

Courage to Act - June Webinar

Creating Inclusive Sexual Violence Prevention and Support With International Students

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Anoodth: Hello everyone, and welcome to the fifth webinar in our series. My name is Anoodth Naushan, Project Manager of Courage to Act. Courage to Act a two-year national initiative to address and prevent gender-based violence on post-secondary campuses in Canada. It builds on the key recommendations within Possibility Seeds' vital report. Courage to Act, developing a national framework to prevent and address gender-based violence at post-secondary institutions. Our project is the first national collaborative of its kind to bring together experts and advocates from across Canada to end gender-based violence on campus.

A key feature of our project is our free webinar series where we invite leading experts to discuss key concepts, and share promising practices on ending gender-based violence on campus. Supported by CACUSS, these webinars are also a recognized learning opportunity; attendance at ten or more live webinars will count towards an online certificate. Our project is made possible through generous support and funding from the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), Federal Government of Canada.

We begin today's webinar by acknowledging that this work is taking place on and across the traditional territories of many Indigenous nations. We recognize that gender-based violence is one form of violence caused by colonization to marginalize and dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands and waters. Our project strives to honour this truth, as we work towards decolonizing this work and actualizing justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across the country.

I want to pause now and invite everyone to take a deep breath. This work can be challenging, and this topic is hard. Many of us may have our own experience of survivorship, and of supporting those we love and care about who have experienced gender-based violence. So, a gentle reminder here to be attentive to our wellbeing as we engage these hard conversations.

Before I introduce our speakers today, a brief note on the format. Melanie and Kate will speak for 40 minutes, and I invite you to enter questions and comments into the question and answer box and I will monitor this, and together we will pose these questions to Melanie and

Kate at the end of the presentation. This will happen in the last 15 minutes.

At the end of the webinar, you will find a link to the evaluation form. We'd be grateful if you take a few minutes to share your feedback, as it helps us improve. This is anonymous. Following the webinar, I will also email you with a copy of the evaluation form and a link to the recording so you can review and share the webinar with your networks. And now, I'd like to introduce our speakers today:

Melanie Crudginton works as a Case Manager with Simon Fraser University's Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office. Melanie holds a Master of Social Work from UBC with post-graduate training in trauma work. Her scope of work has included clinical and consultative social work in acute healthcare settings, and in private practice. A particular area of interest has been providing counselling to women impacted by sexual violence. Melanie previously worked as an International Student Advisor within higher education. Thank you for joining us, Melanie.

Kate Parnell is a Sexual Health Educator and Academic Program Coordinator at Fraser International College at Simon Fraser University. Kate comes from an academic background in sexuality studies and has more than a decade of experience as a Sexual Health Educator, with a particular focus on youth engagement, LGBTQ+ empowerment, and sexuality education for international students in higher education. Currently, she designs and implements sexual health, sexual violence prevention, and well-being curriculum in transition programming for international students at Fraser International College. Welcome, Kate. Now it's my pleasure to turn it over to our speakers.

Kate: Alright, thank you very much, Anoodth for that warm welcome. Hello, everybody. What we're going to be doing in terms of format is we're on video right now, but we're actually going to turn our video off before we get started for recording purposes, for the webinar, and then at the very end when we address questions, we'll pop our video back on so we can have more of a conversation. So, video off, but we'll get started on the presentation.

So, in terms of what we're going to be talking about today, at FIC and SFU we've long been supporting students on international pathways, as I'm sure many of you have as well, in our educational or our support programs. And we're familiar with the barriers that many of our students are facing and the issues that they bring to us. We wanted to do something to address these barriers and improve our services in the community. So, we decided to set out on a multi-year collaborative project to bring light to the barriers faced by our students on International pathways in developing best practices and initiatives for our communities. So, this presentation will primarily focus on this project and what we learn from it. And I also just wanted to mention quickly that in

our title we use the phrase gender-based violence, but in this project we specifically targeted sexual violence as one form of gender-based violence that many students on International pathways face.

So, in terms of what we'll get to, we'll talk about our schools, SFU and FIC and our context. We'll do a brief introduction to the project which we call the IP Project, do a quick overview of definitions, we'll talk about our key findings from our literature review, talk about our two stage community engagement process, our conclusions and then the stage that we're at right now, which is actually taking action.

