests that, since there has been limited work prior to 2010 based on our knowledge of existing literature, the areas of TVIPA and/or SFD for survivors/victims of GBV not only has received recent attention in empirical analysis, but requires more fulsome and in-depth work in the future, particularly given the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Location of Data Collection

Research focused on TVIPA and/or SFD programs for people who have experienced GBV was almost exclusively conducted by global North researchers, with data collection taking place in both global North contexts (n=13) and global South contexts (n=8). This suggests that despite much of the research taking place in the global South, very few global South researchers are involved in this research. Most studies focused on one geographic location as seen in Table 1 on page 12. Two studies (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014; Whitley et al., 2021) focused on several geographical areas. What is clear based on the findings is that there are a variety of different geographical locations where work in TVIPA and/or SFD related to GBV is carried out. Each study must therefore be considered contextually based on location and social, cultural, political, and economic norms.

## Population and Sample Size

The study populations in this scoping review were also wide-ranging and diverse. Study populations included: women aged 31–61 who self-identified as survivors of sexual violence (Smith-Marek et al., 2018); individuals receiving services through domestic violence shelters (Maniccia & Leone, 2019); women aged 18–32 with a history of sexual violence (Shors et al., 2018); women aged 23–48 who are survivors of intimate partner violence (Özümerzifon et al., 2022); and women and trans survivors of violence aged 16–58 (Gammage et al., 2022; van Ingen, 2011; 2016; 2020). Study populations also included women with complex post-traumatic stress disorder aged between 18–58 (Rhodes, 2015); women aged 18+ who have completed domestic abuse project group therapy (Clark et al., 2014); and young women in an SFD program (Hayhurst et al., 2014; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019; Seal & Sherry, 2018; Zipp, 2017); adolescent females aged 12–21 in residential treatment facilities (D'Andrea et al., 2013); and women between the ages of 18 and 40 traumatised by war and violence (Staempfli & Matter, 2017). The sample sizes of studies ranged from 8 to 353 total participants.

## Research Methods Utilized

The scoping review revealed that varying research methods are utilized to study TVIPA and/or SFD related to GBV. Qualitative studies (n=12) utilized focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, observational data, photovoice, field notes, and artwork. Qualitative studies utilized narrative inquiry (n=2), feminist participatory action research (n=1), postcolonial feminist participatory action research (n=1), participatory action research (n=2), community-based participatory action research (n=1), and phenomenology (n=2). Mixed method studies (n=3) utilized pre- and post-test evaluation of the program, focus groups, clinical interviews, and questionnaires. Quantitative studies (n=4) mostly utilized surveys and questionnaires. There was one comparative analysis and one study using post-qualitative inquiry.

## Type of Program

Studies in this scoping review investigated a wide range of programs and interventions which varied in duration. In terms of type of program or intervention, the articles included: trauma-informed or sensitive yoga (n=3); trauma-informed and SFD running (n=1); meditation and aerobic exercise (n=1); dance and movement (n=1); trauma-informed and SFD boxing (n=3); local SFD football (soccer) programs (n=4); a multi-sport program including basketball, soccer, and softball in a residential trauma treatment centre (n=1); trauma-informed bi-weekly sport activities (n=1); girls empowerment through cricket (n=1); martial arts (n=1); football and girls-only dance (n=1); recreational-based activities (n=2); and non-competitive multi-sport and games (n=1).



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| Hayhurst, MacNeill, Kidd & Knoppers (2014)   | Uganda                   | To explore how gender relations are influenced by girls only martial arts-based SGD program   | Eleven SNGO staff members who were young women, eight of which were martial arts trainers | Qualitative  | Martial arts-based SGD program  |
| Zipp (2017)                                  | St. Lucia                | To critically examine sport as a tool for youth development among 'at risk' girls   | 16 at-risk adolescent girls participating in SFD programs                                 | Qualitative  | SFD girls-only dance programs and mixed sex, unsupervised football play   |
| Kahan, Noble, & Stergiopoulos (2018)         | Canada                   | To report on the psychosocial intervention known as "Peer Education and Connection through Empowerment" for girls and women ages 16-24 who have experienced GBV | 23 service users  | Qualitative  | A trauma-informed, peer-based program. Psychoeducational sessions interspersed with weeks of recreational activities to promote health, empowerment, resilience and quality of life |

## Thematic Findings: Key Delivery Elements and Shared Perspectives of SFD and TVIPA Serving Populations Experiencing GBV

After conducting a thematic analysis guided by Braun & Clarke's (2006) approach across the studies included in this review, we identified four prominent themes that aligned with the key tenets of TVIPA and were evident across the 21 articles. This included: 1) understanding the prevalence and effects of trauma and violence; 2) providing safe spaces; 3) offering opportunities for choice and collaboration; and 4) providing capacity-building approaches to support participants.

