

# Courage to Act:

Developing a National draft Framework  
to Address and Prevent Gender-Based  
Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions  
in Canada

**Khan, F., Rowe, C. J.,  
and Bidgood, R. (2019).**

**POSSIBILITY**  
 **SEEDS**

# Courage to Act: A Call to Action

This draft Framework is meant to be 'a call to action'.

Informed by experienced survivors, student researchers, frontline workers and policy experts working to address and prevent gender-based violence at post-secondary institutions and beyond.

What you'll find in this draft Framework are ideas, concepts and practices inspiring the courageous actions needed to make substantive change.

It will take a great courage to act.

The ways in which we act may look different for each of us.

This is the important work that awaits all of us.

Working together, this change is possible.

**Let's start here.**

Courage to Act: Developing a National draft Framework to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence on Post-Secondary Campuses was graciously funded by the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality, Federal Government of Canada.



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada

Canada

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to begin 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 colonialism that is used to marginalize and dispossess Indigenous peoples from their lands and waters. Our work on campuses and in our communities must centre this truth as we strive to end gender-based violence. We commit to continuing to learn and grow and to take an anti-colonial and inclusive approach to the work we engage with. It is our intention to honour this responsibility.

## Dedication

*For Kiyān, thank you for patience.*

We dedicate this work to people affected by gender-based violence within our post-secondary campus communities. We see you, we believe you and we work alongside you.

The Draft Framework builds upon the long history of feminist anti-violence activism, frontline work, and research. We dedicate this work to all those who are striving to end gender-based violence. We are building from legacies that came before us and are working to make transformative change for our communities and for those to come after us.

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# Introduction

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Currently there is an unprecedented conversation in North America on gender-based violence (GBV) on post-secondary campuses. Survivors, administrators, student advocates, parents, faculty, and GBV organizations are pushing for change. These calls to action must go beyond service on an individual basis: they require a holistic framework that addresses policy, procedures, and prevention. GBV and sexual assault are vastly under-reported crimes that cannot be addressed in isolation. For this framework to be transformative, it will take collaboration between Federal and provincial governments, post-secondary institutions (PSI), survivor advocates, grassroots movements, and community organizations to end GBV.

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Student advocates, unions, organizations, research, and grassroots survivor-led groups have been working for decades to address sexual violence on campus. As a result, over the past few years there have been some key changes in PSIs to address sexual violence across Canada. Beginning in 2016, provincial governments, including Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Manitoba, have passed legislation mandating all PSIs (colleges, universities, CEGEP, trade schools) to establish stand-alone sexual violence policies. Since then, other provinces have followed suit.

To address this urgent issue the Government of Canada made a \$5.5 million commitment to develop a National Gender-Based Violence Campus Draft Framework over the next five years facilitated through the Department of Women and Gender Equality. Over a five month period, from January to May 2019, Possibility Seeds was tasked with the development of the draft Framework with support of Women and Gender Equality Framework Advisory Committee. The draft Framework captures promising practices, key policy areas, and prevention plans developed in collaboration with community stakeholders from across Canada. It builds on the crucial work—led by students, staff, faculty, and community organizers—already being done on campuses to address sexual violence, while expanding the scope to more broadly include GBV.

# Draft Framework Advisory Committee

The Department of Women and Gender Equality established the Draft Framework Advisory Committee to assist the development of the Draft Framework to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions. The Draft Framework's Advisory Committee was formed to support the Government of Canada in its commitment to developing a harmonized framework to ensure consistent, comprehensive, and sustainable approaches in addressing GBV at PSIs across Canada.

**The Advisory Committee is an informed, vibrant group of individuals dedicated to preventing and addressing GBV at PSIs. The members of the Advisory Committee include:**

- Priya Dube, Canadian Alliance of Student Association (CASA)
- Arig al Shaibah, McMaster University
- Brenda Austin-Smith, Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)
- Manon Bergeron, Université du Québec à Montréal
- Joanna Birenbaum, Ursel Phillips Fellows Hopkinson LLP
- Ann Buller, Centennial College
- Karen Busby, University of Manitoba
- Lisa Clarke, Kawartha Sexual Assault Centre
- Britney De Costa, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)
- Cassbreea Dewis, University of Victoria
- Nancy Deziel, Collège Shawinigan
- Deb Eerkes, University of Alberta
- Jennifer Flood, Sexual Violence and Prevention, Humber College
- Jason Garcia, Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
- Taylor Glaspey, National Education Associate of Disabled Students (NEADS)
- Trina James, Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)
- Bee Khaleeli, Sexual Assault Centre of McGill University
- Mélanie Lemay, Québec contre les violences sexuelles
- Lucia Lorenzi, McMaster University
- Myrna McCallum, Miyo Pimatisiwin Legal Services
- Jesmen Mendoza, Ryerson University
- Janet Morrison, Sheridan College
- Melanie Omeniho, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (Women of the Métis Nation)
- Chandra Pasma, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
- Peter Ricketts, Acadian University
- Caitlin Salvino, Students for Consent Culture (SFCC)
- Hilary Swan, Fredericton Sexual Assault Centre
- Vianne Timmons, University of Regina
- Candace Wasacase-Lafferty, University of Saskatchewan



# About Possibility Seeds

Possibility Seeds Consulting is a leading Canadian project management and policy development firm. We work alongside our clients to create, connect, and cultivate gender equity. Our team has over 20 years of broad experience working with communities, governments, labour organizations, public and private institutions.

## **Possibility Seeds Draft Framework to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions Team includes:**

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## **Editors**

To echo the community-engaged process that shaped the development of the draft Framework, we would like to thank the following individuals who generously edited, refined, and reviewed this draft:

Jennifer Flood

Woo Kim

Myrna McCallum

Courtney Skye

Listening and Learning Sessions Collaborators

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The draft Framework has been developed in collaboration with the draft Framework Advisory Committee along with 33 Listening and Learning Sessions with key campus and community stakeholders from across the country. This included people affected by GBV, complainants in PSI cases, government officials, respondents in PSI cases, students, PSI unions, administration, faculty, staff, and GBV community organizations. There was a focus not only on areas of work i.e. Educators, but also regions i.e. Northern, Rural and Remote campuses and communities i.e. People with Disabilities.

Information was gathered through individual and group conversations and through an online submission form. With this information, we have identified key promising practices and gaps in the areas of education, support, and reporting, investigations and adjudication around GBV. As well, we have outlined next steps in order to better meet the needs of our diverse communities at PSIs.

Within each chapter, with the exception of the reporting, investigation and adjudication chapter, participant quotes list the Listening and Learning session they were a part of and excludes their name (ie. Educating Students, Listening and Learning Participant). This was a conscious choice by our team after initial conversations with potential Listening and Learning participants who wanted to provide candid feedback anonymously. The only chapter where participant uniformly requested to have their names attached to their quotes was within the Reporting, Investigation and Adjudication chapter. In this section, you will find the name of the participant, the institution they are affiliated with and the session they participated in. We have done our best to respect individual confidentiality throughout the writing of this draft Framework.

We would like to thank all collaborators for participating in Listening and Learning Sessions. Your stories, experiences, and knowledge helped directly shape each chapter of this draft Framework. We are indebted to you for the time and expertise you provided us. Thank you for the work you do in your communities to address and prevent GBV.

# Why Focus on Gender-Based Violence?

The focus of much of the advocacy, policy, support and prevention on PSI campuses has been sexual violence. Through conversations with advocates and campus community members, we know that the current scope of sexual violence policies can fall short in supporting people affected by GBV. For example, a student may be subjected to physical abuse from a partner and may not be able to access support services as this violence does not fall within scope of current sexual violence policies. Having programming and services in place to support them may prevent future violence from taking place. This draft Framework expands the scope to recognize the

myriad of ways in which violence is experienced by students, faculty and staff on campus, recognizing that it moves beyond sexual violence to include other forms of gendered violence.

Throughout this document GBV can be conceptualized as a large umbrella that encompasses sexual violence. The federal government (BCFED, 2018) defines GBV as the use and abuse of control over another person and is perpetrated against someone based on their gender expression, gender identity, or perceived gender. GBV— including violence against women and girls—can take many forms:

## Additional terms to become familiar with under the umbrella of GBV include:

- Sexual Harassment
- Stalking
- Early or Forced Marriage
- Emotional and Psychological Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Genital Mutilation and/or Cutting
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexual exploitation
- Human Trafficking
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexualized Violence
- Technology-Facilitated Violence
- Stealthing or nonconsensual condom removal
- Sexual assault
- Reproductive Coercion
- Threats of Violence (including self-harm) in order to coerce sex
- Rape

## Forms of Gender-Based Violence

physical violence

spiritual abuse

financial abuse

harrasment (including stalking)

online violence/  
technology-facilitated violence

sexual violence (including sexual abuse, sexual harrasment, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation)

emotional and psychological violence (including put-downs, bullying, threats, and intimidation)



# Executive Summary

# Courage to Act: A Call to Action

This draft Framework is meant to be 'a call to action'.

Informed by experienced survivors, student researchers, frontline workers and policy experts working to address and prevent gender-based violence at post-secondary institutions and beyond.

What you'll find in this draft Framework are ideas, concepts and practices inspiring the courageous actions needed to make substantive change.

It will take a great courage to act.

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This is the important work that awaits all of us.

Working together, this change is possible.

Let's start here.

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**7** Person  
Project  
Team

**29**  
Person Advisory  
Committee

**30+**  
Listening and  
Learning  
Consultations

**300+**  
Listening  
and Learning  
Participants

**45**  
Recommendations

**60+**  
Representatives  
from Post  
Secondary  
Institutions

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There is an unprecedented conversation in North America on gender-based violence on post-secondary campuses. Survivors, administrators, student advocates, parents, faculty, and gender-based violence organizations are pushing for transformative change. Traditional responses of supports and services for individuals are still vital but are no longer enough. We now need a holistic framework that sustainably addresses policy, procedures, and GBV prevention.

From January to May 2019 the National Draft Framework to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence was developed by Possibility Seeds Consulting in collaboration with the Women and Gender Equality Draft Framework Advisory Committee. This document captures promising practices, key policy areas, and prevention plans. Developed in collaboration with community

stakeholders from across Canada during 30+ Listening and Learning Sessions, this draft Framework builds on the crucial work—led by students, staff, faculty, academics and community organizers—already being done on campuses and in communities to address sexual violence, while expanding the scope to more broadly include gender-based violence.

The draft Framework is broken into three key chapters and includes: 1) responding to disclosures of gender-based violence and support for people affected by gender-based violence, 2) gender-based violence prevention education, and 3) reporting, investigations, and adjudication. Each chapter delves into key concepts, concerns and promising practices that post-secondary institutions can explore in the development of policy, protocols and practices to address and prevent gender-based violence.

Responding to disclosures of gender-based violence and support for people affected by gender-based violence is a natural first step in establishing a draft Framework. The first chapter explores three key themes including, a) developing capacity in post-secondary institutions to become trauma-responsive campuses, b) developing clear and well supported access to workplace accommodations and academic considerations for those affected by gender-based violence, and c) collaborating with both internal and external partners to ensure that holistic approaches to supporting those affected by gender-based violence are employed. This chapter highlights that this work must be grounded in a trauma-informed, intersectional, and equity based approach. There is no short term solutions, this is long term work. Many of the participants in the Listening and Learning sessions agreed that much more conversations and research is needed to move the practices forward, particularly within a Canadian context.

A key component to supporting the social change needed to address and prevent gender-based violence is education. In the second chapter, we see that gender-based violence prevention education needs to be ongoing and adaptable to address the ever-evolving landscapes of post-secondary institutions and consider the lived experiences of campus community members in its development and execution. Multiple programs, tools, pedagogical approaches and techniques are needed to deliver effective educational programming. Students, faculty and staff should be exposed to consistent prevention messages and education at multiple points in time over their tenure at post-secondary

institutions. These educational opportunities should be developmentally sequenced both in method of delivery and content. Post-secondary institutions have an opportunity to contribute to ongoing conversations in research around gender-based violence prevention education. The opportunities outlined in this draft Framework create the foundation for new and ongoing programs and approaches as well as assessments of their effectiveness in fostering community learning and culture change.

Finally, the third chapter explores the areas of reporting, investigations, and adjudication of cases involving gender-based violence within post-secondary practices. Through this project, it became clear that there are many nuanced and contradictory ideas on how reporting, investigations, and adjudication processes should unfold for students, faculty and staff affected by gender-based violence. Within this chapter, we attempt to address the issues surrounding the increasingly complex topics of student conduct and labour relations while acknowledging that there are intersecting legal frameworks which must be taken into account at the provincial, territorial and federal levels. Such legal frameworks include, but are not limited to, human rights law, child welfare law, administrative law, criminal law and privacy law. These laws confer rights and obligations on post-secondary administrators, not just best practices. With that in mind, more research is needed to fully grasp the scope of complexities inherent in reporting, investigations and adjudication processes within the unique provincial, territorial and national landscapes.

There are a number of overarching recommendations that emerge from the draft Framework and set the stage for a broader and more holistic approach for post-secondary institutions to address and prevent gender-based violence. At the heart of all the work is the experience of those affected by gender-based violence. We hope this draft Framework honours them by applying invaluable lessons learned from their experiences to improve practices, policies and procedures to address and prevent gender-based violence.

# Gender-Based Violence in Canada at a glance

Statistics are used to help paint a picture of our lived experiences. Understanding the rates and impacts of gender-based violence in Canadian society and at post-secondary institutions is an important component in this draft Framework.

However, we know that these numbers are partial truths. Gender-based violence is one of the most underreported experiences in police statistics and in surveys. It is important to recognize that statistics on gender-based violence are usually based on the experiences of cis women and men. They often do not include the experiences of two-spirit, trans, gender non-binary and queer people, we still have much to learn. We offer the statistics below to help shape our conversation recognizing that there is more to do to understand the full extent and impacts of gender-based violence on all of us.