So, our work at FIC and at SFU takes place on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, specifically the Tsleil-Waututh, Kwikwetlem, Musqueam, Squamish, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qayqayt and Katzie nations. We wanted to acknowledge our place as settlers but also the place of anti-violence work on stolen indigenous land. Sexual violence has been at the core of the settler-colonial agenda that displaces and disenfranchises Indigenous peoples. As we work with settlers on international pathways in this project we strive to centre anti-colonialism and anti-racism on our path to end gender-based violence.

We also wanted to acknowledge the current revolution we are witnessing and participating in right now, and we position ourselves as learners along with many of our students. Anti-black racism, anti-indigenous racism, and the colonial violence of Canada are entrenched in the institutions that we are a part of, the cities that we call home and in the fabric of our lives here on the west coast. As services working to support students on international pathways, it is imperative that we centre the immense amounts of reflection, learning and, importantly, change that is currently taking place. We support Black, indigenous, and people of colour's lives and we recognize that liberation from sexual violence cannot take place without an end to white supremacy and anti-Black racism. With that in mind, let's go a bit more in-depth into our specific contexts at our schools.

Melanie:

Thanks, Kate. SFU is located in British Columbia, on the West Coast in Canada and has built a reputation for community engagement and outreach. It's a university with three urban campuses in Metro Vancouver and we have 30,000 students and about 6500 faculty and staff. A little bit about our SFU context on the next slide. These graphs provide information on our undergraduate international students this past fall over 5,300 undergrad international students registered at SFU. International students represent a little over 20% of our total undergrad population and close to 50% of our international undergrads are from China.

On the next slide, these are the graphs that provide information on our graduate international student population. This past fall over 1500

graduate international students registered at SFU. International students make up over 32% of our graduate student population and students from China, India, Iran, and the US make up about 66% of our international graduate population.

The Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office, which we'll be referring to as the SVSPO is the University's central hub, providing supports, education and leadership concerning sexual violence and sexual misconduct. And recognizing that consent matters, people who experience sexual violence are empowered to take the lead in deciding what is right for them and the SVSPO is there to support them through their process. And we've currently shifted to remote working options in a Covid context.

Kate: So, Fraser International College, or FIC as we'll be referring to it, is a private pathway program that's on SFU campus. So, probably many of you have a college like this at your university. We have about 2000 to 3000 students at any given time from about 92 different countries. And it's primarily first year students, which means that the majority of students that we're working with have recently arrived in Canada, sometimes a day before school starts, sometimes within the past year, but they're generally students who've recently arrived in Canada.

Melanie: There was awareness and recognition of the barriers for students in accessing sexual violence support services and engaging in educational initiatives and, even more so, for vulnerable populations such as international students. As Kate mentioned earlier, we were curious to learn more about how we may address the barriers and in Fall 2018, the SVSPO partnered with International Services for Students and Fraser International College and created a working group to collaborate further

The SVSPO has also hired a series of really dedicated work study and co-op students since that time to support the project. Initially conversations amongst our working group really informed the decision to expand the scope of the international student group we were looking at to include students from a range of international pathways. And, when we looked at those stats it suggested a much higher percentage of our student population closer to over 50%. This included permanent residents, refugees, international students and even Canadians who may have been previously living abroad.

The goals of the International Pathways Project that we'll refer to as the IP Project have been to learn more about IP students' knowledge of sexual health issues, to identify barriers that IP students face when accessing sexual violence support and education, to create more accessibility to this support and education and to create an evidence-informed action plan to create more inclusive programming at SFU and FIC.

A little bit about the project structure. It included an initial literature review, followed by a two stage community engagement process. The first stage was conversations with campus community partners to gather their perspectives on barriers and the second stage was to survey SFU and FIC IP students. After that we were able to review the findings which informed our next steps and create an action plan.

Focusing on our working definition, I've shared how those initial conversations informed expanding the scope of the demographic we were looking at to include students from a range of international pathways who are newcomers to Canada. We also had to determine the length of time when we talked about being a newcomer and we eventually landed on the timeframe of a newcomer who has arrived in Canada within the last eight years and we defined these parameters based on a number of factor, discussions on findings and the lit review on the settlement experience, conversations about students who were direct transfer students from high school or else entering university directly from overseas, findings from the internal consultation process as well as the lived experiences of the working group members themselves.

Many of us are already involved in the work, but in case you're new to the field we define sexual violence as an umbrella term that encompasses a broad range of behaviour. It means a sexual act or an act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity or gender expression without the person's consent. Such behaviour may or may not involve physical contact and it includes but is not limited to sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, stealthing, and the distribution of sexually explicit photographs or videos of a person without their consent.