### *Understanding the Effects of Trauma and Violence*

A trauma- and violence-informed approach ensures program providers understand the prevalence of structural and interpersonal experiences of trauma and violence, and their impacts on peoples' lives and behaviours (Ponic et al., 2016; Wathen et al., 2021). TVIPA requires all individuals in organizations to develop an awareness of how various forms of oppression, such as racism, poverty, and sexism, can marginalize individuals from engaging in physical activity (Darroch et al., 2022a). All 21 studies provided background on the type(s) of trauma and/or violence experienced by participants. Thirteen studies also focused on socio-cultural structures that generate conditions of discrimination and violence, including differing societal and gender norms (Hayhurst et al., 2014; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019; Frisby et al., 2007; Kahan et al., 2018; Seal & Sherry, 2018; Spaaij & Schlenker, 2014; Staempfli & Matter, 2017; van Ingen, 2011; 2016; 2020; Whitley et al., 2021; Zipp, 2017). It is unclear whether all 21 studies addressed both structural and interpersonal understandings of trauma and violence amongst staff and participants, or if these tenets were included solely for contextual purposes. Some studies, such as Seal and Sherry's (2018) analysis of the 'girls empowerment through sport' SFD cricket program, discussed both the structural and interpersonal aspects of GBV. This was accomplished through interactive sessions covering various topics, including self-defence and domestic violence, to increase participants' awareness of complex issues and encourage critical reflection on personal experiences (Seal & Sherry, 2018). The integration of critical pedagogies in GBV allowed participants to become more aware of broader systematic and structural inequalities such as sexism and poverty (Seal & Sherry, 2018).

In nine of the studies, it was unclear if

an explicit understanding of trauma and violence was provided to participants (Hayhurst et al., 2014; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019; Clark et al., 2014; D'Andrea et al., 2013; Oxford & Spaaij, 2019; Rhodes, 2015; Staempfli & Matter, 2017; Zipp, 2017). Eight of these studies clearly discussed how program staff were aware of the traumas and/or violence affecting program participants (Gammage et al., 2022; Kahan et al., 2018; Seal & Sherry, 2018; Spaaij & Schlenker, 2014; Whitley et al., 2021; van Ingen, 2011; 2016; 2020). To illustrate, the "Women on the Move" program targets women traumatized by war and violence in South Sudan (Staempfli & Matter, 2017). The program intersperses group sport activities with group counselling sessions and awareness-raising meetings (Staempfli & Matter, 2017). However, SFD programs that aim to manage post-traumatic symptoms in persons experiencing GBV often refer to these approaches as trauma-informed or trauma-sensitive, rather than using the more nuanced term trauma- and violence-informed (e.g., Kahan et al., 2020; Staempfli & Matter, 2017).

### *Providing Safe Spaces*

The second tenet of a TVI approach is to create emotionally, culturally, and physically safe spaces for service users and providers (Ponic et al., 2016; Wathen et al., 2021). Fifteen programs provided safe spaces violence and intimate partner terrorism, and complex that embodied different dimensions of safety, including emotional, physical, and cultural (Hayhurst et al., 2014; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019; Clark et al., 2014; D'Andrea et al., 2013; Kahan et al., 2018; Rhodes, 2015; Seal & Sherry, 2018; Spaaij & Schlenker, 2014; Staempfli & Matter, 2017; van Ingen, 2011; Whitley et al., 2021; Zipp, 2017). For instance, trauma-informed hatha yoga fostered a safe space for participants to claim peaceful embodiment (Rhodes, 2015). This was accomplished by creating new, present-oriented, positive embodied experiences through yoga (Rhodes, 2015). The SYL boxing program provided a social space that enabled survivors and victims of GBV to claim their anger (van Ingen, 2011; 2016; 2020). Interestingly, people who have experienced GBV are often discouraged to express anger or direct it constructively, highlighting the need for more research on emotions and their role in shaping experiences and driving social change (van Ingen, 2011).

