

Across the Line Evaluation Overview

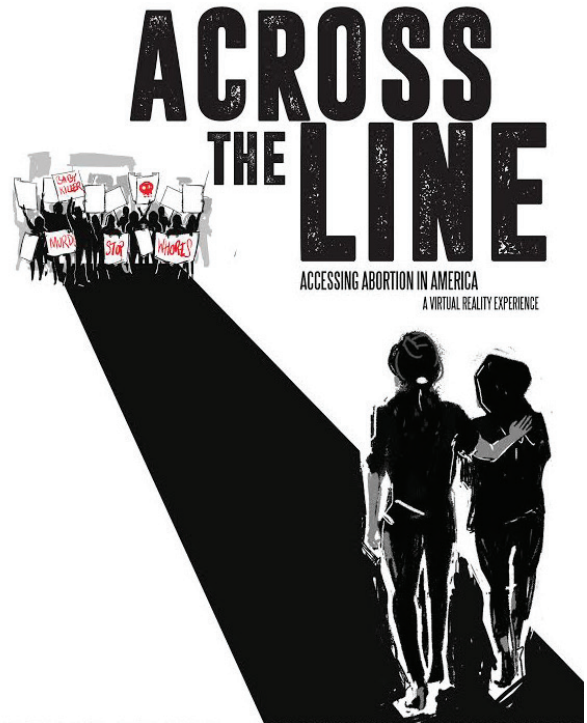
To demonstrate the reality of what clinic harassment can be like for patients, staff, and physicians across the country, Planned Parenthood Federation of America executive produced a virtual reality experience: *Across the Line*. *Across the Line* puts viewers in the shoes of a woman seeking abortion care and encountering clinic harassment. The film, co-created by Nonny de la Peña of [Emblematic Group](#) and Brad Lichtenstein and Jeff Fitzsimmons from [371 Productions/Custom Reality Services](#), combines documentary video, documentary audio, and computer-generated imagery to immerse viewers in one experience of going to a reproductive health clinic that provides abortions. Planned Parenthood was interested to understand the impact of the virtual reality experience on a broad demographic of viewers. [The Sea Change Program](#) and [SKDKnickerbocker](#) conducted interviews and surveys to determine how viewers respond to *Across the Line*. The goals of the research were to:

- Understand how viewing the film relates to views of clinic harassment,
- Understand how the film affected viewers' perception of abortion and/or Planned Parenthood,
- Test calls to action against clinic harassment tactics.

Methodology

The Sea Change Program conducted a survey with 284 attendees at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival, Cleveland International Film Festival, and South by Southwest Interactive.

- Respondents were randomized into two groups: one group (147 participants) took the survey before seeing *Across the Line*, and the other group (137 participants) took the survey after seeing *Across the Line*.
- Sea Change then looked at the differences between the two groups, to assess whether viewing *Across the Line* was associated with any differences in attitudes between the two groups.
- Survey respondents were majority male (60%), highly educated (74% were college graduates or above), and predominantly white (73%), and the majority (69%) identified as somewhat or very liberal.
- The Sea Change Program also conducted 20 interviews with viewers to understand their experience of and motivations for viewing the film.



SKDKnickerbocker conducted 44 in-depth interviews with individuals¹ who held moderate to conservative views on abortion and moderate political beliefs. The interviews were conducted on November 21-22, 2016 in Kansas City, MO and November 30-31, 2016 in Atlanta, GA.

- Respondents ranged in age from 20-45 and all had above a high school education; 75% were women and 50% were people of color. No respondents had had an abortion.
- It is important to note that these findings provide only preliminary insights about viewer reactions to the film due to the relatively small sample size of the survey and interview respondents.

Summary of Findings

Overall, *Across the Line* is an effective tool for increasing support for women who have abortions and decreasing support for protestors outside of reproductive health clinics – even among moderate and slightly conservative audiences. After viewing the film, most interview respondents become more sympathetic to women entering health clinics and become more critical of clinic harassment outside of abortion clinics. On surveys, film viewers expressed more disapproval of clinic harassment than a comparable group that hadn't yet seen the film.

The film is also an effective mechanism for getting interviewees to support increased regulation on protesting outside abortion clinics. After watching this film, many people think that clinic harassment targeted at the woman entering an abortion clinic is not okay and would support anti-clinic harassment legislation.