Kate: We started this project with a lit review, which was short. Because, as probably many of us are familiar with, there's very little current research on IP students. But the lit review that we did do confirmed essentially what we already knew from our experience as frontline workers. So, the research that we did find showed that, unsurprisingly, international students often face many barriers to disclosing or reporting sexual violence. It also showed there was a lack an understanding of what actually constitutes as sexual violence. And that there's a pretty strong level of fear around disclosure and how that connects to student visas and what actually confidentiality looks like.

We also were able to find that most current sexual violence education content is not culturally sensitive and it doesn't often meet the needs or centre the needs of students on international pathways. We also looked at kind of parallel areas of research that could help inform our practices, such as research highlighting the experiences of immigrant and refugee folks and we found that immigrant and refugee women specifically are more vulnerable to gender-based violence because of isolation that they may experience from family and community. So, we tried to look at these

parallel areas and see what we could learn that could inform our best practices.

Melanie: The first stage of the community engagement process took place over the Fall 2018 term and involved consultations with key campus community partners. They were about one hour meetings co-facilitated by our Work Study student and another SVSPO staff member. These are the various campus partners we connected with.

The first question we asked, on the next slide, was around the barriers the staff member had identified in IP students accessing sexual violence support services on campus and if they could share with us any trends they'd noticed. These were some of the main responses. Lack of awareness of the existence of the SVSPO. Stigma around accessing support services or other counselling services on campus. Students from some cultures where it's not encouraged to talk about problems or reach out for help externally, where more value is placed on family and social support systems and that the individuals who do access external services may be stigmatized. Lack of diversified staffing in student services offices also came up as students may be uncomfortable relating with staff from a different cultural background. And some students believing that reporting sexual violence to offices like the SVSPO could escalate issues, potentially jeopardizing their academic record or their immigration status in Canada.

The second question we asked was around the barriers the staff member had identified in IP students engaging in sexual violence educational initiatives on campus and if they could share with us any areas of challenge. These were some of the main responses. That the language used in documents or presentations need to be simplified for students to understand the materials easily. Cultural references like "Netflix & Chill" were not relatable to IP students. That workshops need to be dynamic, relatable and creative, for example to include case scenarios potentially theatre and body movement and personalized messages from survivors and educational materials and workshops. What also came up was that there's a lack of understanding of what sexual violence encompasses. Staff suggested that when students hear the term their understanding is limited to the act of sexual assault.

The third question we asked was related to sharing and the observations on newcomer students' base knowledge around sexual health. From these conversations the perception was that both domestic and IP students have a very low base knowledge around sexual health, though much lower for IP students. There were discussions that students from conservative and religious backgrounds have little information about sexual health, sexuality and sexual acts and that sex education workshops should be offered for all students most especially undergrads upon university entry.

There was discussion that sex education workshops should include topics like safer sex supplies and its use, contraceptive methods, hormonal and non-hormonal methods, STIs and so on. And that student should also be taught how to access safe and healthy sexual health information.

Kate: So, the second stage of our process was directly connecting with SFU and FIC students. So, we created a survey and in that survey we had demographic questions, questions about their awareness of resources and awareness of the current available education around sexual health. We asked about their general understanding of sexual health and sexual violence. And we did this survey both online and a paper version and we handed out the paper version and advertised in places like residence, various different resource centres and in FIC were able to actually get into the classrooms and do them within a classroom setting.

So, at the end of it we ended up with 427 total responses that were complete enough to be analyzed and you can see that there's a bit of a difference in breakdown between FIC and SFU. There's a lot higher numbers from FIC, even though it's a much smaller school and that was because we were able to get into a bunch of my classrooms basically and we had kind of an in there, where we could actually get the students in a classroom, so we ended up with higher numbers from FIC because of that.

So, the demographics of our population were that the majority of respondents were under 21. There were a few responses for more mature students, but this told us that mostly what we were looking at was undergraduate data. The countries that were most represented in our surveys were India, China, Bangladesh, Iran and Pakistan. A majority of our students have learned English as an additional language which told us that they may be at varying levels of comprehension and confidence in English when it comes to consent and sexual health, but also potentially when it comes to completing the survey. In terms of living in Canada, the majority of students have lived in Canada for less than a year, although there was a fairly sizable population who had been here for several years or more, although the majority was less than a year.

Melanie: When asked if they were familiar with the definition of sexual violence, the majority of students felt that they were in fact familiar with the term. However, when asked to describe further if they understood the term, what their definition would be, their responses really reflected what staff has shared during the internal consultation process which was a more limited understanding of what it entailed.