### ***Offering Opportunities for Choice and Collaboration***

Offering opportunities for participants and staff to make authentic choices through connection and collaboration is an essential pillar to a TVI approach (Darroch et al., 2022a; Wathen & Varcoe, 2021). Twelve studies explicitly discussed participant opportunities for collaboration, choice, and connection with programming (Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019; Clark et al., 2014; Kahan et al., 2018; Rhodes, 2015; Spaaij & Schlenker, 2014; Staempfli & Matter, 2017; van Ingen, 2011; 2016; 2020; Whitley et al., 2021; Smith-Marek, 2018). For example, Street Soccer helped participants connect with employment and housing opportunities (Whitley et al., 2021). Further, Street Soccer programming gave participants the freedom to express and process their emotions through conversation and play with other members (Whitley et al., 2021). The PEACE program incorporated a peer-supported and trauma-informed approach, providing flexibility and choice based on participant-identified needs and preferences (Kahan et al., 2020). The Vencer program ensured daily changes in team compositions to reduce competitiveness, and modified rules to vary the physical and emotional demands of the games (Spaaij & Schlenker, 2014).

### ***Providing Capacity-Building Ways to Support Participants***

The fourth tenet of TVI is to provide strengths-based and capacity-building to support participant coping and resilience (Ponic et al., 2016; Wathen et al., 2021). This tenet emphasizes that programs need to be tailored to the specific needs of the community to reinforce self-care, confidence, and social connections, which subsequently strengthens communities' abilities to cope with trauma (Darroch et al., 2022a; Darroch et al., 2022b). Sixteen studies provided a strengths-based or capacity-building approach to support participants (Hayhurst et al., 2014; Hayhurst et al., 2018; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019; D'Andrea et al., 2013; Kahan et al., 2018; Oxford & Spaaij, 2019; Rhodes, 2015; Seal & Sherry, 2018; Staempfli & Matter, 2017; van Ingen, 2011; Whitley et al., 2021; Zipp, 2017; Maniccia & Leone, 2019; Özümerzifon et al., 2022). For instance, the GET program enabled female staff to assume development officer and managerial roles, as described by participant narratives, which helped build their leadership capacity and increasing their sense of self-efficacy (Seal & Sherry, 2018). Additionally, Street Soccer programming

fostered a growth mindset, defined as understanding their abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work, among participants (Whitley et al., 2021). Growth and resilience were recurring themes across players' narratives, with many seeking new possibilities (Whitley et al., 2021). Trauma-informed hatha yoga also provided capacity-building opportunities for participants, by increasing strengths and capacities through yoga, including their capacity for self-care and emotional and physical intimacy (Rhodes, 2015). On another note, despite the significant and compounding challenges of conducting a virtual dance/movement program during a global pandemic, participants still benefitted from community building through the Zoom chat feature, where they could have side conversations and affirm one another (Özümerzifon et al., 2022).

### **Discussion**

Using a systematic approach, the goal of this scoping study was to explore peer-reviewed literature on TVIPA and SFD programs targeting populations who have experienced GBV. The scoping review revealed that SFD programs that aim to serve people experiencing GBV were diverse and wide-ranging, underscoring the need for a consistent approach to SFD programs that can be empirically tested and assessed for its appropriateness and feasibility in serving populations experiencing GBV. While considerable scholarship has examined the prevalence of trauma-informed yoga (Darroch et al., 2020), little research has been carried out on the use of trauma-informed approaches outside of yoga, and there is a dearth of research that examines trauma- and violence-informed approaches to physical activity. Scholars have called for an important shift in language by referring to practice as trauma- and violence-informed (TVI), rather than only trauma-informed, to bring into focus acts of violence and their traumatic impacts on victims (Browne et al., 2015; Ponic et al., 2016). And yet, no studies included in this review explicitly used a trauma- and violence-informed approach; rather, studies more commonly employed approaches defined as trauma-informed or trauma-sensitive. However, all studies mentioned specific type(s) of violence impacting program participants, including sexual violence, violence against women, GBV, domestic violence, intimate partner trauma. Thus, it is essential to consider the context in which SFD and TVIPA programs take place and how different forms of violence compound on each other and broader sport and physical activity settings to uniquely impact program participants. TVIPA offers an approach that can be implemented in SFD address



structural, systemic, and interpersonal forms of violence impacting all program participants, and especially communities experiencing GBV. Literature has suggested SFD programs should foster autonomy-supportive environments that help create a safe and supportive climate for participants (Whitley et al., 2017). Implementing a trauma- and violence-informed approach in SFD programs responds to this need and provides a nuanced approach to best help serve the needs of marginalized communities.