## Courage to Recognize the Impact

**We recognize** because violence against women costs taxpayers and the government billions of dollars every year: Canadians collectively spend \$7.4 billion to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence alone (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2015)

**We recognize** because students, and especially women who were students, reported relatively high rates of sexual assault. Overall, approximately 261,000 incidents of sexual assault—41% of all incidents—were reported by students. This represented a rate of 73 incidents of sexual assault per 1,000 population. Of all sexual assault incidents where the victim was a student, 90% were committed against women. However, rates of sexual assault

among young women who were students and those who were not students were relatively similar. As such, age may be a larger factor than student status (Statistics Canada, 2014a)

**We recognize** because 19% of women and 13% of men aged 15 to 64 reported that they experienced at least one type of harassment in the workplace in the past 12 months (Statistics Canada, 2018a)

**We recognize** because 18% of men and 16% of women who reported experiencing workplace harassment in the past year reported that they had poor mental health, compared with 6% of men and 8% of women who had not been harassed (Statistics Canada, 2018a)



**We recognize** because 30% of employees report having experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace (Statistics Canada, 2018a)

**We recognize** because evidence suggests that being harassed in the workplace by a supervisor or another person in a position of power can have more harmful consequences for survivors/victims than being harassed by someone without the power imbalance. Among men who were harassed by a manager or supervisor, 23% reported low levels of job satisfaction, compared with 9% of those who were harassed by someone other than a person in a position of power. Women who were harassed by a person in position of power were also significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with their job, relative to those who had not been harassed. (Statistics Canada, 2018a)

**We recognize** because 7 in 10 people who experience family violence are women and girls (Statistics Canada, 2014b)

**We recognize** because women with disabilities are twice as likely as women without disabilities to have been sexually assaulted in the last year (DAWN, 2019)

**We recognize** because almost two million Canadians aged 15 years and older—about 8% of women and 5% of men—reported being stalked in the preceding five years. One of the most common types of stalking experienced by victims was unwanted emails, texts or communication over social media, representing 28% of all forms of stalking experienced by Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2018b)

**We recognize** because nearly one-third of stalking victims (32%) experienced physical intimidation or threats of violence consistent with Criminal Code definitions of assault, while almost 1 in 5 (18%) were victims of actual physical violence (Statistics Canada, 2018a)

**We recognize** because approximately every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2015)

**We recognize** because the rates of spousal violence and homicide are highest for women in the 15 to 24 age group (Statistics Canada, 2013)

**We recognize** that immigrants and newcomers who arrive in Canada having experienced trauma due to conflict, oppressive governments or war are less likely to report sexual and physical violence to the authorities as they fear deportation or further victimization. (Migrant Mothers Project, 2014, p. 34)

**We recognize** because 67% of Canadians know a woman who has experienced physical or sexual abuse (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2012)

**We recognize** because in 2017 police-reported data indicate that violence against girls and young women was most commonly perpetrated by a male accused (81% of accused), and this was similar for boys and young men (79% of accused) (Statistics Canada, 2017)

**We recognize** because only 1 in 3 Canadians know what sexual consent means (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2015)

**We recognize** because 4 out of 5 undergraduate students surveyed at Canadian universities reported experiencing dating violence; 29% of them reported sexual assault (DeKeseredy, 2011)

**We recognize** because women with a mental health disability were three times more likely to be victims of sexual assault compared to those with no mental disability in 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2018c)

**We recognize** because bisexual women were seven times more likely to report experiencing sexual assault (208 versus 29 per 1,000 population) than their heterosexual counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2018b)

**We recognize** because 1 in 6 men will experience sexual violence in their lifetimes (1in6.org)

**We recognize** because the rate of self-reported sexual assault of Indigenous people (58 per 1,000) was almost triple that of non-Indigenous people (20 per 1,000). The rate of sexual assault self-reported by Indigenous women (113 per 1,000) was more than triple that of non-Indigenous women (35 per 1,000) (Statistics Canada, 2016)

**We recognize** gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer people are at higher risk for sexual assault, and harassment. In a study by EGALE (2011) it found that levels of sexual harassment are high across the board for LGBTQ students. The following groups of students reported having experienced sexual harassment in school in the last year: 49% of trans students, 43% of female bisexual students, 42% of male bisexual students, 40% of gay male students, 33% of lesbian students (EGALE Canada, 2011)

**We recognize** because sexual assault survivors/victims most commonly reported feeling angry, or upset, confused or frustrated after the incident. 1 in 4 survivors/victims reported that they had difficulty carrying out everyday activities because of the incident. Further, 1 in 6 survivors/victims reported experiencing three or more longer-term emotional consequences, indicating the possibility of post-traumatic stress disorder (Conroy & Cotter, 2017)

It takes courage to act on this new knowledge.

**Let's take action together.**

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The background is a solid teal color with several decorative elements. There are four large, overlapping circular patterns made of small dots in shades of pink and orange. These patterns are arranged in a way that they appear to be part of a larger, abstract design. The dots are scattered across the teal background, creating a vibrant and textured effect.

# Key Recommendations for Post-Secondary Institutions to Address and Prevent Gender- Based Violence

# QUICK REFERENCE

## Key Recommendations for Post-Secondary Institutions to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence:

- Implement existing Indigenous-led solutions aimed to end gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people.
- Utilize a trauma-informed approach to support services, education, and reporting.
- Support the leadership of student survivors, researchers, and activists.
- Work with broader movements to end gender-based violence.
- Develop and implement performance measurements, evaluation, and climate surveys.
- Establish centralized data collection, reporting, and public disclosure of statistics.
- Create a policy creation and review process.
- Ensure that intersecting PSI policies are adapted to reflect overarching gender-based violence plan.
- Implement an intersectional equity approach to addressing and preventing gender-based violence.
- Commit to sustainable funding for gender-based violence services and education.
- Create a long-term Gender Equity Strategic Plan for the PSI.
- Enact oversight mechanisms with Indigenous, provincial, territorial, and/or federal governments.
- Responding to Disclosures of Gender-Based Violence and Providing Support

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This draft Framework looks to build upon the work being supported by post-secondary institutions (PSIs) in addressing sexual violence and misconduct to enhance:

- support services,
  - education, and
  - the reporting, investigations and adjudication processes.
- 

We explore these three key areas which post-secondary institutions will need to consider in order to address and prevent gender-based violence (GBV) on their campuses. In each chapter you will have the opportunity to explore key themes, findings and promising practices along with areas for further research and exploration. With this in mind, there are a number of overarching recommendations stemming out of the draft Framework and that set the stage for a broader and more holistic approach to supporting PSIs to address and prevent GBV.

Although this work can seem overwhelming, the draft Framework focuses on three areas to highlight both the good work already being done and how PSIs, community members, community organizations and others can all support this work moving forward. We elaborate on many of the recommendations listed above throughout the draft Framework. However, there are others that will require further exploration in the future. At the heart of all the work is the experience of those affected by GBV. We hope this draft Framework honours them by applying invaluable lessons learned from their experiences to improve our practices, policies and procedures around GBV and work towards prevention.

# 1. Implement existing Indigenous-led solutions aimed to end gender-based violence against Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and non-binary people.

Addressing GBV in Indigenous communities necessarily includes addressing their distinct experience of settler colonialism. Two places where historical context meets contemporary, Indigenous-led solutions are in the Calls for Justice in the *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (2019) and in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2015). A number of the Calls to Action made within the reports intersect with the work articulated in this draft Framework. First, PSIs must work with Indigenous communities to develop and provide culturally relevant services on family and domestic violence and overcoming the experience of having been sexually abused. Education and training within PSIs concerning GBV prevention should be developed in ways that acknowledge the impact of GBV on Indigenous communities, work to dispel stereotyping, and highlight the resiliency and creativity of Indigenous peoples and communities. This work should be done in collaboration with local Indigenous communities at each institution.

“All institutional and governmental sexual and gender-based policies and protocols need to be rewritten jointly with the Indigenous communities on whose land post-secondary institutions operate in order to fully incorporate their perspectives and worldviews... Currently, all sexual violence policies employ solely a settler-colonial perspective and legalistic language, thereby distancing Indigenous communities, international and other foreign-born postsecondary community members, and their allies from these policies. All associated policies and protocols should be rewritten in this same light as well in order to break down barriers to exclusion, stigma, etc. and to open ground for decolonial ways of receiving support, healing and justice.”

(Online Submission, Listening and Learning Participant)

PSIs should work with Indigenous peoples, local Indigenous communities and educators to ensure that GBV staff on campus are educated on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge, local histories and teaching methods in their curriculum. *Reclaiming Power and Place* (2019) describes a number of principles that must inform implementation of ending violence strategies for them to be effective and meaningful. These include: a focus on substantive equality and human and Indigenous rights; a decolonizing approach; inclusion of families and survivors; self-determined and Indigenous-led solutions and services; recognizing distinctions; cultural safety; and taking a trauma-informed approach. A part of this work entails building out a curriculum on the legacy and ongoing impact of settler colonialism, including: land dispossession, historic and contemporary treaty relationships, and Indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary

contributions to Canada so that GBV education and prevention can be framed in culturally grounded ways. The basis of this curriculum should be the understanding that ending GBV experienced by Indigenous people is contingent upon the implementation of Indigenous-led solutions. As one Listening and Learning Participant shared:

“When we talk about the roots of gender-based violence, we know there are links. The piece that resonates with me is we acknowledge the land. Why do we do this and how is this linked to what we are teaching? When we reference colonialism we need to build on this. Build in the connection with Indigenous knowledges. How do we build out consent education and education on Indigenous people, our history and... A part of this is for educators to be informed about why we are doing this and the importance of what we do here on this land (i.e. murdered and missing women, residential school, the 60s scoop).”

(Indigenous Peoples, Listening and Learning Participant)

While this may be a departure from typical approaches and ways decisions are made at PSIs, it's important to consider that substantive changes in approach are necessary to change cultures in order to create safety. As *Reclaiming Power and Place* (2019) notes:

“In this sense, the information presented in this report and the recommendations it offers are not easy to understand or implement. Due to the denial of knowledge and expertise held by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people for so long, respecting these opinions and teachings will challenge readers, researchers, policy makers, and the general public who are used to thinking about policy solutions or social issues in a particular way or within already established systems. Really listening to this expertise often requires questioning standard ways of doing things, challenging the status quo, and being open to radical, new alternatives.”



## 2. Utilize a trauma-informed approach to support services, education, and reporting.

Policies and practices must aim to minimize the potential for harm and re-traumatization, and should enhance safety, comfort, healing and resilience for all parties involved. A trauma-informed approach to support services, education, and reporting recognizes the connections between violence, trauma, and negative health outcomes. It additionally understands that trauma greatly impacts memory as well as the ability to recall events in a detailed or chronological manner and behaviours. Being trauma-informed acknowledges the traumatic nature of the subject matter rather than focusing on treating trauma, and includes identifying and understanding trauma symptoms, adapting our practices accordingly.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) outline the ‘four R’s’, or assumptions, used in a trauma-informed approach;

- **REALISE** the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery;
- **RECOGNIZE** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
- **RESPOND** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices,
- **SEEK** to actively resist retraumatization. (SAMHSA’s Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, 2014. p.9).

## 3. Support the leadership of student survivors, researchers, and activists.

Over the last few decades, there has been tremendous organizing in Canada by students to address sexual violence and GBV at PSIs. Currently student unions and groups including but not limited to the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, Our Turn, Students for Consent Culture, Silence is Violence, Canadian Federation of Students, are all striving to make change in addressing sexual and GBV on campuses. A key goal behind the development of this draft Framework is to further conversations and build capacities at PSIs to address GBV in consistent, ethical, and clear ways. Working with students, student organizers and activists is key to building strong relationships and making change that impacts PSIs in positive ways.

## 4. Work with broader movements to end gender-based violence.

Collaboration is key in enhancing a strategic approach to addressing and preventing GBV in PSIs. A number of key areas of collaboration came to the surface during our Listening and Learning sessions:

- a. **BUILD** strong relationships and work closely with community based organizations i.e violence against women organizations, LGBTQ2S+ organizations, and experts in the field of GBV to support education and support services at PSIs.
- b. **SUPPORT** community organizations’ advocacy for policies and services that will address and prevent GBV.

- c. **RECOGNIZE** that a single campus office or an individual cannot end GBV on their own. GBV at PSIs is a public health issue that impacts all of us. The entire campus community must work collectively to create a safer environment and culture of respect in which all members can live, work, and learn.
- d. **COLLABORATE** with unions who have a long history of involvement in addressing GBV on campuses. Building strong relationships and partnerships with unions is a key element to sustainable social change and understanding the impacts of GBV on their members.

## 5. Develop and implement performance measurements, evaluation, and climate surveys.

Assessment and evaluation should be used to help PSIs understand how effective their policies and processes are in addressing and preventing GBV. Methods that help measure changes in behaviour, effectiveness of support services and impacts of the reporting, investigation and adjudication process are key to system change. PSIs and their community partners must understand the scope and prevalence of GBV in order to properly assess if their interventions are having the intended impact - ending GBV on campus.

Using data collected reliably over time, PSIs can assess changes in prevailing attitudes around GBV. This information can then be used to evaluate programs and policies to establish best practices in GBV intervention and prevention, which includes disaggregated data regarding race, ability, gender identity, gender expression, migration status, and Indigenous identity in order to understand how different communities may be disproportionately affected and require distinct responses.

### Some assessment and evaluation tools include:

- a. Embed questions in already existing campus surveys, such as the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) research survey
- b. Program evaluation, which includes service users and deliverers
- c. Research partnerships with faculty
- d. Community wide surveys and focus groups
- e. Campus climate surveys (an institutional specific tool or one that can be developed for use across the country).

Assessment and evaluation questions and tools should be developed with a clear understanding of what information is needed. These tools can then be developed to provide a more nuanced understanding of lived experiences and key factors that affect GBV at PSIs. Issues around confidentiality must also be a key consideration from the development phase.

“[I]f I were going to look at how to mandate evaluation it would probably be through really rigorous community climate surveying that would have to be done over quite a lengthy time period because probably in the first sort of I don’t know whether it’s five to eight or ten years kind of thing within that time period, right?... [T]hen the question becomes, ‘how do you do things like sustained funding for that kind of really long-term climate survey?’”

(Faculty and Staff, Listening and Learning Participant)

“[As campus educators] we’re limited in our own resources we’re given such a large portfolio and unfortunately often what we see is that the research component falls short of what we really needed to accomplish and so either if that’s embedded in policy or if it’s in part of the accompanying documents.”