When asked about reasons why they would choose not to use SVSPO and FIC Wellness Centre services, responses were because of shame and embarrassment, language barriers and privacy concerns. We asked what topics they would be interested in learning more about related to

sexual health, we offered a dropdown menu and they could select as many as they wished. Most responses included interest in healthy relationships. For SFU healthy relationships were closely followed by interest in dating culture, assertiveness and boundaries, consent and safer partying. For FIC the responses were slightly different, and they were likely based on what was being offered at FIC at the time.

When asked if they were aware of the existence of the SVSPO or FIC's Wellness office, responses of yes came in at 68% for SFU and 88% for FIC. If we look at timing these responses were collected around the one-year benchmark of the SVSPO being opened. For FIC, half the students indicated knowing about support resources due to the classroom setting.

Kate: So, after we are able to analyze all this information we were able to come to some conclusions. So, the first conclusion was Promotion. That promotion needs to be language-accessible and it needs to centre English-language learners specifically. We also need to be highlighting confidentiality more clearly. We need to specifically be highlighting the visa concern issue as well as what confidentiality actually looks like within the context of our university.

Students also were asking us to centralize information through social media, probably unsurprisingly. So, we needed to do a better job of that. It also told us that there was a basic understanding of sexual violence, but that there was a definite need to create a more long-term plan to develop a deeper understanding of what sexual violence really is. It also told us consent needs to be integrated more fully into wider sexuality education programs and that sexuality education programs themselves need to be developed further.

Melanie: There have been some really excellent action pieces that have stemmed out of the survey. At the SVSPO we've had our support brochures translated into some key languages: Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Hindi, Farsi and Spanish with Korean, Bengali & Punjabi coming soon. These languages were selected based on top demographic groups as well as those identified as particularly vulnerable based on patterns and trends. These translated brochures can be accessed on the SVSPO website.

Our office is also engaged in de-developing a series of videos aimed to reduce barriers and increase accessibility. The project started before Covid, but the need for these online videos have likely increased within the current context. They are intended for the larger student population; however, the project is being led by an international work study student to consider how accessibility needs of the international community can be met throughout the content. The first video which we completed earlier this year is a wayfinding video of the office with a focus on

accessibility to the space. That can be found on the SVSPO Contact Us page.

The second video was an interview with the two SVSPO Case Managers. It covers the support services offered, who can access the services and all the various ways in which one can link in with us. The intent is for the audience to be able to see the faces of the case managers, which focus on the messaging and the validation that one can connect with us to begin a conversation, no matter what their experience is. Because the perception of whether their experience is enough or uncertainty over the nature of their experience can sometimes be a barrier to accessing services. This video is currently being edited and we are considering re-recording on Zoom to address the current context with our remote services being offered.

The third video is an educational piece led by our SVSPO Director and Educator which unpacks the different forms of sexual violence, talks about consent in the Canadian context and addresses some of the differences between a disclosure and a report, as again these terms and what they mean could potentially be a barrier to accessing services. That video is currently being recorded on Zoom.

We've been brainstorming a fourth video, and actually currently in the scripting phase. That one is going to be geared specifically for international students and it will be a conversation between an SVSPO case manager and an international student advisor. The goal is to focus on how confidentiality is handled by the SVSPO, particularly when we may be working with other partners such as international services for students to facilitate support for that student. Whether it's related to their academic health or immigration needs. And we aim to complete recording on Zoom for that one this summer as well.

Kate: So, we've also had one of our mandates be that we share this information. And, obviously, as I mentioned when we were talking about our lit review, there isn't a lot of information on how to support students on International Pathways and we really wanted to make sure that we were able to share this and to engage in the dialogue that is kind of already going on about this. So, we've been sharing our findings at the NASPA Strategies Conference that we were able to get in right before things shut down with Covid. SFU internal Student Affairs Meetings, this wonderful webinar, and end in future conferences such as the APAIE Conference next year. Hopefully we're able to kind of start some conversations and contribute to some conversations and also be learning from the many other folks doing this work through these types of sharing experiences.

We've also been partnering with different campus programs to expand sexuality, sexual health and healthy relationship education. It has been very clear to us, since even before this survey, but certainly afterwards,

that there needs to be more sexual health education on campus. So, a few of the things we've been working on to further develop that is the SVSPO has been developing specifically a cyber-safety workshop and some cyber-safety content that the SVSPO would be using, but also could be used by other areas in campus, for example, I plan on using that content in my classrooms for sexual health education and that really is addressing the current Covid-19 online dating kind of context that we're in right now.