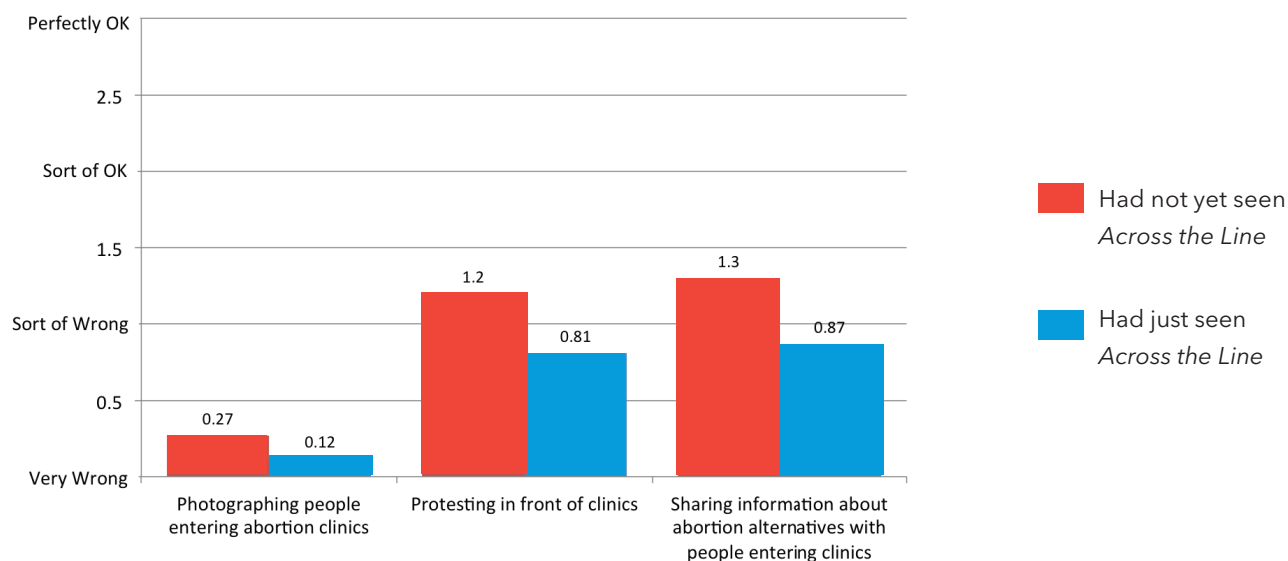
Viewing *Across the Line* Is Associated with Greater Disapproval of Clinic Harassment: The Sea Change survey found that the group that had just seen *Across the Line* expressed more disapproval of clinic harassment than the group who hadn't yet seen the film. In general, seeing *Across the Line* was associated with higher disapproval of clinic harassment.

- Overall, survey respondents mostly supported women who had abortions and disapproved of clinic harassment.
- The group that saw *Across the Line* disapproved of some types of clinic harassment more than the group that hadn't yet seen the film. People who had just viewed *Across the Line* expressed statistically significant higher disapproval of: 2
- Anti-abortion individuals photographing people entering clinics.
- Anti-abortion individuals protesting outside abortion clinics.
- Anti-abortion individuals sharing information about abortion alternatives with people entering the clinics.

¹ Respondents were recruited from the general public using a market research recruitment agency.

² All differences were statistically significant (p<.05).

Attitudes Towards Clinic Harassment



Viewers seek out *Across the Line* for new

experiences and understanding: Many film festival interviewees wanted to see *Across the Line* to bridge the “experiential gap” around abortion, so they could better understand first-hand the experiences of people who have abortions. Others were curious about what it would be like to do virtual reality at all, or were intrigued by *Across the Line*’s novel combination of CGI and documentary footage. Many viewers said that *Across the Line* brought home realities of clinic harassment in a new way. For example, one viewer commented: “Even though you may feel a certain way about the right to abortion, you don’t actually know how you’re going to feel until you’re in there... You, your views might change.” Many viewers were shocked by what it was like to experience clinic harassment: as one viewer said, “it was insane that people actually had the nerve to say that to people they don’t actually know.” The majority of the interviewees felt that the film was important viewing, with one viewer saying, “If you know a woman, which everyone does, then you need to go and watch it.”

***Across the Line* is linked to attitude shifts in people who hold moderate to slightly conservative**

political views: SKDKnickerbocker tested seven of the items from the Sea Change survey before the in-depth interview respondents viewed the film and re-tested them after viewing. There are several areas where the responses change notably after the interviewees watch the film³:

- Many people shift to think that “Anti-abortion individuals sharing information about abortion alternatives outside abortion clinics” is wrong.
- More people think that “Anti-abortion individuals protesting out of abortion clinics” is wrong.
- The number of people strongly agreeing with the statement, “I could support a woman who had an abortion (e.g. by driving her to an appointment) even if I didn’t agree with her decision” increases.

Calls to action: Overall, in-depth interview participants who held moderate and slightly conservative political views were significantly more receptive to calls to action than survey participants, though survey participants

³ The Question text for the metrics:
Statements: For each please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.
Situations: For each please tell me if you think it is really wrong, sort of wrong, sort of OK or perfectly OK?

“If you know a woman, which everyone does, **then you need to go and watch it.**”

—*Across the Line* viewer at Sundance

generally held more liberal views. This is likely because interview respondents will over-claim their willingness to take action in front of interviewers.

Despite this, it is notable that participants with moderate and slightly conservative views were receptive to many calls to action. Overall, the respondents are most inclined to activities that require the least amount of lift (telling others about bullying, encouraging others to see the movie, sign a petition). Nearly all of the interviewees say they would tell friends about bullying and intimidation outside of clinics - particularly in the context of a relevant conversation. Similarly, they say they would encourage others to see the movie. There was significant willingness to sign an anti-clinic harassment petition on social media though much less willingness to share such a petition on social media. Relatively few said they would volunteer to be a clinic escort.

Conclusion

By putting viewers “in the shoes” of someone accessing abortion care, *Across the Line* presents new potential to shape attitudes and raise awareness of what it’s like to face harassment while seeking healthcare services. Our research suggests that *Across the Line* effectively shows viewers a new perspective on clinic intimidation and harassment, personalizing an experience that is often invisible to those not experiencing it. Faced with this new experience, viewers may feel frustrated and angry, which may drive the differences in attitudes toward clinic harassment that we saw in the survey group. Having just virtually experienced the reality of what it’s like to be subject to clinic harassment, *Across the Line* viewers disapproved of clinic harassment more than people who hadn’t gone through that experience. By bringing home the reality of what clinic harassment can truly look like in America, *Across the Line* demonstrates potential to change hearts and minds about clinic harassment.