(Educating Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

## 6. Establish centralized data collection, reporting, and public disclosure of statistics.

A rubric should be developed to support PSIs in reporting on the work they are doing to address and prevent GBV. Such data could include the types and number of support services and referrals provided to those affected by GBV, the number of participants engaged with, themes of the educational opportunities provided to the campus community, and reporting of cases involving GBV. This data would be collected by a centralized office and the reporting would take place annually. These reports would be published, widely publicised, easily searched, and housed on a centralized website.

Ensuring that there is a coordination of data collection on GBV, including information about disclosures and reports, will allow PSIs to have a clear indication of emerging trends, needs and gaps in service provision. In some provinces, data is required by the Ministry of Education (i.e. Ontario). However this data focuses on reports of sexual

violence and not disclosures, leading to a limited understanding of the amount of people served within PSI communities. It is imperative that a GBV policy outlines what data is collected, how the data is collected, who it is shared with and for what purpose.

### Key practices for data collection and record keeping:

- **CREATE** a protocol for data collection and distribution between on-campus collaborators;
- **ENSURE** that employee surveys, audits and proactive workplace inspections take place to identify biases, attitudes and structures that contribute to GBV;
- **SET** policies and procedures for record keeping and accessing records.

Most policies lack or have weak provisions on collection, analysis, and public release of aggregate data. This results in future policies and revisions being based on incomplete records or insufficient evidence to make informed decisions. Student activists including the group Silence is Violence have requested that this data be collected and shared to promote accountability and inform where improvement is needed in policies and processes.

Refinement of those policies to best address the systemic nature of campus GBV will depend on more compelling and complete data from across the country.

“We’ve never had a non-academic suspension or expulsion at the university. And knowing that’s the truth... it would be great if we had data from other universities.”

(Response and Support, People Who do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

“I think we have a unanimous plea for more information.”

(Education, People Who do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

GBV programs and policies cannot be properly designed, implemented, and evaluated without adequate data. There has been a call for PSIs to be more transparent about the effectiveness of their GBV policies but an accurate assessment of whether the policies are accomplishing their objectives is difficult to demonstrate. A PSI’s institutional research/assessment and planning unit, or others who work on assessment and evaluation, could work with individuals doing work on GBV programs and policies to determine the best ways of collecting and analyzing this data.

## 7. Create a Policy Development and Review Process

It is important to develop a strategic campus engagement process in the development and ongoing review of a GBV policy and all policies adjacent to and impacted by it.

- a. **MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT:** The policy development process should include a robust engagement period with the entire campus community, through both in person sessions and an online tool/portal. Specific care should be made to ensure that those most impacted by gender-based violence are given space to provide feedback and engage with the process.
- b. **TIME SENSITIVE REVIEW:** Some provinces have mandated that sexual violence policies in PSIs be reviewed every 2 or 3 years. The same should be true across all Canadian GBV policies, in all provinces and territories.
- c. **VARIETY OF FEEDBACK CHANNELS:** The policy review process should include opportunities for students, faculty and staff to provide feedback throughout the review through different platforms (i.e. online survey, stakeholder sessions, town halls, etc.).

“Extensive consultations with organizations inside and outside of the campus community is needed when developing and reviewing policy. Indigenous community members are not often brought into the conversation in genuine ways. When we implement policies of this magnitude we need to identify the consultation needs that have to support the development and implementation of these policies. For example, the Indigenous centre on my campus wasn’t consulted on the development of the sexual violence policy. Same with queer, trans and 2S people and folks with disabilities. The policies are full of jargon that won’t sit well with a lot of communities. Really advocate about consulting with those with the most stake at this, especially rural and remote communities. Be cognizant of this moving forward.”

(Indigenous Peoples, Listening and Learning Participant)

## 8. Ensure that intersecting PSI policies are adapted to reflect an overarching gender-based violence plan.

We must pay attention to where PSIs' GBV policies intersect and overlap with other policies and agreements that affect campus community members. Often, protocols are embedded in other policies, such as a student code of conduct or in collective agreements.

**“When complaints come forward they are very likely to involve one person who belongs to a bargaining unit. There is a difficulty when policies are designed to follow a structure that runs parallel to another structure that’s governed by labour law... there needs to be more communication between those systems.”**

(Reporting, Investigations and Adjudication, Listening and Learning Participant)

Where PSIs have other policies that overlap or intersect with GBV policies, these policies should be reviewed and revised to reflect the existence of current strategies or procedures to address incidents of GBV. Priority should be given to policies such as: conflict of interest, student code of conduct, human rights, and at-risk behaviour policies. Revisions to procedures embedded within collective agreements and campus security protocols should also be agreed upon by the necessary parties.

**“These policies do not exist in a vacuum. Unfortunately, just from my experience and our experience with other locals, the fact that the policies have been created with no or little consultation from unions and the refusal that this policy exists within the labour code.”**

(Reporting, Investigations and Adjudication, Listening and Learning Participant)

In addition to multiple overlapping policies within a PSI, there are also policies that interact and overlap with provincial and territorial legislation, such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act. These should also be reviewed bi-annually by senior administrators to see how they will interact with their GBV policy to avoid duplication and ensure alignment.

**“I would like to call for an exemption to the standard wait time for policy revisions (2-3 years) for this, as new policies may be applied to student cases without the appropriate awareness and training first provided through institutional sexual and gender-based violence policies and their associated processes and procedures.”**

(Online submission, Listening and Learning Participant)

PSIs should develop a protocol for when new policies are developed that intersect with the GBV policy in the PSI to ensure alignment and to eliminate confusion. This also ensures that other workplace or campus policies do not discriminate against those experiencing workplace GBV.

**“Our institution’s sexual violence policy has not been updated to indicate how the new mental health policy interacts with it, so those wishing to come forward with a gender-based or sexual violence complaint may be unaware of the possibility of interaction between the two. It should be noted that the University-Mandated Health Policy proposal states that the applicability of the policy is in cases of medical or personal problems. Both of those situations affect victims, aggressors and even bystanders in sexual and gender-based violence situations.”**

(Online Submission, Listening and Learning Participant)

## **9. Implement an intersectional equity approach to addressing and preventing gender-based violence.**

Intersectionality should be an underpinning of any framework that addresses GBV. It recognizes that all experiences of GBV are not the same. Rather, our conversations, interventions, prevention strategies, and support services should be facilitated to respond to the needs of the broader campus community while also providing relevant supports and services based on an individual’s needs and lived experience. Some individuals or groups experience GBV at higher rates. Intersectionality recognizes that a person’s experience will be impacted by many social factors, including their positions within the structures of their campus.

The concept of intersectionality was first penned by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw’s work has reshaped how we think about power and privilege, and their effects on social identities and lived experiences. She argues that gender cannot be understood without a critical look at all of the ways in which one’s identities are interconnected. Such interconnections include gender identity and expression, sex, age, racial or ethnic background, language, ability, socioeconomic status, Indigeneity, and sexual orientation, to name a few.

“Make an intersectional approach to the education work that we’re doing. So recognizing that shifting a culture is going to be more than just addressing gender-based violence, but we need to look at gender-based violence and its intersections with other forms of violence.”

(Faculty and Staff Education, Listening and Learning Participant)

This approach recognizes that the unique social locations of those who have been impacted by GBV will influence their experiences and healing process. When GBV occurs, an individual’s social location impacts the services they have access to, if they are believed and how they are treated in their community. Their social location impacts their experiences with situations such as the medical, legal and education systems. This is why it is imperative to recognize that no single approach to justice, support, and education will not meet the needs of all.

## 10. Commit to sustainable funding for gender-based violence services and education.

GBV is a multi-faceted and complex reality at PSIs. The steps outlined in this draft Framework require ongoing, dedicated and sustainable funding from multiple sources including government, PSI and private institutions. The development of stand-alone policies, hiring and training conduct officers and investigators, adding support services for community members affected by GBV and prevention education require proper resourcing and support. If institutions solely devote resources to responding when GBV cases arise we lose the opportunity to change the culture to prevent future violence from occurring.

## 11. Create a long-term Gender Equity Strategic Plan for the PSI.

A long-term strategic plan to focus and help strengthen a PSI's ability to advance gender equity through all aspects of policy development, program design and budgeting for services is required to support those most impacted by GBV. In this context, gender equity includes sexuality, gender identity plus expression. It allows an institution to promote a stronger understanding of gender and diversity including the spectrum of intersecting identities to acknowledge that gender goes beyond biological and socio-cultural differences.

There is no one-dimensional “quick-fix” to achieve gender equity. Gender bias is deeply embedded in structural and societal systems. To address it holistically, there has to be a re-evaluation of PSI policy, processes, and outcomes. Gender inequities can be structurally addressed by introducing, reviewing and reinforcing PSI policy tools including but not limited to Gender-based Analysis Plus, Gender Responsive Budgeting including disaggregated data collection, pay equity, wage transparency, human resources practices, hiring and retention strategies.

One key tool is Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) which is recognized financial budgeting that works by distributing and planning for gender-equitable resources for all. GRB incorporates a lens with Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) over comprehensive financial planning and statements. They are effective analytical equity-promoting tools that promote gender equity and inclusion in budget decisions to implement policies and operationalize programs, services and initiatives. GRB and GBA+ assess how diverse men, women and non-binary people experience policies, programs and services differently. It works to eliminate gender bias in budgetary matters to ensure that investments in policies, programs and services are free from gender discrimination and planned, designed and delivered equitably to people of all genders.

“GBA+ is an analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. We all have multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are; GBA+ also considers many other identity factors, like race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability.”

(Status of Women Canada, 2018)

These gender equity tools work together to enhance the systems and procedures that operate large complex companies, institutions and governments. They promote operational reciprocity to achieve common outcomes and prevent information silos. The long-term strategic gender-equity plans for any PSI must ensure that the gender-equity seeking tools are consistently used, evaluated, and made inseparable when shifting from one division or department to another. Gender equity seeking tools used with consistent intention and synchronized across all divisions, departments and in every aspect of PSI life will drive long-lasting inclusiveness and collaborative campus culture transformation.





**PROMISING PRACTICES:** The Government of Canada has a free online course on Gender-Based Analysis Plus that community members can take. The course is designed as a basic introduction to GBA+ where participants learn key concepts and how to apply some processes in their own work. (Status of Women Canada, 2018)

## 12. Enact oversight mechanisms with Indigenous, provincial, territorial, and/or federal governments.

In our Listening and Learning sessions some have called for the creation of national standards around providing support services, prevention education, and reporting, investigation and adjudication procedures on GBV at PSIs. We recognize that it is difficult to standardize practices when each province and territory have their own Privacy Legislation and various acts and laws that impact how PSIs can respond. There is also little research in this area that focuses on the post-secondary setting.

We have developed this draft Framework to help inform the work and research needed in this area over the next 4 to 5 years which can, in turn, inform the development of standards at PSIs. That said, when implementing policies and procedures it is important that there is space for oversight and review of whether policies are effective and whether they further perpetuate harm. Student-led groups including Students for Consent Culture and Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance have shared their concerns about the lack of oversight for current sexual violence and GBV policies. Some have specifically made a call for provincial governments to provide oversight through developing legislation that would require PSI GBV policies to meet a set of expectations. However, it's also important that PSIs

develop their own oversight mechanisms. This can help to address some of the gaps we are currently seeing in the RIA and further support best practices.

“Can we build into the draft Framework that some sort of provincial dataset or survey needs to be released? Funding is tied to survey results. Having them take place every 2 years.”

(Response and Support, People Who do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

### Through the Listening and Learning sessions, we heard the following two suggestions:

- a. Governmental involvement at the provincial, territorial and federal levels could work to help ensure that PSIs integrate effective GBV policies, accompanying protocols, educational plans and support services.
- b. Develop a framework to allow governments to properly monitor and evaluate the development and implementation of GBV policies.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** The Ontario Undergraduate Student Association (OUSA) penned a policy paper titled *Sexual Violence Prevention And Response* (2016) that outlines the legislative and regulatory steps that the Ontario government could implement to ensure that PSIs are held accountable to the policies they have implemented on their campuses.



# Responding to Disclosures of Gender-Based Violence and Providing Support

# QUICK REFERENCE

## Responding to Disclosures of Gender-Based Violence and Providing Support

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING SUPPORT:

- Trauma-informed
- Address trauma exposure
- Affirming
- Dignity
- Accessible
- Informed consent
- Survivor-centric
- Transparent
- Continuity of care
- Transformative
- Accountable
- Leave no one behind

### INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE MUST CONSIDER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Establish a Coordinated Response Team
- Ensure that every door is an open door
- Promote the rights of people affected by gender-based violence
- Understand the scope and limits of confidentiality
- Maintain a trauma-informed responsive campus
- Clarify role of security and police
- Establish protocols and processes for community safety alerts
- Work with campus media and public relations

## QUICK REFERENCE

### Responding to Disclosures of Gender-Based Violence and Providing Support

#### SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

- Increase access to support services
- Commit to accessible support services
- Clearly define the scope of the policy
- Ensure broad workplace accommodations
- Provide comprehensive academic considerations and accommodations
- Establish a Centralized Support Office
- Utilize the experience and expertise of people leading the work on campus.
- Support student-led centres, organizing, and peer support programming
- Collaborate with external community partners
- Support respondents
- Support people who have caused harm

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## Introduction

Recognizing that the rate of reporting is relatively low, response to disclosures of gender-based violence and support of those affected are cornerstones of the work on campuses. All educational settings have a responsibility to create learning and work environments that are trauma-informed, supportive of those that have been affected by GBV, and ready to respond with care. This chapter focuses on two areas that help address and prevent GBV: response and support. Response refers to having a campus-wide commitment to addressing disclosures of GBV. Support refers to providing specific services, programming, and accommodations for those affected by GBV.

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# Guiding Principles for Responding to Disclosures of Gender-Based Violence and Providing Support

## TRAUMA INFORMED

Policies, programming, protocols that recognize the impacts of trauma (intergenerational, historical, complex, acute, chronic, community-based) on the PSI community and integrate this into response.

## ADDRESS TRAUMA EXPOSURE

PSIs must have programming in place for staff providing support to ensure workplace well-being.