We've also been exploring other institution services and connecting with other institutions and also creating a database of resources, specifically resources that are translation focused. As we saw, language accessibility is a huge thing, so we want to create as many different resources as we can for our students that are as accessible as possible when it comes to language. We've also been working with existing programming and different areas in campus to create IP-focused programming. So, for example, we've been working with Residence, Centre for Accessible Learning, and various different FIC peer-led programs such as orientation and leadership training.

We're currently developing a Gender & Sexuality Living Learning Community which would hopefully be launching Fall 2021 and that would be a collaboration between FIC & SVSPO to create an LLC that empowers both IP students and domestic and strengthens the intersecting knowledge base between sexual health and intercultural communication within the residence community. So, that's an exciting project we're working on right now. And, in the future we're hoping to launch a Sexual Violence Support Certificate for specifically faculty and staff. The idea with that is to create a peer program to develop a faculty and staff network of champions that could then further support capacity building across different areas of campus. So, that's a future project. We haven't quite started on that one yet, but it's something that we're thinking about and starting to kind of brainstorm.

So, we're currently in this taking action phase. This project has been going for a few years now and we got to the taking action phase about last summer. So, we've been here for about a year and we're still here. So, many of these initiatives that we've talked about, we can't fully report on just how successful they are yet, because they're just kind of in the works, but this shows what we've chosen to do with the information that we've been given from our students. So, that's kind of where we're at now. We've got a few references, if you had some questions about information that we've put up here, but I think now we've got lots of time for some questions. So, Melanie and I will pop our videos back up and hopefully we can have a conversation and learn from all y'all about what you have to say about this.

Anoodth: Thank you Melanie and Kate. That's perfect. And now, I'd like to invite our attendees to share questions and comments. You can do so by

typing these into the Question and Answer box at the bottom of your screen ... Great, I can see we've got our first question. So, this is for both of you, Melanie and Kate. Could you share a couple of ways you have adapted support services to meet the needs of the international student population in the current COVID-19 context?

Melanie: Sure. We've certainly been trying a few different pieces to highlight as well as provide our support services within the current context. We're going to be hosting a virtual meet-and-greet with the SVSPO case managers for all SFU and FIC community members to learn more about the support services we offer and over there we'll be discussing who can access ways in which one can link in with us and so on. Again, it's a way to get people familiar with our faces and hopefully invite someone to consider using our services as and when they may be ready. Another way in which we've adopted support services is by introducing virtual drop in hours. We've gone online using Zoom.

A third way in which we've adapted – and we were doing this before Covid I would say as well, but it will likely become more important as we move into our Fall term with courses online and international students potentially returning home, is that we fax a schedule when needed to meet the needs of a client who may be out of province or out of country as much as possible, wherever possible. And I'm really curious to learn from all of you as well on some of the different ways in which you've adapted your support services, so please feel free to share things that you're currently doing in the chat box as we go along.

Anoodth: While we're waiting, Mel, for those prompts to come in. Someone had asked in the chat box as well if you could explain what an LLC is?

Melanie: Totally, yeah. An LLC stands for Living Learning Community and I think it's a relatively newer thing. It's new to SFU anyways. I think we started maybe about four or five years ago with developing a cohort of students who all live on the same floor in their residence building and they engage in some sort of thematic workshop learning together. So, for example, as SFU we have an LLC specifically for BD students, which is our business school. So, for example, all these business students would live on the same floor in residence and then, as well as going to their business classes, they would also engage in extra programming that would kind of develop their skills and their leadership skills and things like that. So, there's all sorts of different LLCs, you can pick any theme. We have an engaged global citizen LLC, we've got an LLC for indigenous folks, we've got an LLC that's specifically leadership focused.

So, what we're trying to develop is a gender and sexuality LLC. The idea would be that it would be a group of anywhere from like 15 to 40 students who all live on the same floor, meaning that they kind of all bond and they get to know each other in residence and then they participate in sometimes weekly or bi-weekly events and workshops that

are around a theme and this theme would be gender and sexuality. So, the idea is that we would equip a group of students not only with a strong base of sexual health knowledge, but also with skills in how to become leaders in their own communities, how to become cheerleaders within the residence community and how to kind of create a culture of consent within their residence community. So, that's the idea behind the LLC.