### Practical Implications

As evident by this review, working to integrate TVIPA in SFD programs for people experiencing GBV requires the adoption of a multi-sectoral approach in developing a comprehensive GBV prevention and response plan that focuses on the roles and needs of people who have experienced GBV. On another note, this scoping review underlined how SFD programs serving people who have experienced GBV have indeed used many of the tenets of TVIPA (e.g., trauma and violence awareness). These tenets have been useful for ensuring safe spaces and for upholding the agency of program participants. And yet, there remain no SFD programs (that we are aware of) that have yet to formally adopt a TVIPA approach. Organizations and practitioners should thus be particularly interested in integrating the tenets of the TVIPA approach within SFD to ensure that individuals who have experienced GBV will feel comfortable participating in programs (Darroch et al., 2022a).

With the exception of one SFD program, Shape Your Life, programs for people experiencing GBV did not account for gender-diverse social groups, including (but not limited to) transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, gender-fluid, and gender non-conforming people. A TVIPA approach to SFD would thus enhance attention paid to the needs of diverse social identities and prioritize meaningfully engaging gender diverse people in the development and implementation of SFD policy, research and practice. Without upholding the integral viewpoints and lived experiences of gender diverse people, TVIPA and SFD programs serving populations of GBV run the risk of missing the mark entirely and potentially causing more harm than good. For instance, the study conducted by Hayhurst et al., (2014) on a martial arts program in Uganda pointed out that homosexuality is a criminal act in Uganda, and “it seemed dangerous for staff to move away from the heteronormative assumptions that provided justification for their focus on teaching self-defences to only young women and girls” (p. 164). Within

communities, substantive discussions need to involve those most vulnerable, which is crucial to amplify voices that critique inequitable gender norms and other oppressive practices.

Given how the pandemic has changed SFD delivery (Dixon et al., 2020), continued efforts should be made to make virtual SFD programming accessible to all, including finding optimal ways to provide the programming on more inclusive virtual platforms (Özümerzifon et. al, 2022). For example, gendered responsibilities, in conjunction with technological barriers like unstable Internet connection and lack of access to digital devices, may hinder the attendance and desired impact of virtual programming interventions (Özümerzifon et. al, 2022, p. 12).

### Recommendations for Future Research

Based on this scoping review, we offer five recommendations for future research, policy, and practice related to utilizing TVIPA in SFD programs serving populations experiencing GBV.

First, we suggest that organizations, researchers, and policy-makers seeking to address GBV and using TVIPA in/through SFD to consider the array of populations that are affected by violence, and to work with multiple actors – most especially those who have experienced GBV – in order to more effectively implement programming that suits the needs of particular populations. For example, while community intervention partners are helpful in creating debate within communities about TVIPA, SFD, and GBV, support from local and national actors are needed. Therefore, we particularly advocate for policy-makers to work more closely with community intervention programs to build a multi-sectoral approach.

Second, we suggest that TVIPA training of staff, volunteers, managers, and other program leaders be implemented, especially since many SFD participants may be, or have, experienced violence as evident from the different studies in this review. Training should be context-specific and incorporate the perspectives and suggestions of program participants. This approach enables opportunities of choice, collaboration and connection, as outlined in a TVIPA approach (Darroch et al., 2022a).

The third recommendation is that, SFD organizations should strive to deliver complementary resources that would enable intended

participants the ability to fully engage in virtual program activities, such as by supplying user-friendly devices like tablets or computers, reliable Wi-Fi access, and vouchers for childcare services. It is vital for managers and practitioners within SFD to recognize the way in which violence may still permeate virtual spaces. Thus, a TVIPA approach should continue to inform decision-making and delivery of virtual SFD.