## AFFIRMING

Support services should invest in each person's ability to transform, grow, and heal. Seeking support is a difficult process. There must be a commitment by PSIs to remove barriers and ensure access to services and support for those who have been harmed to heal and achieve academic success on campus.

## DIGNITY

Response to disclosures and support for those affected by gender-based violence should affirm the dignity and humanity of the complainants and respondents, recognizing how a person can both experience and perpetuate harm.

## ACCESSIBLE

Any protocols, procedures, outreach, and support spaces should be accessible to all PSI community members including but not limited to people with visible disabilities, deafness or being hard of hearing, intellectual or developmental learning and mental health disabilities. Accessibility can include but is not limited to providing support workers and ensuring sign language interpretation, brail, and audio or visual representation. The GBV policy must align with the PSIs access and accommodations policy.

## INFORMED CONSENT

People affected by gender-based violence are consulted and informed on the options available so that they can make informed decisions about their healing and accessing justice.

## SURVIVOR-CENTRIC

Placing the control and decision-making back into the harmed person's hands should be prioritized in protocols over all other factors.

## TRANSPARENT

PSI community members should be able to easily access resources, policies, and protocols, both online and in-person.

## CONTINUITY OF CARE

With informed consent, there is continuous communications between offices and individuals supporting PSI community members affected by GBV; offices and individual are knowledgeable about the network of systems in place to offer support.

## TRANSFORMATIVE

The policy and protocols must recognize that people who cause harm may have their own histories of trauma and violence and that they too have a right to heal.

## ACCOUNTABLE

Policy and protocols should have accountability mechanisms such as evaluation and reviews to ensure that they meet the needs of those that have been affected by gender-based violence.

## LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Policies, protocols, programming, and support must take into consideration intersecting identities and experiences. Social location based on intersecting identities and experiences impacts someone's access to support, if they are believed, and how they are treated in their community. Social location will impact their experiences with institutions such as the medical, legal, and educational system.

# Institutional Response to Disclosures of Sexual Violence

## 1. Establish a Coordinated Response Team

When an incident of GBV becomes known of through a report, known within the public realm whether through social media, a news report, or when the violence is determined by the PSI to be a community safety risk, key stakeholders should be brought together to provide a coordinated response. This will help streamline services while avoiding duplication, service gaps and allowing for a proactive response.

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### POLICY

There should be a provision that embeds a coordinated response team in PSI GBV policies. Three examples currently in place at PSIs are:

- University of Alberta: A recommendation in the Review of University of Alberta's Response to Sexual Assault is the need to embed the University's Sexual Misconduct and Assault Response Team (SMART) into the policy with their terms of reference and mandate. Embedding the Response Team gives institutional support for its effective operation instead of relying solely on the individuals involved.
- University of New Brunswick: A coordinated response team is also embedded in the University of New Brunswick's Sexual Assault Policy. The Campus Sexual Assault Support Advocate (CSASA) chairs the response team that is made up of the Vice President of student services, security, residence life, the accessibility centre, the student advocate, student health, and the human rights advocate. The CSASA is responsible for coordinating this meeting and inviting the applicable parties at the discretion of the survivor.
- Saint Mary's University: Saint Mary's University Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures also includes a provision on a coordinated response team:

**“The Sexual Violence Response Team comes together when there is an incident of sexual violence and will coordinate the response. The team is normally comprised of the following University members: Senior Director of Student Affairs & Services (Co-Chair), Registered Nurse Manager and Educator (Sexual Violence Case Manager), Senior Director of Human Resources (Co-Chair), Conflict Resolution Advisor, HR Officer (OH&S), Manager of Security, Director of Housing and Conference Services, Assistant Director, Student Affairs and Services or any of their designates.”**

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## PRACTICES

Coordinated response teams not only address immediate cases, but can also collaborate on revising procedures and protocols. Response teams could include, but would not be limited to: Gender-Based Violence/Sexual Violence Office, Counselling, Conduct, Human Rights Services, Security, or Student-Led Support Centres. They could have one permanent chair or a rotating chairship depending on the nature of the case. In our Listening and Learning sessions, PSI staff shared ways that coordinated response teams allow for cohesive and timely procedures:

“Our policy has been helpful as I have been able to call response teams with the consent of the survivor and offer a coordinated approach. When not all units are educated on the policy and their obligations under it there can be some push back from units who don’t understand why they are being called on to do certain things or give special attention to a particular case or student. They might not know what their role is.”

(Education, People Who Do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

Having a protocol that details the responsibilities of different members of the response team will ensure systems are coordinated in the event of a disclosure/report and allow for all members to understand their scope of work, e.g. delineating whether Human Rights Services, Security, or Police conduct investigations on campus. The protocol should include the following:

- **STATE** under which circumstances the coordinating team would convene. For example, some PSIs have biweekly coordinating meetings to keep each other abreast of emerging trends and cases, while others only come together to address potential community safety concerns.
- **OUTLINE** the specific responsibilities of departments or offices in regards to addressing gender-based violence to ensure that service delivery needs are met without duplication of service.
- **DESIGNATE** a chair for the coordinated response team with the understanding that not all campuses may have a designated person or office to respond to GBV.
- **OUTLINE** roles and responsibilities of the coordinated response team to avoid duplication or gaps in services as well as role confusion.
- **PROVIDE** guidelines for information sharing, including a Consent to Disclose form for coordination amongst multiple services within the institution and external organizations (e.g. recent GBV may potentially involve a crisis counsellor, medical services, security, police and short- or long-term counsellor).



### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSMENT.

Currently, there is no standard metric used at Canadian PSIs to determine which incidents/events constitute a community risk. Without this, PSIs make decisions based on generalized risk assessments, sometimes without experience and expertise on the specifics of GBV. An area that needs more exploration is how institutions balance reporting with protecting the confidentiality of the person who was harmed. With mounting pressure from both internal and external sources to hold those who cause harm accountable and to keep campuses safe, institutions will need to find ways to better meet community needs while prioritizing the needs of the person who has been harmed.





### CHALLENGE: COLLABORATION

It is imperative the coordinated response team trusts the expertise of the staff hired to address GBV and include them from the beginning in addressing emerging issues on campus. These staff were hired specifically for their knowledge and experience in addressing GBV. However, it was raised in a number of Listening and Learning sessions that they are sometimes not included in collaboration teams from the start:

“We developed a sexual violence response team wherein any disclosure or report, especially, is to come to myself. I am the sexual violence coordinator and I am supposed to call the team together. The barrier I’m finding happen is that I am either being called too late, telling me an investigation has been launched, [or I am] not given the authority to make decisions or carry out what I feel is survivor-centred or best for the survivor. I am wondering if others are finding this in their work as well. Although their policy might say that the sexual violence coordinators have the authority and responsibility to bring together the sexual violence response teams together, [I wonder if] they have been finding the same thing, that they have never been given the authority to actually do that part of their job.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

## 2. Ensure that Every Door is An Open Door

“No matter who you are on campus, like, you should be aware of what the process is when it comes to gender-based violence like how to deal with the disclosure or how to deal with it when a person is reporting because that will ensure that every individual is equipped with how to handle at least the first part of the situation.”

(Black and People of Colour, Listening and Learning Participant)

People may choose to not disclose for many reasons including, but not limited to, feeling a sense of shame, guilt and embarrassment, fear that they will be blamed if they were drinking, isolation, community stigma and not wanting their loved ones to know. Others may be concerned about confidentiality or may worry that they will not be believed. Often people affected by GBV do not disclose to a professional or report to the police. Instead, they may choose to disclose to friends, family, intimate partners or roommates for a variety of reasons. As a result, PSI community members have to be prepared in the event of a peer or co-worker disclosing to them. A knowledgeable response to a disclosure can have significant positive outcomes for people who have experienced violence. Research demonstrates that a negative response to a first disclosure might prevent the person who was harmed from seeking further help.

**“A victim [or survivor] will probably feel more comfortable speaking to a person they know and have confidence in, rather than to the official institution contact.”**

(Quebec Region, Listening and Learning Participant)

An *Every Door is An Open Door* policy and practice within PSIs allows for community members to have a clear understanding of what their role is when someone discloses to them that they have been affected by GBV. This, in turn, minimizes trauma exposure by providing a container for which the responder can use to listen and respond to disclosures. An *Every Door Is An Open Door* policy also recognizes that marginalized members of a community may feel more comfortable sharing with someone of their identity (i.e. Black Faculty Associations, Student LGBTQ Centres).

This approach builds on best practices outlined in the *Okanagan Charter, Action Framework for a Healthy Campus*, specifically section I.3. Create supportive campus environments.

**“Enhance the campus environment as a living laboratory, identifying opportunities to study and support health and well-being, as well as sustainability and resilience in the built, natural, social, economic, cultural, academic, organizational and learning environments.”**

(Okanagan Charter, Action Framework for a Healthy Campus, 2015)

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## **POLICY**

GBV policy should include a provision that speaks to the roles and responsibilities of PSI community members regarding disclosures by anyone on campus. This provision should clearly outline the rights and responsibilities of staff to respond to disclosures. A number of PSIs outline the responsibility of a community member when they learn of GBV:

**“If an incident of sexual violence is disclosed to a member of the University community, the person to whom it is reported has a duty to refer the person to this Policy. They must also inform the person that the Sexual Assault Support Centre within Equity Services (hereafter ‘Equity Services’) is where they can access information about the availability of support and services.”**

(Carleton University, Sexual Violence Policy)

**“Any person who receives a disclosure of an incident of sexual violence from a member of the University community should refer the person who made the disclosure to the Centre.”**

(University of Toronto, Sexual Violence Policy)

“A report of sexual assault or any other kind of sexual violence can be filed under this Policy by any member of the college community. The decision making power is always with the survivor about whether they would like to disclose to anyone. If they choose to, they also decide which type of report they would like to make.”

(Fleming College, Sexual Violence Policy)

These policy examples emphasize the responsibility of a PSI community member to connect the person who has disclosed with resources and to alert them that there is a policy to address their needs. A key part of these examples is that they do not state that the community member or the individual is compelled to report within the PSI or to the police.

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## PRACTICES

The hope is to create standards of practices across PSIs to respond to disclosures of GBV that is trauma-informed, culturally safe and accessible.

“When the Indigenous #MeToo movement started last fall we became aware of the real sense of the “don’t ask don’t tell” atmosphere. In order for Indigenous peoples to share their experiences we must build trust. Once this trust is built, students will begin to feel that there are open channels for communications. This can happen between administrators and students. The shame of experiencing violence is still there. Breaking the silence is key.”

(Indigenous Peoples, Listening and Learning Participant)

“I think it’s important for PSI to know that if a person has been recently assaulted they will be in a hyper-aroused state and may not be able to ‘hear’ their options the first time around. It’s okay to offer things again, later to remind people of their options and opportunities. Having an advocate with you helps, too.”

(Gender-Based Violence Organizations, Listening and Learning Participant)

An *Every Door is an Open Door* Policy would require a comprehensive plan by the PSI, creating, within the policy and practices, a standard for addressing disclosures. This would be supported by educational campaigns, course syllabi, websites, and programs. The hope would be that everyone on campus will be clear about their role and responsibility when they hear a disclosure. A supportive response should be set as a standard for PSI employees as an aspect of important service work to the campus community in terms of educating, responding, and engaging. A supportive response includes but is not limited to:

- **LISTENING** without judgement
- **COMMUNICATING** that GBV is never the responsibility of the person harmed
- **OUTLINING** limits of confidentiality, roles and responsibilities
- **CONNECTING** them to available campus and off-campus services, including emergency medical care
- **RESPECTING** the person's right to choose the services they feel are most appropriate and to decide whether to report to police, security, the PSI or a professional body
- **HONOURING** the person's choice as to what, when and how much they disclose about their experiences.



**CHALLENGE:** SELF AND COMMUNITY CARE

It must be recognized that those responding to a disclosure may experience burnout, vicarious/psychological distress and/or other negative impacts on their emotional wellness. As part of a holistic response to GBV, a system of support should be developed for witnesses of disclosures. This could include regular meetings, clinical supervision that is separate from job performance reviews, mental health leave and check-ins with staff from the GBV office as well as a clear outline of their role and responsibilities, including the limits of confidentiality.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** The No Wrong Door commitment at Red River College is a great example of working from a trauma-informed approach to responding to GBV.

**“As a College community, we have collectively adopted a ‘No Wrong Door’ approach when it comes to disclosing, reporting, and supporting those who have been impacted by any instance of sexual violence, harassment, or discrimination. If you need someone to talk to about your experience, we encourage you to speak with someone who you feel comfortable with and trust – this may be an instructor, a staff member, another student, counsellor, or anyone who can help access the supports that you need.”**

(Red River College, n.d.)



#### PROMISING PRACTICES: DISCLOSURE CAMPAIGNS AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- **I Believe You Campaign** - Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services  
<https://www.ibelieveyou.info/>
- **Responding to Disclosures Training** - Centre for Research on Violence Against Women, Western University  
[http://www.learningtoendabuse.ca/online-training/resp\\_disclosures/](http://www.learningtoendabuse.ca/online-training/resp_disclosures/)
- **BRAVE Model** developed by Farrah Khan used by Ryerson University's Consent Comes First Office of Sexual Violence Support and Education  
<https://www.ryerson.ca/sexual-violence/give-support/>
- **Neighbours Friends and Family program**  
<http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca/about/about-us>
- **Survivor Toolkit Video Series**  
[www.Survivortoolkit.ca](http://www.Survivortoolkit.ca)

### 3. Promote the Rights of People Affected by Gender Based Violence

The GBV policy should clearly outline the rights of the people affected by GBV. This provides informed consent to the PSI community member who might be considering disclosing as well as to the community member who would be receiving the disclosure. The rights and responsibilities should be understood by all staff and faculty who may receive disclosures. This transparency of policy will support those affected by GBV to make informed decisions and retain control of how they would like to proceed. Rights could include the following:

- To only disclose their experience and seek support without being required or pressured to make a formal report or complaint.
- To be treated with respect, dignity and compassion.
- To be informed about on and off-campus trauma-informed services and resources.
- To choose whether or not to access services and what services would work for them.
- To decide whether to report it through their campus, police or professional bodies.
- To access trauma-informed medical support and have a safety plan conducted by a trained professional.
- To be fully informed and supported at every step of any process and have the right to not participate in any investigation that may occur.
- To be engaged in the campus community regardless of the material impacts, including financial impacts of GBV, e.g. bursary programs for people who have been affected by GBV to address financial costs.
- To determine what, when and how much they choose to disclose.
- To decide whether to report to police and/or PSI security and emergency services.
- To be informed and supported in cases where the PSI may be required to take some action without the person's consent as a result of risk to community safety.
- To be provided with workplace accommodations to assist in managing the impacts of GBV.
- To access accommodations in residence and safe housing options including moving residences.
- To be provided academic considerations and accommodations to assist in managing the impacts of GBV.