Anoodth: Thank you, Kate. Our next question is around the virtual drop-in sessions. So, Mel and Kate, could you share a bit about how your virtual drop-in sessions have been operating in the current Covid context and also the platform that you're using for the virtual drop-in?

Melanie: Sure. We are using Zoom. SFU went through a process with Zoom to make sure we had all the correct levels of encryption and security built in. We offer drop-ins four times a week. We offer morning, late morning, as well as late afternoon time slots, about an hour and a half to two hours. And we've done a bunch of communication and promotion around it and we've been trialing it, really, over the past month to see what the response would be. We are finding that clients are still accessing us more through texting us directly, texting, emailing. We suspect that they may be looking at our faces and pictures online and gauging their comfort level and then connecting directly with either one of us. There are two of us there.

Melanie: Thank you. We have a number of questions about the research actually, the International Pathways Project. People are wondering whether the project was taken on due to an increase in international students at the school or an increase in reports by international students? If that was one of the motivations for doing the work.

Melanie: I think one of the – Kate, if you're OK with me responding to this – I think one of the driving motivations was that all our different service areas, international services for students, Fraser International, the SVSPO, we recognize and we were seeing and we were aware and familiar that there are barriers for this vulnerable population. Even barriers for all students actually and then even more so for this population. So, we really wanted to learn more about how we could help mitigate and address some of the barriers to make our services more accessible.

Anoodth: Thank you. Another question from Erin is our offices had some resistance from our international education department in regards to sex positive or healthy sexuality training discussions. So, do you have any advice on how to communicate or push the need for these types of programs?

Kate: Having the numbers from students is a really good way to say, "Listen, this is what students want and need." So, if there's any way to do any sort of informal pulling of the student population that you're working with, I guarantee that that population will say "We want sexual health

education. We need it.” And, if you have a poll that says, well, a majority of our students say that they want and need this and then you can show them the stats on sexual violence, for example, within IP populations. I think it’s pretty hard to argue. Having an idea of what your students want and need, I think help in that situation. So, for example, when I was just pitching the LLC to residents, I came at it with the stats that we had. I said “This is the percentage of students that say that they want and need sexuality education and this is a way that we can do that. Can we work together?” So, I think coming at it with those stats is really helpful. I don’t know if you have anything to add to that, Melanie?

Anoodth: Thank you, Kate. Our next question is from Eileen. Eileen met you at the NASPA conference in January and was asking if you can expand more on what kind of information about confidentiality international students would benefit from learning about it in the context of accessing services.

Melanie: Sure. What we’ve been hearing, especially during conversations with our partners in International Services for Students and from what we’ve been seeing in our work with that demographic, is students are concerned about what we would be doing with the information by them sharing, is it going to be reported to their parents, for example. Is it going to go to their parents? Are their parents going to get a call? Or is it going to go to the International Centre? So, basically, really not learning more about the way in which we work and how we handle confidentiality and the approach that we use in facilitating services for them. So, within the context of facilitation, you know, getting their explicit consent to release information and what kind of information would be released and then how our offices work together to facilitate impact, support services so that their academics and other areas that have been impacted we can work with them around those issues.

Kate: Just to add to that, like something to keep in mind, is language-specific education. For example, the word confidential or confidentiality, that concept might mean something very different to another person, of their understanding of what that word actually means, they might not have ever heard that word. So, like Melanie is saying, like being very transparent about what confidentiality looks like, but also just what does that word mean? What does that word mean in this context, I think, not taking for granted the language aspect is important as well.

Melanie: Mm-hmm. And specifically if we’re talking about the impact to their immigration status. That’s something that comes up too. So, just concern of “Is this going to be reported?” and “Is it going to jeopardize my study permit and work permit?”

Anoodth: Thank you. Our next question is from Madison and it’s; has the SVSPO considered creative ways to support a more family or community-based support mechanism? I’m not sure how that would work, but I’m curious on ways to take into consideration more culturally appropriate ways to

provide support. Because I think one of the survey answers said that many students chose to go to their family or inner circles for support.

Melanie: Definitely. I know that with the work that we do with clients, you know, one of the first things – something that we’re always talking about and revisiting with each interaction – is who are their supports, identifying their supports and their resources and their strengths, whether it’s external or internal and looking at ways in which they can lean into that. So, if it is within something that they already practiced where they are sharing with family or with friends, if that is something that they’re comfortable with and they want to do, facilitating those conversations off how it can happen and what it can look like.