Fourth, SFD organizations may consider applying intersectional, anti-oppressive approaches to their work – in line with TVIPA – to better consider how different forms of oppression (e.g., sex, race, class, etc.) contributes to GBV. Notably, only one trauma-informed SFD program included in the review, Shape Your Life (SYL) (Gammage et al., 2022; van Ingen 2011; 2016; 2020), explicitly stated using an anti-oppression framework.

In line with this suggestion, future research may also explore the conceptual approaches and theoretical perspectives being taken up in research on TVIPA in SFD to address GBV. This could involve examining how different theoretical frameworks inform the research on TVIPA in SFD, and how this research can be used to create more effective interventions for GBV. Additionally, exploring theoretical perspectives of intersectionality and how TVIPA can be used as a tool to address the intersectional aspects of GBV may provide valuable insight into how to reduce the incidence of GBV. By conducting further research in these areas, we may be able to develop more effective targeted interventions that address the complex and multifaceted nature of GBV. SYL is one of the few SFD programs that

have made efforts to reach out to women in diverse contexts, including immigrant and refugee communities and participants of colour (van Ingen, 2011). In line with TVIPA, SYL aims to address the multiple realities of GBV, particularly facing low-income and racialized women and trans individuals, by offering boxing as a form of anti-violence work within an anti-oppressive framework (van Ingen, 2011). Hence, using an anti-oppressive theoretical framework within TVIPA could aid in holding SFD organizations and practitioners accountable in ensuring that program participants are not homogenized and reflect the multiple realities marginalized communities experiencing GBV face. By expanding our understanding of TVIPA in SFD, we can better address the complex issue of GBV around the world.

Finally, this scoping review highlights the need for future

research to investigate the feasibility and acceptability of TVIPA in SFD programs for people who have experienced GBV and in different geographical contexts. Particularly, further research presents an opportunity to investigate how scholarship in the global South is being adopted by global North scholars, and whether these studies involve local experts to ensure cultural and contextual understandings of GBV from an outside perspective.

## Limitations

One limitation of this study is the restrictions placed on our literature search including only reviewing articles between 2000 to 2022 and those written in English, however this was the best solution considering costs and time constraints. This scoping review also focused on peer-reviewed literature, omitting grey literature on TVIPA and SFD programs serving survivors of GBV. In addition, inconsistencies with the use of TVIPA, SFD, and GBV terminology may have unintentionally limited the number of articles included within this scoping review – for instance, if terms such as ‘development and sport’ were used rather than SFD. However, such inconsistencies of terminology, including within the studies reviewed, demonstrate the vital need for the adoption and integration of a consistent framework for GBV in SFD organizations and practice, which we have argued throughout the TVIPA approach is appropriate for.

## Conclusion

This research builds on other recent scoping reviews within the SFD field that examine advancements in the sport for development in relation to Indigenous youth (e.g., Gardam et al., 2017); health promotion interventions in Africa (Hansell, et al., 2021); and health-based programming for women and girls (Pederson & King, 2023). To our knowledge, the study herein is the first study to explore the overlaps and synergies between peer-reviewed literature on TVIPA and SFD programs for victims and survivors of GBV. In turn, this work illuminates the possibilities and potential of TVIPA and SFD programs to work collectively to provide more comprehensive GBV support mechanisms for participants. Based on our findings, we have deduced that – with the exception of one SFD program, Shape Your Life – the exclusion of diverse gender identities in SFD for victims/survivors of GBV has only further entrenched hegemonic ideologies within the sector, with this maintenance of the status quo making a safe space for all illusive. Apart from one SFD program, Shape Your Life, programs for victims/survivors

of GBV did not account for gender-diverse social groups, including (but not limited to) transgender, Two-Spirit, queer, gender-fluid, and gender non-conforming people. TVIPA accounts for structural, systemic, and interpersonal forms of violence that has led to the exclusion gender diversity within SFD. Widening whose experience is accounted for is beneficial for everyone and as such programming, research and policy needs to reflect this. Thus, SFD programs can benefit from adopting a TVIPA approach. There are many complexities in how programming was delivered to victims and survivors of GBV, hence there is a need to develop a conceptualized TVI framework that can be utilized across SFD and physical activity programs.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Funding

This study was supported by e-Alliance, an initiative of the Gender Equity in Sport Research Hub – Seed Grant, funded by Canadian Heritage – Sport Canada (#1327883), and a York Research Chair (Tier 2) award in Sport, Gender and Development & Digital Participatory Research (Hayhurst).

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