There are various ways in which PSIs can ensure all members of the campus community are aware of the rights and responsibilities of those affected by GBV. Similar to education around the prevention of GBV, education around support and resources can be done through in-person, online and print engagement.

## 4. Understand the Scope and Limits of Confidentiality

The lack of clear guidance and understanding about confidentiality was consistently raised in the Listening and Learning sessions. Frontline workers shared that, across campuses, there were often different interpretations of the policy and provincial legislation regarding the difference between disclosure and reporting. This makes it challenging for the community to know if, when, and how they should share information about incidences of GBV.

“For an international student they often believe immigration is the law and that the process for PR (Permanent Residence) could entail lifting confidentiality. Ideally in policies it would explicitly state that immigration law would or would not apply to make it clear for many students. This would lift a major stigma. There is also no language in the preamble around cultural safety and support for either the survivor or the respondent.”

(International Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

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### POLICY

“Confidentiality is particularly important to those who have disclosed sexual violence. The confidentiality of all persons involved in a report of sexual violence must be strictly observed, and the College does its best to respect the confidentiality of all persons, including the complainant, respondent, and witnesses. The College will do this by restricting access to information for individuals without a need for such access, and by providing education and training to those who are regularly involved in the administration of reports and complaints. We will treat individuals who disclose sexual violence with compassion, recognizing that they are the final decision-makers about their own best interests.”

(Fleming College, Sexual Violence Policy)

To create a concrete framework for how the PSI community should respond to disclosures, a clear outline of the limits of confidentiality in the GBV policy should be provided.

In some situations when a disclosure is being made, some limits or exceptions to confidentiality might have to be put in place during the complaint process. Therefore, it is important to know when confidentiality cannot be maintained and it should be stated clearly in the GBV policy. These limits of confidentiality include:

- when an individual is at imminent risk of life-threatening self-harm
- when an individual is at imminent risk of harming others
- when there is an imminent risk to the safety of the campus or broader community
- when an individual belongs to a professional body (i.e. registered social worker)
- when disclosure is required by law, for instance, under Child Protective Service laws, it is legally required to report abuse against minors
- if there is a requirement to comply with a court order for release of information
- if there is a need to comply with labour or human rights legislation
- when there is a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour if,
  - the worker can be expected to encounter that person in the course of their work and
  - the risk of workplace violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury
- if the evidence of disclosed incident(s) of GBV is available to the public (e.g. video shared publicly on Social Media).

In the case the PSI is required to take some action without the harmed person's consent, it is imperative that the policy outlines that they will be fully informed and supported at every step of any process and have the right to not participate in any investigation that may occur.

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## PRACTICES

There are a number of practices and protocols that can be developed to support maintaining confidentiality as well as understanding limits.

**COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSMENT:** If a PSI states in their policy that they would have to break confidentiality if there is a potential risk of harm to the community, it needs a metric to determine what the risk is. As stated previously, PSIs currently lack a standardized risk assessment to assess GBV cases to prevent future violence and manage harm. Potential future promising practices would be to solidify how community risk and harm is assessed by PSIs.

**SERVICE AGREEMENTS:** The limits of confidentiality should be clearly outlined in service agreements provided to people affected by GBV, in all training on GBV, and on websites. It should be standard practice that PSI staff and faculty understand the limits of disclosure and, when unsure, consult with management.

**RECORD KEEPING:** It is important to have created a protocol about record keeping regarding GBV cases within the PSI to ensure adherence to provincial and territorial privacy legislation. The protocol should clearly outline who within the PSI has access to records and how these records are kept. It should also outline when, how and why information is shared within the PSI regarding GBV. The difference between counselling records and those of a GBV worker must be specified. Some PSI counselling services units have, in the past, not taken on GBV cases due to a fear of their notes being subpoenaed. Having clear training on note-taking and case management will address this concern. Promising practices raised in Listening and Learning sessions were to develop a communication protocol in which a student who has been harmed and who is moving to another campus could have their records forwarded in order to not have to repeat their story.

**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:  
CONFIDENTIALITY AND RURAL, REMOTE  
AND NORTHERN COMMUNITIES**

It is important to note that disclosure and confidentiality pose challenges within smaller campuses and communities. In smaller populations, anonymity is less likely as relationships and networks are much more intertwined. In our Listening and Learning sessions with smaller campuses as well as rural and northern PSI campuses, this concern was raised consistently.

**“[In regard to confidentiality] in a university of 40,000 people, it might be easy to handle, but in a CÉGEP of 200 [people], where everyone knows each other, it’s much harder.”**

(Quebec Region, Listening and Learning Participant)

**“In rural and remote communities, Elders, and families, at very intimate levels, are the ones who ultimately decide how cases are handled in terms of restrictions of privileges for the respondent, etc. It is important to respect nationhood and communities who will have a very different process for dealing with gender-based violence. There’s a difference between the institutional reality of our policies and how they apply to communities”.**

(Senior Administrator, Listening and Learning Participant)

It is imperative that great care and thought is put into protocols regarding confidentiality in rural and Northern communities. Protocols should recognize that support workers in less populated areas may have intimate connections to the communities they are serving. They should also include trauma-informed and discrete services for those affected by GBV in these communities, such as anonymous phone or text lines.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:  
MANDATED REPORTING**

**“There is a challenge in dealing with worksafe regulations that mandate reporting when best practice is survivor self-determination of desired process(es).”**

(Workplace, Listening and Learning Participant)

A tension raised within the Listening and Learning sessions was the challenge of providing confidentiality for those seeking support, while also maintaining the mandatory reporting requirements of provincial child welfare or labour legislation. A research study by Moylan in 2016 found that “advocates reported that they were seeing negative ramifications of such policies, with some victims choosing not to receive services after learning that their confidentiality could not be ensured” (Javorka & Campbell, 2019, p.4).

In addition, on-campus advocates may “be pressured to provide confidential information if they are financially tied to a university, and they may require additional training to build capacity for understanding the unique



educational rights and campus safety needs of college victims” (Javorka & Campbell, 2019, p. 15). A central office or centre for those affected by GBV can help clarify these ambiguities around policy and confidentiality. This includes clearly stating the limits of confidentiality in service user agreements provided to people seeking support on the PSI website and in any training about GBV. Further, the policy should outline how information is shared, under what circumstances, and how the person will be informed throughout the process.

Another tension raised in the Listening and Learning session was anonymous reporting. Anonymous reporting can conflict with procedural fairness as the respondent has a right to hear details of the complaint.

**“Once you start an investigation, there will come a point where the investigator has to question the aggressor about the facts of the case. At that point, it’s a big difficulty to think that the victim’s anonymity can be preserved if the facts ring a bell for the aggressor.”**

(Quebec Region, Listening and Learning Participant)

Listening and Learning participants also shared that it would be helpful to have legal guidance on what measures or conditions institutions can impose on people who have been reported by an anonymous source.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** We Make it Our Business, a program out of Western University’s Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children has a comprehensive handout on guidelines for balancing safety and confidentiality in situations of workplace domestic violence that could easily be used in PSIs.

## 5. Maintain a Trauma-Informed Responsive Campus

A community-wide commitment to a trauma-informed campus recognizes that GBV will have already impacted members of the PSI community before they arrive on campus. The resulting trauma of GBV has physical, emotional, behavioural, neurobiological, spiritual, and relational impacts. This affects the ways in which people learn and work.

**“This is why it is imperative that we use a trauma-informed model [that] replaces the labelling of clients or patients as being ‘sick,’ resistant, or uncooperative, with that of being affected by an ‘injury.’ Viewing trauma as an injury shifts the conversation from asking ‘What is wrong with you?’ to ‘What has happened to you?’”**

(Klinik Community Health Centre, 2013, p.16)

A trauma-informed approach recognizes that students, staff, and faculty can come to the PSI with their own traumas, including intergenerational histories of GBV, and intends to alleviate, not exacerbate, these traumas.

A trauma-informed campus:

- **RECOGNIZES** all students, staff and faculty are to be supported regardless of whether we know they have been exposed to some form of trauma;
- **COMMITTS** to creating a culturally safe, empathic and kind working and learning environment;
- **ACKNOWLEDGES** that in programming, investigations and support, people who cause harm may have their own histories of trauma that need to be attended to;
- **PROVIDES** access and referrals to counselling for all PSI community members either through Health and Wellness offices, Employment Assistance Program or a cultivated community referral list;
- **CREATES** sustainable, ongoing educational opportunities for the campus community to understand the impact and response to trauma;
- **ENSURES** that key staff are trained as first responders (i.e. Student Life Staff, Security).

*Amended from the Klinik Community Health centre's Trauma-Informed: The Trauma Toolkit, Second Edition, 2013.*

Instead of those affected by GBV having to cope in isolation, the responsibility should shift to the campus system as a whole to cultivate a healthy, safe, and compassionate community. Cultivating trauma-informed campuses must be a key aspect of policy.

Trauma is not only generated by single incidences; it is often a manifestation of collective experiences such as colonization, slavery, forced migration, and systemic racism. Dr. Sarah Hunt speaks to this:

“So as we have conversations on campus about sexual violence, we must remember that Indigenous people enter into this space (students, staff, and faculty) with an existing relationship to rape culture. Sexual violence is just one manifestation of the continuum of violence wrought by settler colonialism. Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, trans and queer people have been resisting colonial rape culture for years, mourning our loved ones whose lives have been taken in a country in which their deaths are treated as unexceptional.”

(Hunt, 2016, p. 4)



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**

##### **AFFIRMING CULTURALLY SAFE AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE**

In Canada, some PSIs are in the process of responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. These responses are not always in the context of addressing multigenerational trauma. Being a trauma-informed and responsive campus is one key way to recognize the multigenerational violence inflicted on Indigenous communities. This means not only understanding the impacts of colonization, but also putting in place culturally safe practices, programming, and protocols that actively support Indigenous students, staff and faculty.

Specific resources must be put forth to ensure that Indigenous PSI community members have access to programming and services that are culturally safe, trauma-informed, holistic and honour their knowledge.

“Indigenous students are not just facing higher rates of violence. Despite this violence, they are also cultural practitioners, land defenders, knowledge keepers, resisters, educators, and advocates.”

(Hunt, 2016, p.8)

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## PRACTICES

From recruitment to career services, to athletics and classroom syllabi, there are many opportunities for PSIs to have a comprehensive response to trauma that recognizes its multigenerational impacts. This would help support all members of the campus community to feel safe, welcomed and supported. But this kind of environment must come from a collaborative approach involving all members of the community.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** The University of Lethbridge outlines their commitment to a trauma-informed approach as part of their practices:

“This approach is grounded in and directed by a thorough understanding of the neurological, biological, psychological, and social effects of trauma and interpersonal violence and the prevalence of these experiences in persons who receive services. It involves not only changing assumptions about how we organise and provide services but creates organisational cultures that are personal, holistic, caring, and open”

(University of Lethbridge, n.d)



## FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED: HEALING CENTRED ENGAGEMENT

It was suggested in a Listening and Learning session institutions should exploring shifting to trauma informed care framework to one that is healing centred engagement. This approach is being lead by Dr. Shaw Ginwright. He shares that

“A healing centered approach is holistic involving culture, spirituality, civic action and collective healing. A healing-centered approach views trauma not simply as an individual isolated experience, but rather highlights the ways in which trauma and healing are experienced collectively. The term healing-centered engagement expands how we think about responses to trauma and offers more holistic approach to fostering well-being.”

( Dr. Shaw Ginwright)

Further research needs to be conducted to determine how healing centred engagement would work in PSIs.

## 6. Clarify Role of Security and Police

Depending on the PSI, private security, police or the RCMP can be the first responders when GBV occurs. In order for people affected by GBV to feel comfortable in accessing the support and care they need, it is essential that the first responders work from a trauma-informed framework that does not cause further harm. This requires that they recognize that some people will have a history of trauma associated with security and police and will, therefore, be hesitant to report to these first-responders. Given the position of authority and power that security and police often hold over members of a community, it is also important that they take a survivor-centric approach that puts the decision-making in the hands of the person who has been harmed so the response does not contribute to taking away further control from that person.

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### PRACTICES

There needs to be a clear protocol on how security services will share information and provide referrals to people disclosing GBV, as well as how they will communicate with the PSI community about public safety from a trauma-informed framework. The Canadian Federation of Students' Consent on Campus toolkit includes the following promising practices for security:

- **COMMIT** to the PSI having adequate levels of security staffing to carry out campus patrols, nighttime coverage, response time to calls and coverage at special events such as pub nights;
  - **HOLD** ongoing training that includes topics such as equity, community and inclusion and trauma-informed practice;
  - **PROVIDE** PSI community members with an outline of their rights and responsibilities when working with security and/or police;
  - **CREATE** a memorandum of understanding between security services and institutions that outlines roles and responsibilities;
  - **ENSURE** that people affected by GBV can bring an advocate or support person;
- **MEET** in a place that is accessible and safe for the person who was harmed;
  - **TRAIN** security and police in GBV, cultural safety, equity, community and inclusion; this is ongoing and evaluated;
  - **HIRE** security teams that are representative of the PSI community;
  - **REVIEW** protocols with students, staff and faculty, in order to protect their safety and privacy.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** At the University of New Brunswick and St. Thomas University it is common practice for campus security to meet the person who has been harmed at a location that they determine is comfortable and safe. This could be the support advocate's office or a public place on campus.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** HEALING JUSTICE AND SECURITY

**“I don't want it [security] to be something that hinders a person from coming forward or hinders a person from wanting to use the resources on campus or wanting to go through the process but then thinking about the fact that they don't want to villainize a person from the community.”**

(Black and People of Colour Listening and Learning Session)

Within the Listening and Learning sessions it was raised that some campus community members may not want to report to security/police or draw upon campus resources because of the fear that they will approach the issue from a punitive model one that may further harm marginalized people including but not limited to members of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour communities or trans and gender non-binary people. Further research is needed on possibilities for developing models with security that utilize a healing model that transforms the conditions that lead to harm and the current relationships between those involved. This was named as especially important for communities that are already over-policed and might not be inclined to further bring scrutiny onto their community.