Anoodth: Thank you. Ashley was wondering if this research project identified strategies for building capacity and knowledge with faculty members and TAs on how to support international students regarding sexual violence. Because often faculty may be the first point of contact for international students, given the barrier to accessing support services, but sometimes faculty aren’t even aware of the unique barriers that international students face. And they might not perceive academic struggles with other struggles. Yeah, so they’re just curious if the research identified the need for online videos and workshops as well in different languages beyond the pamphlets.

Kate: I think probably both of us can answer this. I do a lot of education that I see specifically for faculty, because there is that massive need and because we want to equip our teachers and our instructors with the ability to have that conversation if a student wants to have it, and to feel comfortable with that. And, from doing those workshops I can see that there is still a huge need and that one workshop isn’t enough and that there does need to be more of an effort when it comes to certain days or opportunities. There does need to be more of a sustained effort in order to develop that. Because I think it’s the kind of thing where my experience is that it’s like a one-off workshop that schools might offer and it needs to be something more than that. And we hope to kind of develop that with the certificate for faculty and staff, but that wouldn’t be every faculty and staff, that would just be some. But I do think that’s a huge area that was identified in the survey and that I definitely see as an instructor there’s a huge need for that in the – it needs to be a continued and ongoing effort, rather than a one-off workshop. I don’t know, Melanie, if you have other experiences.

Melanie: Yeah. And I think finding ways in which we can build it into the expectations of that community rather than something that’s offered as a one-off I think is really important.

Kate: Absolutely.

Anoodth: I think we had some questions as well about that certificate for staff. So, once that's completed, will that be available, as well in a free or paid capacity?

Kate: Great question, that I do not know the answer to. Do you, Melanie?

Melanie: No.

Kate : Well, we'll put that in mind as we – My understanding is that – it's not my baby, it's someone else's in the team – but my understanding is that we're just at the initial process of starting this. So, it's good to know and then put that on the list of things to consider.

Anoodth: I see we have a few more questions. All of the slides will be shared after. And, yes, so, the recording will be made available on the website along with a transcript. And Ian's question for Mel and Kate were following a surveying effort with the students, did you see more engagement from students with the SVSPO, as in more students disclosing their experiences with sexual violence?

Melanie: We did not look for or notice any correlation. I think that's what I would have to say. In terms of who responded to the survey, we don't know that either. We looked for responses, we advertised it online. We had physical hardcopies available in key areas of campus, like in residence, International Services for Students. So, we don't know if folks responded because it was a term or an office that they were already familiar with and it caught their attention or if they responded to it, because of the incentives that were offered. So, we didn't notice a correlation with disclosures after the survey was conducted. And I know that it was slightly different at FIC and, Kate, maybe you can speak to that, because it was the classroom setting.

Kate: Yeah. So, at FIC we have a mandatory, like a wellbeing course essentially. That includes a lot of sexual health education that students take in their first semester of study, like when they first arrive in Canada. And that includes a lot of information on connecting to resources, including our wellness centre, which is where our counsellors work. So, there's a different level – We didn't notice an increase, but we have noticed any increase in accessing the wellness office for sexual violence and other experiences when we advertised the wellness office more. So, we started having our counsellors actually coming into the classrooms, so that students can meet then and say, OK, this is what a counsellor looks like. Most of our students have never used counselling resources before. So, when we started bringing those counsellors into the classroom wellness access went up, but that didn't actually correspond to the survey, it corresponded to just our practices in the classroom and how students were able to see, "Oh, yeah, that's who I'd be talking with. OK, I feel a bit more comfortable now." Which I think speaks to the video

that, Melanie, you're making with SVSPO of meeting the case managers and having that face and being able to connect with the person.

Melanie: Yeah, I think that's so important, just, you know, it helps pave the way for the beginning of building rapport. I do find that we hear a lot of "My friend told me about your office" and connection through word of mouth. That seems to be a really key way in which clients access our services.

Anoodth: Thank you. And we have another question. It's have you found a way students prefer communication and information, Melanie, from SVSPO to be delivered. Does social media seem to be the most beneficial way to reach students?

Melanie: Definitely, I would say. I'm just pulling up our survey results, because we did have a question in there about ways in which they would like to receive information on our support services. So, email came in at 54%, newsletters 25%, social media 50%, in class 31%, from a friend about 17%.