## 7. Establish Protocols and Processes for Community Safety Alerts

It is strongly encouraged to have clear protocols and processes for creating community safety alerts, as an informed community is a safer one. The alerts should inform the community about incidents and safety practices. It also allows for a shared responsibility for the safety of the PSI community.

Community alerts are an important part of informing the community of a safety risk and potential for further harm to be committed. In the seminal Canadian civil legal case against the Toronto Police by Jane Doe, community alerts were raised as one of the recommendations to address a serial rapist in a community. The City of Toronto Auditor recommended that:

**“The Chief of Police develop a written protocol detailing the circumstances in which a general warning should be given to the public that a suspected serial sexual predator is active. Community consultations should take place in the preparation of this directive”**

(Griffiths, 1999)

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## PRACTICES

The protocol should outline the following:

- **SCOPE OF ALERT:** Provide an explanation as to why some incidents of violence will be shared publicly while others will not. Within many police services and PSIs, community alerts are only for violence that occurs between strangers, not for community members known to each other (i.e. partner abuse) in order to protect the privacy of those involved.
- **DUTY TO COMMUNICATE TO THE PUBLIC:** Establish, with senior administrators, what constitutes a duty to communicate regarding GBV to the PSI community at large.
- **LANGUAGE USE:** Clearly state the reasoning behind the terminology chosen for the alerts.
- **TIMELINES:** Establish clear timelines of when reports are disseminated to the community.
- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** Provide opportunity for community members to flag incidents for alerts.
- **COMMUNITY RESOURCES:** Within each community alert there should be information about community supports to address GBV, i.e. phone lines or shelters.
- **COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY:** Invite concerned community members to take action, be it a bystander intervention workshop, or ways to support survivors. This places acts of violence as a community responsibility instead of just that of those directly involved.
- **REVIEW BY PSI GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERT:** PSIs can engage the GBV staff to review community alerts to ensure trauma-informed language is used.
- **COMPLAINANT REVIEW:** When possible provide opportunity for the complainant to review community alerts as well as notices of when the alert will be sent out to the larger community.

## 8. Work With Campus Media and Public Relations

Campus media and PSI public relations have the power to shape conversations on campus and beyond regarding GBV, therefore it is imperative to engage them early on in the work to create a comprehensive strategy on campus. It is particularly important to ensure that campus media and PSI public relations are knowledgeable on the guiding principles for responding to GBV from trauma-informed and survivor-centric practices that are informed by an intersectional lens. Without this basic level of understanding to inform their reporting, campus media and PSI public relations can perpetuate unsupportive attitudes and practices. For example, they may write only of Indigenous communities as targets of GBV while not recognizing their self-determination and resiliency. Dr. Sarah Hunt from UBC speaks to this:

“Most research about sexual assault on university campuses does not mention colonization nor the specific needs of Indigenous survivors of sexual assault. If Indigenous people are mentioned in literature about sexual assault at universities, it is often as one of a list of ‘marginalized’ or ‘at risk’ groups. Further, university websites with information about sexual assault services frequently also list Indigenous people as being “at higher risk of sexual violence” with some listing statistics of the “staggeringly high rates” of sexual violence we face. Absent of any information about colonization, this naturalizes risk upon the bodies of Indigenous peoples and simultaneously ignores our leadership in resisting sexual violence in communities across North America and bringing the issue of sexual and other forms of violence into the international spotlight through years of advocacy.”

(Hunt, 2016, p.7)

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## PRACTICES

The PSI should work with campus media and public relations to develop a clear protocol for these bodies to report on and speak to GBV.

This could include:

- **REPORTING** guidelines that outline how to share information from a trauma-informed framework either as a reporter or as a public relations staff;
- **OUTLINING** the process for accessing Freedom of Information requests;

- **HOLDING** annual training for campus media and public relations on reporting on GBV;
- **OFFERING** to provide training where people affected by GBV can share their experiences with the media;
- **LAYING** out the procedure for when, how and why a PSI would make a public statement regarding a case of GBV;
- **ENSURING** that the information posted on PSI websites, social media and print materials about GBV are trauma-informed and are reflective of the diversity of the campus;
- **ESTABLISHING** a plan to address the impact of trauma exposure of PSI journalists and public relations staff.



### PROMISING PRACTICES: RESOURCES AND TRAININGS FOR MEDIA REPORTING

- Canadian Judicial Council: **The Canadian Justice System and the Media**
- DART centre tipsheets: **Reporting on Sexual Violence and Reinvestigating Rape**
- Jessica Luther’s primer for sports journalists reporting on sexual assault: **Changing the Narrative** (Sports on Earth)
- Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women: **The Media Hub Women, Action, and the Media**
- Rhode Island Coalition to End Violence Against Women: **Telling the Full Story: An Online Guide for Journalists Covering Domestic Violence**
- Ryerson University, **Reporting Guidelines for Student Journalists**
- TransPride Canada: **Style Guide: Media Reference Guide – Best Practices**
- Use the Right Words: **Media Reporting on Sexual Violence in Canada**



# Support for People Affected by Gender-Based Violence



# 1. Increase Access to Support Services

Campus services that offer on-campus health and wellness programs from medical centres to employee and family assistance programs to accommodations to counselling are key in providing support to people affected by gender-based violence.

“Sexual violence survivors who have experienced trauma will be best served by trauma-informed, survivor-centric, feminist therapists who practice counselling with an intersectional lens”

(Wright, et al., 2019, p.8).

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## PRACTICES

“One thing with our Northern communities we’re finding is that a lot of the professionals that come in, they’re not local to the communities. (...) And so then what happens is that people are not from the community, and they’re not necessarily invested in being there for a long time. So there’s a transiency with the instructors, there’s a transiency with the professionals. I think it sometimes makes it harder for students to feel like they can trust their... just the people that are working there. (...) we’re talking about training people, we train people and then they’re gone. How do we invest in training when people aren’t going to stick around.”

(Rural and Northern Communities, Listening and Learning Participant)

The following are practices that can be put into place to better meet the needs of people affected by GBV who are accessing on campus support services.

- **COLLABORATE:** on-campus health and well programs should work in collaboration with the centralized. GBV supports an office as well as community partners.
- **REPRESENT:** staff in these frontline roles should reflect the PSI community it serves; “We must always have people in support roles who students can relate to (LGBTQ, 2S, Indigenous) also create spaces where a community of trust and caring can be built.” (Indigenous Peoples, Listening and Learning Participant)
- **TRAIN:** staff from these programs and departments should receive ongoing training in trauma-informed, survivor-centric service provision as well as GBV.
- **REFER:** have prepared a clear protocol and practice of referring PSI community members to on and off campus GBV specific supports.
- **CONNECT:** efforts on campus to address mental health should also address the impacts of GBV. This includes the current work of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) to develop a Standard on Psychological Health and Safety for Post-Secondary Students (PSS Standard). The PSS Standard will act as a voluntary process guideline to help Canada’s academic institutions promote and support students’ psychological health and safety, and support students’ success.
- **ADDRESS:** the long waitlists for counselling and other support services on campus can sometimes mean that students have to pay out-of-pocket for services including a counsellor. It was raised in a Listening and Learning session that this can be especially true if they are seeking a counsellor that reflects their lived experiences, such as their experiences as a racialized student. “Because my school had a long waitlist and I needed immediate support, I had to pay out of pocket for a counselor.” (Support for Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

## 2. Commit to Accessible Support Services

It is imperative that the campus supports are accessible not just in physical spaces but in the ways they provide outreach materials, programming and services.

“Women with disabilities face unique barriers when accessing general services. For example, it has been noted that women with disabilities face more barriers in leaving abusive situations as both disability-related services and services for victims of abuse are not always able to respond to the needs of women with disabilities.”

(Disabled Women’s Network of Canada, 2019, p.94)

The buildings where services are housed as well as the location of the space itself can act as a barrier against students with disabilities who seek support. In the report *Not on the Radar: Sexual Assault of College Students with Disabilities*, the challenges for students with disabilities when accessing trauma services—“the process of transporting a student with a physical disability for immediate medical attention after a sexual assault” (National Council on Disability, 2018, p.37)—was also highlighted. Institutions that do provide transport may not have vehicles that are accessible for students who use wheelchairs.

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### PRACTICES:

Accessibility can include but is not limited to:

- **PROVIDING** people with disabilities who experience deafness or are hard of hearing with access to the appropriate services and supports to ensure equitable care is given (e.g. require ASL and LSQ, CART, etc.). Support for such services must be provided by the institution.
- **KEEPING** up to date and implementing current accessibility legislation.
- **COMMITTING** to accessibility in infrastructure i.e. the physical environment is accessible to an individual during a disclosure and has further resource supports when needed. Any person affected by GBV must be able to attend the room or space with a level of independence and dignity.
- **CREATING** plain language reports available to all parties affected by GBV.
- **ALLOWING** disclosures and additional support to be done in informal spaces for people who are home bound by episodic disability or have a severe disability that impairs their ability to leave their home or residence.
- **ENSURING** that those who are hospitalized for any reason (acute or chronic) can access a PSI member to disclose in an informal, non-university space such as a hospital without having to disclose to a police officer or nurse/doctor that would potentially escalate the situation where the person affected is not comfortable.
- **UNDERSTANDING** that there is a duty to accommodate a person with a disability in procedures surrounding academic considerations and workplace accommodations.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** The Vera Institute of Justice provides promising guidelines for sexual assault organizations to make their services more accessible for people with disabilities including but not limited to:

- **Ensuring** sexual assault services have a budget for accessibility.
- **Making** buildings and materials physically accessible.
- **Representing** people with disabilities in their materials including social media, flyers, website.
- **Collaborating** with disability organizations and providers in the community.
- **Providing** training on violence against people with disabilities.

### 3. Clearly Define the Scope of the Policy

All PSI students, faculty and staff should expect to receive support through the appropriate office if they are affected by GBV. The policy should clearly indicate the scope of who, where and when the GBV policy applies. It is important to recognize that trauma has a ripple effect on those around the person who experiences harm, especially for those who are very close to them. It is important that those supporting or witnessing trauma, be it children of domestic/intimate partner violence survivors, partners or parents, are within the scope of people who can access support and accommodations.

Policies should explicitly state that anyone who is part of the campus community can have access to support including students, staff and faculty, as well as any worksites that are operated by the employer.

“Often the policies on sexual violence are primarily focused on student survivors disclosing and sometimes there are separate policies for faculty, or they don’t always mesh well together, and it is important to think about who the policies are supporting.”

(Unions, Listening and Learning Participant)

GBV policies within PSIs cannot solely focus on the needs of students but also need to include staff and faculty. This includes ensuring that employees have access to confidential, trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and equitable supports. Within the policy there should be a clear outline of the role and responsibility of the union as advocates and supports for people affected by GBV.

**“I found that sometimes employers will not tell people that they have the right to go to their union and the right to be represented by a union or bring a union representative with them, who don’t need to speak but can be present for moral support.”**

(Unions, Listening and Learning Participant)

In addition, there needs to be clarity of who will support non-unionized and/or contract workers who are respondents or complainants as well as what support these workers will have access to i.e. will they be able to access the Employee Assistance Program. Participants of the Listening and Learning sessions share that some of the promising practices that are actually working right now are less available to non-unionized and/or contract workers.

We suggest the following PSI community members be included in the policy:

- All students (undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral fellows, exchange students, etc.),
- Faculty (tenured, sessional, professors emeriti, etc.),
- Staff (academic staff, administrators, support staff, etc.),
- Third-party contractors, volunteers, visitors to campus,

- Invited guests to campus,
- Alumni and former staff,
- Students participating in experiential learning opportunities i.e. co-op or placements.

In addition to the scope of who is included in the policy, there also needs to be clarity of how a PSI community member can access the support when facing GBV. For example PSI community members:

- Need only to disclose their experience to seek support and will not be required or pressured to make a formal report or complaint.
- Have the right to choose when, in what time, and how they report or disclose. This includes the right to decide whether to report to police and/or Security and Emergency Services.
- Will determine their support and/or workplace and academic accommodation needs and GBV office staff will work with them to access these.
- Have their support and accommodations be tailored to their needs on a case-by-case basis.
- Can receive support no matter when, where and by whom the violence occurred.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** MCMASTER UNIVERSITY’S SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY OUTLINES SCOPE AS THE FOLLOWING:

Unless otherwise specified in this Policy, the Policy and its provisions apply to all acts of Sexual Violence where the University has the jurisdiction to pursue, adjudicate, or take steps to safeguard the University community. All such acts of Sexual Violence are considered a violation of this Policy. The Policy applies to:

### **All Members of the University Community (“Community Members”)**

- a) Community Members include: students (graduate, undergraduate, and continuing education), staff, faculty, postdoctoral fellows, adjunct professors, visiting professors, sessional faculty, teaching assistants, clinical faculty, medical residents, volunteers, visitors, and institutional administrators and officials representing McMaster University.

### **All University-related activities**

- b) University-related activities are activities (authorized and non-authorized) that occur on University premises or on non-University premises where there is a clear nexus to the working or learning environment at the University; and

### **All instances of Sexual Violence**

- c) all instances of Sexual Violence that have occurred or are occurring during University-related activities.



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED: ALUMNI REPORTING**

Another area that needs further research is how to support alumni when they come forward with a report of GBV by a current staff or faculty. PSIs have a responsibility to provide staff and students with a safe work and learning environment. An alumnus, for example, has the privilege to report. They shouldn't be dismissed, however it is not clear if it is within the PSI's direct responsibilities to give mandated protections.

“There could be a bursary created for survivors who are alumni and are currently in an investigation to access support off campus in their community. If there is no support it can look like the PSI is penalizing us for not coming forward earlier.”