Kate: I do think it's worth mentioning that students wanted social media, but also that in Covid-19 it might not be happening yet, but I guarantee you it will happen in the next few semesters whereas more students are leaving Canada to do their online courses, so social media is an accessible platform. For example, I'm teaching classes to students who do not live in Canada right now, who are in their first semester of online study at our school and many of those students live in geo-blocked countries, where you can't access Instagram or you can't access Facebook. So, just to keep that in the back of your mind, that when you're working with IP students in Covid-19 social media you have to think carefully about that and what platforms you use and what other platforms you make available instead of just using Instagram and Facebook for example.

Anoodth: Thank you. I think we have time for just three more questions. So, it's; how do you address international students' concerns if they're concerned about whether their study permit will be impacted by their struggles?

Melanie: We definitely check in on their openness and comfort level in connecting with an international student advisor with our campus partners International Services for Students. If it's a case where they're not comfortable accessing directly and engaging directly with their consent, we facilitate them receiving the responses that they need to be aware of and to be informed. So, basically if we offer facilitation of setting up the appointment, supporting them in person if needed and attending and if they're not open to that, but they would like access to that information, we find ways in which we can pose those questions to our colleagues and get the answers for them.

Anoodth: Thank you, Melanie. Our next question is can you share a few creative dynamic strategies that the SVSPO and FIC have used to engage International Pathways students on sexual education?

Kate: Sorry, the question was just like ways that we engage students in sexuality education?

Anoodth: Mm-hmm. Like creative ideas and dynamic strategies that you use to bring students into the conversation on sexual education.

Kate: Something that I've been using, as I mentioned I'm teaching only online right now and almost all my students don't live in Canada right now, so I've been using Padlet, which is an online platform that kind of acts as social media, but it lets students have conversations with each other. So, one of the ways that I've been approaching sexual health education online is to turn a lot of the education over to the students to be having conversations with each other rather than me talking about my context that my students can't relate to at all because they've never been to Canada. So, I've been using this platform, Padlet, to have students have conversations with each other, giving them discussion questions, giving them a little tiny thing to research and then to post about it. And they can post videos, they can comment on each other's posts, they can create threads and discussions just like you would. Basically it's like an Instagram. And I've really enjoyed doing that.

It's probably one of the more successful tools I've used in sexual health education in the last couple of years. And it's provided a really awesome platform for students who are living in completely different countries to start developing intercultural communication skills and sexual health skills at the same time and to be developing them together and they're really just learning from each other and I'm just moderating essentially. So, that's one tool. If you are working with students online in any way, then I'd highly recommend checking it out. I'm sure there's similar platforms other than Padlet, but it's enabled me to kind of step out of the picture and have students learn from each other and me to just kind of guide them through that process. So, that's one thing that I've been really enjoying using lately.

Anoodth: Kate, would you share the name of the platform again and also type it into the chat box for our attendees?

Kate: Yeah, it's Padlet. P-A-D-L-E-T. It does cost money, just heads up. I can't remember the cost right now. But, yeah, it's basically saved my online teaching for me. I'm very grateful.

Anoodth: Thank you, Kate. Perhaps our very last question, as we're mindful of time. Have you noticed any differences in the needs of International Pathways students on sexual health education in the Covid-19 context?



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Kate: Yes. Melanie, do you want to –?

Melanie: Yeah. Speaking with our educator, students have definitely shown increased interest and curiosity to learn more about healthy practices related to online sexual activity such as sexting, video sex, sharing photos while they're social distancing with either their partners or their dates. So, that has definitely increased interest in that realm since Covid.

Kate: I think what I've been noticing from a prevention and education perspective is just the fact that, yeah, students are starting to be not just all in one city. And that creating sexual health education that has to rely not on understanding any sort of shared social context. So, normally when I do sexual health education we can all kind of acknowledge, yeah, this is what it's like here and people have witnessed and experienced that, even if it's different from what it was back home. Whereas now you're going that education with students who have different levels of experience with the culture that is on the west coast for example. So, I've noticed just a difference in the perspective that I take on sexual health and the context that it exists in and really trying to take it out of context as much as possible.

Anoodth: Thank you, Melanie and Kate. We've had a really great discussion today. I just want to honour our 1 hour commitment. Melanie and Kate thank you so much for sharing your time and expertise with us today. We've learned a lot and the recording will be available on our website in a few days. I also want to thank our participants for joining us, and sharing with us today. We appreciate and take inspiration from your commitment to addressing and preventing gender-based violence on campus and we feel very lucky to be able to work alongside each and every one of you. Thank you again, and a kind reminder to please complete the evaluation forms. We look forward to seeing you at the next webinar in July. Bye, everyone.