(Online Submission, Listening and Learning Participant)



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

“The dilemma is what kind of accountability power does our institution hold when sexual harassment happens to co-op students in another university campus, and if the people aren't a part of our community, how do we hold them accountable?”

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

Experiential learning was raised continuously as an area needing further research regarding providing support and reporting in our Listening and Learning sessions. Participants shared confusion within PSIs of what their role was to address the situation. We suggest that a specific protocol is created to address GBV in experiential learning environments. This protocol could include:

- An outline of the responsibility and role of the PSI in supporting students affected by GBV in experiential learning settings. This would include the steps that a PSI staff person must take once aware of sexual harassment and other forms of GBV in the workplace;
- A request that experiential learning environments have up to date policy that addresses GBV in the workplace, i.e. a Sexual Harassment Policy;
- A requirement to include information for students on how to report GBV in the workplace in the course syllabus, PSI career, co-op and other forms of experiential learning websites.

## 4. Ensure Broad Workplace Accommodations

PSIs are places of living, learning and working. Often the focus at PSIs has been on the GBV students face, however, employee safety is also important to address. As we have discussed, all employees, from unionized workers to student staff, management, and faculty, all deserve to have safe workplaces where they can access support. The PSI GBV policy should address the totality of the community including staff and faculty in addition to students.

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### POLICY

Experiences of GBV can impact a person's mental and physical health, relationships to others and job performance. There are many barriers that may prevent a person from disclosing or reporting GBV at work including but not limited to fear of reprisal and job loss. This can leave employees who have experienced GBV in a vulnerable position if they are unable to perform their regular tasks or duties. Rather than taking a disciplinary approach that could cause further harm to the employee, PSI policies should include a 'duty to inquire' that adopts a trauma-informed lens by inquiring whether the individual would benefit from access to support and provide any needed assistance or accommodation. This could mirror the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Disability.

“There is absolutely no training offered to students [who also work at the PSI] on how to access their union reps, where to find their collective agreement, and how to file a grievance. In my four years as a graduate student there have been no calls for new stewards and union members must go to the website to opt-in to emails to be provided with information about their union. The vast majority of the graduate students are international students with different experiences around what labour standards are as student workers and students are unaware of what their rights are as workers in Canada.”

(Students, Listening and Learning Participant)



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**

Further research is needed on how the following should be included in the support and reporting process:

- Visitors to campus including but not limited to guest lecturers, postdoctoral researchers, visiting sports teams. If they are included, what is the responsibility, if any, of the PSI to provide support and resources such as legal counsel?
- Non-PSI community members who have experienced GBV by a PSI community member.
- Incidents involving students from different PSIs in the same city or region.

“With the union being so under capacity, workers not having the appropriate information on what their union can offer in terms of services and supports, having no women, trans or non-binary representatives, how can survivors of GBV trust their union to represent them on issues that have occurred in their workplace? Who advocates for these survivors?”

(Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

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## PRACTICES

Approaches to support staff members affected by GBV include but are not limited to:

- Early and timely access to occupational health services and workplace supports
- Paid GBV leave to address medical, legal, housing and other forms of support
- Freedom from reprisal
- Training for union stewards and other workers on how to advocate and support staff as they are reporting GBV and going through an investigation
- Access to an advocate either through a union, centralized office or HR
- Workplace accommodations such as distance working
- Provision of an employee and family assistance program
- A list of community resources and supports for people who have been affected by GBV
- Information about financial coverage of support services for people who have been impacted by GBV in the workplace
- Provision of benefits that includes access to a therapist, culturally safe supports (e.g. Elders), paramedical and body work
- Promoting awareness of provincial and federal workplace legislation, including but not limited to human rights acts and health and safety acts.

## 5. Provide Comprehensive Academic Considerations and Accommodations

In our Listening and Learning session with students, academic considerations were cited as one of the key challenges that they face when affected by GBV. Providing students affected by GBV with low barrier access to the academic considerations they need is key to healing.

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### POLICY

The GBV policy should clearly outline the right to academic considerations including but not limited to institutional support to :

- Withdraw with cause
- Retroactively withdraw
- Find a new supervisor
- Address student loans and bank loans
- Ensure freedom from reprisal
- Self-facilitate return to academics
- Exam scheduling
- Take a leave of absence
- Deferral of academics including but not limited
  - Incomplete coursework or exams to be completed within a timely manner
  - Temporary suspension, timelines automatically stop, option to take leave from scholarship
- Transfer to another program/department or institution
- Address any challenges with study permits/visas if as an international student they choose to withdraw or take a pause in their studies
- Allow for enrollment in studies part-time
- Take on a reduced course load



- Extensions on exams and assignments
- Distance learning
- Tuition reimbursement
- Option to change course schedule, when additional sections are available.

The policy should also consider the processes that students have to go through to receive accommodations. Processes should be streamlined so that accessing accommodations do not further stigmatize, traumatize or impede students as they seek support.

“The expectation right now for me is that I go through the Accessible Learning centre and I flagged it as a pretty large concern in that A) I feel like it’s problematic to tell students in order to get these accommodations, they have to essentially identify as having a disability. I think that’s like ethically and liabley [sic] kind of a nightmare. (...) For students who are experiencing harm late in the semester, I often struggled to get them accommodations (in a) timely (manner) because the Accessible Learning centre is obviously so booked up and they won’t be taking new people within like a month or three weeks of exam times and so then those students are kind of screwed.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

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## PRACTICES

“I am not sure if other institutions are experiencing this around what accommodations are provided. Also just thinking about students who experienced the effects of intergenerational trauma, residential schools and how that can impact learning especially in class when learning about colonization and then students are not aware where to reach out for support. Getting accommodations for those students is very hard and very complex and it is important for a policy to respond to how the student experiences the effect of trauma rather than focusing on when it happened and who it happened to.”

(Response and Support People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

Most policies about sexual or GBV are relatively new in PSIs. Previous to these policies, requests were either considered on a case to case basis through academic departments or through a support office such as a PSI’s Access and Accommodations office. In the Student Listening and Learning session the three key areas cited as challenges were:

- **TIMELINES:** Restrictive institutional timelines that do not consider the impact of trauma on a student’s ability to access or reach out for support
- **DOCUMENTATION:** Difficulty obtaining medical documents for trauma as well as the cost of medical documentation
- **UNDERSTANDING OF LONG-TERM IMPACTS:** GBV is often seen as an episodic experience not a chronic issue with long lasting impacts that is not taken into account within accessibility, medical or compassionate grounds.

Some students shared that they may fear academic and other repercussions for coming forward with reports or disclosures of GBV. This could include impacts on their ability to complete their degree, loss of funding due to taking time off their studies or, for international students, worries of being sent back home. For international students, this may be an additional source of stress and fear due to the implications on their visa status in Canada.

**Practices to providing academic considerations include but are not limited to:**

- **LIMITING THE INFORMATION NEEDED:** people affected by gender-based violence having to share minimal details with a centralized office of what occurred and its impact in order to receive support.
- **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY FORMS:** people accessing the central office are provided a form that notifies them of their rights and responsibilities as well as a Consent to Release Information form that allows for the support person to speak with the administration as well as other collaborators.
- **COLLABORATION WITH FACULTIES:** empower support staff to work with faculty administrators to arrange academic considerations. This would free those affected by GBV from having to repeat their story multiple times as well as self advocate.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** Ryerson University is currently conducting a Anti-Black Racism Campus Climate Review led by the Office of the Vice President of Equity, Community and Inclusion. Part of this review will explore Black students, faculty and staff experiences accessing support from campus services. This “campus climate review seeks to source multiple perspectives in an attempt to capture a detailed and accurate view of the conditions of Black communities at Ryerson.” At the conclusion of the process, a report containing next steps and recommendations will be presented to the University’s administration.

## 6. Establish a Centralized Support Office

There should be a centralized office (Trauma-Informed centre for the Support of People Affected by Gender Based Violence) located on every campus to provide support to people affected by GBV, as well as to coordinate campus programming and education. The hope is that this office will allow for people who have experienced, witnessed or become aware of GBV to be provided with support without the distress of having to re-tell their experience(s) multiple times to different responders. This office would be the host of several services including: providing education and awareness programming, supporting people affected by GBV, and handling disclosure and reporting processes.

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### POLICY

In Listening and Learning sessions, stakeholders agreed that having a centralized office on campus has been or would be helpful in clarifying where survivors can go to receive appropriate support and information when they have experienced GBV. The role and responsibility of the centralized support office to provide support and education to the PSI community must be clearly outlined in policy. This is supported by some student-led reports in which students have voiced their concerns about the further harm that is caused when a survivor has to disclose their experience multiple times while seeking appropriate resources.

Legislation in several provinces addresses this issue, by requiring universities to have a stand-alone sexual violence office (e.g. BC, Ontario, Quebec, etc). This also helps to ensure the survivor’s privacy is maintained by avoiding having their information shared until it reaches the appropriate party. A centralized office would lessen confusion during what is already a sensitive and distressing time for the survivor.

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## PRACTICES

A centralized support office should work from a trauma-informed, survivor-centred approach. Staff should be reflective of the campus community, specifically centring marginalized communities. The physical space should be a place of respite for those affected by GBV to access when feeling overwhelmed or harmed. The office should provide the following for people affected by GBV:

- Navigating systems i.e. education, social services, legal, etc.
- Health support regarding but not limited to mental health, STIs, reproductive health, chronic illness, trauma that includes internal and external referrals
- Resources list of no cost, low cost, affordable short and long term external counseling referrals
- Information on reporting and disclosing internally and externally
- Connections to culturally safe healing practices i.e. connecting Indigenous students to Elders and other community supports
- Support in dealing with media stories or working with journalists i.e. some PSIs have provided media training for people affected by sexual violence when they are going to be interviewed
- Psychoeducational information on the impact of trauma, GBV and healing
- Access to peer programming either on campus or in the community
- Self-defense workshops
- Appropriate support to the campus community in instances where there are satellite and small campuses
- Conduct risk assessment and provide safety planning
- Referrals to community services i.e. sexual assault, domestic violence care centres, rape crisis centres, shelters
- Academic considerations and workplace accommodations including but not limited to: exam extensions, distance working, tuition reimbursement options

- Access to anonymous support phone and text lines
- Hold support groups for people affected by GBV
- Access to off-campus mental health providers and affordable long-term services.

The Centre should provide leadership to the PSI through

- Public awareness campaigns for PSI community including students, faculty and staff
- Participate in and possibly lead the GBV Coordinated Response Team
- Coordination between campus partners to provide ongoing training on GBV
- Chair the PSI Advisory Committee on Gender-Based Violence.



### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** ENSURING LGBTQ2S AFFIRMING SERVICES

LGBTQ2S students and staff may fear that they will not be able to access support or services as a result of heterosexism, cissexism and transphobia. It is imperative to have services that explicitly name that they are affirming of LGBTQ2S communities.

**“Contextual factors may be particularly important for understanding this vulnerability, as transgender/nonbinary students were specifically more likely to experience sexual violence in athletic contexts and during volunteer activities when compared to cisgender students, and were also more likely to experience this kind of harassment from someone in a higher hierarchical position.”**

(Martin-Storey et al., 2018, p. 706)

At this time, there appears to be a lack of such training according to one participant:

“There isn’t necessarily any training provided on responding, for example, to people who are LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans], trans people and male victims.”

(Quebec Region, Listening and Learning Participant)

Further research is needed on meeting the needs of LGBTQ2S communities facing GBV on campus to better respond and support.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED: MEETING THE NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

In a number of Listening and Learning sessions it was raised that international students have unique needs regarding gender-based violence at PSIs. However programming and services have yet to be created in many institutions to meet these needs. Canadian research is needed on what programming, policies and protocols should be created to address International students impacted by GBV.

“People are afraid about how it will affect their standing as a student. And then if they’re like even as far as how they’ll be able to stay in the country if they have, if they’re living in residence and their, the outcome of their of their disclosure is that they’re going to be moved to a different residence building or off campus. How that’s going to impact their finances as students in Canada. So be that misinformation or you know rumors or if that is, I don’t think there is a scenario in which that’s the truth. But even the fact that is a barrier that people are afraid to even disclose let alone might go through with reporting process is a major issue.”

(Black and People of Colour, Listening and Learning Participant)



**CHALLENGE: SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES AND FUNDING FOR CENTRES**

Precarious funding and fear of closure of support centres was raised in multiple Listening and Learning sessions. It is key that these centres are provided sustainable funding and are well resourced to ensure a continuance of care for the campus community as well as work to address the root causes of GBV.

“Campus sexual assault centres have become adept at working with limited budgets by relying on volunteers and collaborating with off-campus organizations. Many have had to creatively refashion their staffing, priorities, and practices in the face of chronic budgetary constraints and persistent underfunding.”

(Quinlan, Clarke, and Miller, 2016, p.48)

“I have an office but it’s precarious. So I’m about to print resources to get ready for September and I don’t know if I should. I mean, I can’t print my location on there because it could change.”

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

“We rely a lot on volunteers and unpaid interns. And so again, resources so that we can hire students rather than having people volunteer to do some really intense and tough work.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Session Participant)

“It’s important to have mechanisms that ensure that post-secondary institutions fund a minimum level of services according to their size [whether those services are provided within the institution or outside it].”

(Quebec Region, Listening and Learning Participant)

## 7. Utilize the Experience and Expertise of People Leading the Work on Campus

“We have all the responsibility without the authority for a number of different things that are outlined in the policy.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

“...respecting the experience of the workers who are doing this work. Universities who have no background in doing this work, trying to tell us what to do and not listening to or respecting many of us who have extensive experience.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Session Participant)

In Listening and Learning sessions, GBV experts on their campuses shared that although they were hired to lead prevention and response efforts on campus, they were frequently not included in high-level conversations or decisions which directly impact their work. They also shared feeling that they are the ones to carry the blame if the work goes wrong. The ways in which the PSI handles cases seem unpredictable and there is no level of control for the staff member. This leaves staff feeling burnt out, unable to complete their job responsibilities as needed and worried about the precarity of their employment.

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## PRACTICES

### Addressing Trauma Exposure Experienced by GBV Frontline Workers on Campus

“[Trauma exposure response] the experience of bearing witness to atrocities that are committed human against human. It is the result of absorbing the sight, smell, sound, touch and feel of the stories told in detail by survivors who are searching for a way to release their own pain.”

(Health Canada, 2001, p.123).

When service providers work directly with people who have been subjected to GBV they are often exposed to trauma on a daily basis. Vicarious trauma is the term used to describe what has become known as “the cost of care” for others. It is the belief that those working with trauma survivors experience trauma themselves because of the work they do.

Without being addressed, this vicarious trauma can lead to employee burnout and high turnover:

“Universities are set up in a colonial, uncaring way. Where do Indigenous and sexual violence counsellors get support? Where can people who specialize in gender-based violence access support? Do provinces and territories have professional networks established?”

(Indigenous Peoples, Listening and Learning Participant)

“You’re having all of the POC [people of colour] advisors being overworked because campus populations, even if campus populations of POC is not high, the fact that there’s just one, it’s not enough to service all these people.”

(Black and People of Colour, Listening and Learning Participant)

There is an impact on emotional, physical, spiritual wellness from holding space for GBV. There needs to be adequate administrative and material support for support workers on campus, particularly those from marginalized communities who are pushed into support work because of gendered and racialized divisions of labour. It is imperative that there is support for frontline staff to address trauma exposure and continue in this work. In the Listening and Learning sessions, frontline workers shared ways to mitigate vicarious trauma in the work and workplace. Some strategies include:

- **CLINICAL SUPERVISION:** This will help address trauma exposure amongst staff. The clinical supervision would not be connected to performance review or management.
- **PERMANENT POSITIONS:** Consistently raised in Listening and Learning by frontline staff was the need for permanent positions. These demonstrate the PSI's commitment to address systemic change and providing support for people affected by GBV. It also provides the staff member with workplace stability and allows them to plan multi-year strategies. If the staff position is a contract, ensure that they still have adequate benefits that include access to therapy.
- **NETWORK OF FRONTLINE WORKERS:** Having a network can help to break isolation, as many shared they were the sole person at the institution tasked with this portfolio.
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** PSIs should ensure that there is funding each year to allow for frontline workers to receive professional training.
- **SUSTAINABLE WORKLOAD:** Develop workloads that are balanced with individual and community work.
- **CULTIVATING OPPORTUNITIES:** Provide opportunities for leadership and collaboration with colleagues and influence in decision making.
- **TIME OFF:** Ensure vacation and overtime is accounted for to promote a workplace that supports self and community care.

*Amended from American College of Health Association Sexual and Relationship Violence: A trauma-informed Approach*



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** In our Listening and Learning session, participants shared a number of ways they have practically addressed trauma exposure in the work, which echoes the strategies listed above:

- **Clinical Supervision:** "To have an external clinical supervisor has made it... There's like no words to describe the difference that's made for my overall wellness as well as like strategizing or advocacy for myself and the folks that I work with, with someone I trust." (People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)
- **Circle of Care:** "We as staff need a place to share our experiences working with students so that we can co-create a safety net so students don't fall through the cracks. There are Indigenous ways of doing care work." A model being explored at one institution is the creation of a Circle of Care based off of <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/chapters/indigenous-circle/>. (Indigenous Peoples, Listening and Learning Participant)
- **Learn from External Community GBV Organizations:** Ending Violence Association of British Columbia created a great guide for frontline workers in 2007 and updated in 2016 entitled *Sexual Assault Support Worker Handbook*.
- **Community Networks:** To address isolation and burn out, some PSI sexual assault centres have created communities of practice with other campus centres and have joined local community based networks.
  - In Ontario there is the Network of Ontario University Sexual Assault Centres and in Western Canada there is the Sexual Violence Support and Prevention Community of Practice.

“My city has an action committee against domestic violence and sexual assault and we meet monthly and all the partners are there - Crown Attorney’s Office, all the police organizations, our women’s shelters, our hospital, myself, the school boards. We provide training to one another which is great - outside training but also training about all of our own resources and what we all do. That helps me to do a warm hand-off to people and feel confident when I am sending a student to somebody else.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

## 8. Support Student-Led Centres, Organizing and Peer Programming

Across Canada, student-created centres, groups and phonelines have emerged as a response to sexual violence on campus in the past few decades led by student unions and/or grassroots student networks. These include but are not limited to the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre at the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta’s Sexual Assault Centre, Silence is Violence, Advocates for a Student Culture of Consent, the Sexual Assault Survivors’ Support Line & Leadership at York University, and the Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students’ Society (SACOMSS). These services include programming and peer-counselling, as well as text and call support phone lines.

Some students affected by GBV may not feel comfortable seeking support from the same institution involved in their cases. Because of this, there has been a call for peer support programs to be student-run, as cited in the *Silence is Violence* and *Our Turn* reports.

“Although access to professional support provided by institutions is a necessity on campuses, it is important to recognize that some survivors may not feel comfortable seeking support from the same institution involved in their cases. Access to support networks independent of the institution may be helpful to many survivors as they pursue recovery. This can be done either through the creation of an independent student sexual violence support centre or the creation of informal survivor network.”

(Salvino, et al., 2017, p.28)



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## PRACTICES

Student Unions and PSIs can work to support student-led centres, organizing and peer programming by:

- **DEVELOPING** models of community care for peer workers within student unions to address the impacts of trauma exposure.
- **COMPENSATING** students who are asked to participate in PSI task forces or policy committees
- **CREATING** GBV policies and procedures within students unions and organizations
- **ENSURING** that students directly impacted by GBV are included in policy taskforce or ongoing advisory committees on campus.
- **SUPPORTING** student-run services through student levies, student fees.
- **FOSTERING** collaboration and relationship-building between student run services, organizations, researchers and PSI led centralized offices.
- **ENCOURAGING** student unions to share with students what they are doing to address and prevent GBV i.e. Student Society of McGill University Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy Implementation Guide.

## 9. Collaborate with External Community Partners

“We are not working in a bubble with these gender-based violence issues - we are working with very complex and intersecting efforts, such as those addressing the Missing Indigenous Girls & Women - it’s very real here.”

(Senior Administrators, Listening and Learning Participant)

There is a long history of advocacy, education, and support services in Canada by grassroots organizations to address GBV. It is vital that this framework align and intersect with efforts to address and prevent GBV both locally and nationally. In addition, campus and community-based organizations meet different needs of PSI community members; a collaboration between the two can provide a strong safety net and wrap-around services.

In our Listening and Learning sessions, GBV organizations raised that there is sometimes an expectation that community organizations will provide support to campuses with little or no financial compensation and institutional support. Some community-based workers indicated that they felt that institutions only wanted to collaborate in times of crisis or when they made newspaper headlines, creating inconsistent communication and processes. In order to build strong relationships between campus and community sexual assault centres, there needs to be ongoing collaboration and respectful partnership.

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## PRACTICES

Across Canada, some PSIs are choosing to develop a comprehensive memorandum of agreement with community partners to provide access to service for their campus community members while compensating the work of the organization.

“One of the ways that that actually is formalized is that we have a contract with sexual assault centres and they’re on campus five days a week providing longer term trauma counselling to survivors which really is helpful to me, because if I can focus on doing crisis counselling, group therapy, and advocacy work, and knowing that the students are accessing like solid therapeutic support that doesn’t have the limit that a lot of the wellness centre type models have has been, just like it would be a massive loss if that were to change.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

“Rather than the survivors going to the police station, they send someone from the special victims unit up to campus and create a safer opportunity for the student to do that. If that’s a choice that they want to go down. (...) The one with the police is one that actually came out [naturally] but it is now like kind of documented and it came out of a need I guess from survivors...we’re trying to strengthen our relationship in a good way.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** Creating of memorandum of agreements between PSI and community organizations to share student services and counselling to provide more trauma support is one way to effectively utilize resources and expertise. A number of such collaborations are in place already:

- **University of New Brunswick, St. Thomas University and the New Brunswick Community College** has a partnership with the Fredericton Sexual Assault Centre to provide trauma-informed support for students and staff on the tri-campus that started in 2015. The PSIs have a Sexual Assault Support Advocate position located on the Fredericton campus available to all staff, faculty and students who have been impacted by sexual violence. This position was created through a MOU between the tri-campus and allowed the institutions to have an expert on sexual violence and trauma-informed care available to serve their campus communities.

- **Laurier University** has a memorandum of agreement with the Sexual Assault Centre of Brantford and the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region to provide sexual violence counselling on-campus on both their campuses.
- **Trent Central Student Association** has a student levy of \$3.41 per student annually that goes to the Kawartha Sexual Assault Centre. The Centre offers their services off-campus, including individual counselling, group counselling and workshops, peer support, public education, and professional training. The Centre also collaborates with the Counselling Services on campus to offer an 8-10 week expressive arts counselling group for student survivors.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** Ending Violence Association of British Columbia created a free resource *Campus Sexual Violence: Guidelines for a Comprehensive Response* and the *Overview of Guidelines* have been developed to support PSI campus communities in their response to sexual violence.

## 10. Support Respondents

“[Our policy] explicitly states “respondents will receive support”. Even though we have this policy point and we’ve had it for 9 months, no one has been doing it.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

A trauma-informed approach to support for those impacted by GBV includes support for respondents and those accused of GBV. Such support should include help navigating the reporting, investigation and adjudication processes, support in accessing support services both on and off campus, and ensuring that appropriate training is provided to counsellors on campus to ensure that they are well equipped to provide support to individuals who have been accused of causing harm.

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### POLICY

Support for respondents should be integrated within GBV policy. All members of the PSI community should have access to supports and services when they are impacted by GBV. Presently, some sexual violence policies, such as Simon Fraser University’s *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention, Education and Support Policy (2017, s.5.2.e.)*, outline the need for support for respondents and states that the University’s Central Office will “inform Respondents about the resources available to them and assist them to make informed decisions.” Other institutions clearly articulate the office on campus responsible for providing support to respondents based on their role at the institution, be it student, faculty or staff. Ryerson University’s *Sexual Violence Policy, s.3.b.* states:

“Complainants and respondents will be provided with a support person throughout the investigation and decision making process by the university. Support for complainants will be facilitated by the Office of Sexual Violence Support and Education. Support for respondents who are students will be facilitated through the Student Conduct Office. Support for employees who are respondents will be facilitated by Human Resources, consistent with any existing relevant collective agreement provisions. Complainants and respondents also have the right to identify an alternate support person or representative of their choosing to accompany them to any meetings or proceedings related to the handling of their case. Support persons may include a friend, family member, employee union representative, legal representative, colleague, etc.”

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## PRACTICES

Some centralized support offices provide support to both respondents and complainants, often leaving the complainant feeling nervous or uncared for. Although both parties need support, it is crucial that there is separation between the two.

“We have a separate office and process for receiving disclosures and submitting reports and in the implementation of the policy... There is a gap in terms of supporting respondents through the reporting process and because of lack of support the respondents circle back to our office and we are already supporting the “complainant.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

## Support for Respondents

Help in understanding their rights

Explaining and helping navigate investigation and adjudication processes (formal and informal hearings/processes)

Referrals to campus and community resources, ie. legal services, alternate housing, academic changes, counselling, etc.

Organize interpreter/translator if needed

Other support as needed

**“No one is disposal”**

(Indigenous Peoples Listening and Learning Participant)



**PROMISING PRACTICE:** Humber College has a team of 4 Student Support and Intervention Coordinators (SSIC) who are the initial point of contact for students on campus who experience an incident in relation to sexual violence and sexual assault. The SSICs play a supportive role to both survivors and respondents of sexual violence disclosures and allegations. The SSICs are therefore not punitive or disciplinary; they offer resources and referrals for parties/survivors/respondents involved.

When an investigation of sexual violence/assault occurs, both the survivor and the respondent are assigned to a separate SSIC that will case manage or triage them to the appropriate and necessary supports needed.

Some instances where SSICs have played a supportive role to respondents:

- The respondent has been temporarily removed from residence due to an interim measure during the sexual violence investigation. A SSIC will support the respondent with finding temporary housing accommodations.
- The respondent may have missed some class time due to the investigation and therefore the SSIC will support with advocating for academic consideration in their classes for any missed tests/assignments/exams/presentations/etc.
- The SSICs also engage in dialogue and education around consent with the respondent.
- The SSICs will attend any conduct meetings with the respondent (if they chose to have a SSIC present) to offer emotional and supportive advocacy.
- Respondents are contacted from the first point of the reporting process (either from Public Safety, Conduct, Student Wellness Centre, etc) and are contacted by email and phone to arrange for support. It is up to the respondent whether they would like to engage in SSIC services, although in some cases it is mandatory that a respondent engage with a SSIC.

## 11. Support People Who Have Caused Harm

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### POLICY

**“They’re [people who have caused harm] suspended from school that’s the case where you go through the process of getting arrested. That doesn’t actually solve anyone’s problems it just creates more, I would argue more barriers, more intentions and it still doesn’t deal with harm or trauma in the situation.”**

(Black and People of Colour, Listening and Learning Participant)

Recognizing that people who have caused harm are a part of the PSI community is imperative. Policies may indicate that support for people who have caused harm is provided, however it is often not clear who it is provided by nor what kind of support is offered. It is important that any service recognizes that people who have caused harm might have their own histories of trauma and violence and thereby have support needs that must be addressed.

“I would love to see somehow in policy is kind of reframing supporting Respondents and people who have caused harm as a survivor-centric practice.”

(Response and Support, People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning session)



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** STUDENT TRANSFERS WHEN THEY ARE FOUND TO HAVE CAUSED HARM

There is a lack of clarity on the responsibility of a PSI when one of their students/employees who is found to have caused harm is transferring to another PSI.

- Should something be placed on their academic transcripts, non-academic records and/or employment records?
- Who, at the institution that they transfer to, should be made aware of their history?
- Should consideration of what program/job they are going to be taken into account i.e. health care or work with vulnerable persons?



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE CAUSED HARM

There is limited research on best practices and services for people who have caused harm at PSIs—specifically in the case of GBV or sexual violence. The existing body of research on intimate partner violence (IPV) is more robust and, by examining it, we can gather insight on how programming directed towards people who have caused harm can be shaped. Regardless, further research in this area needs to be conducted.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:**

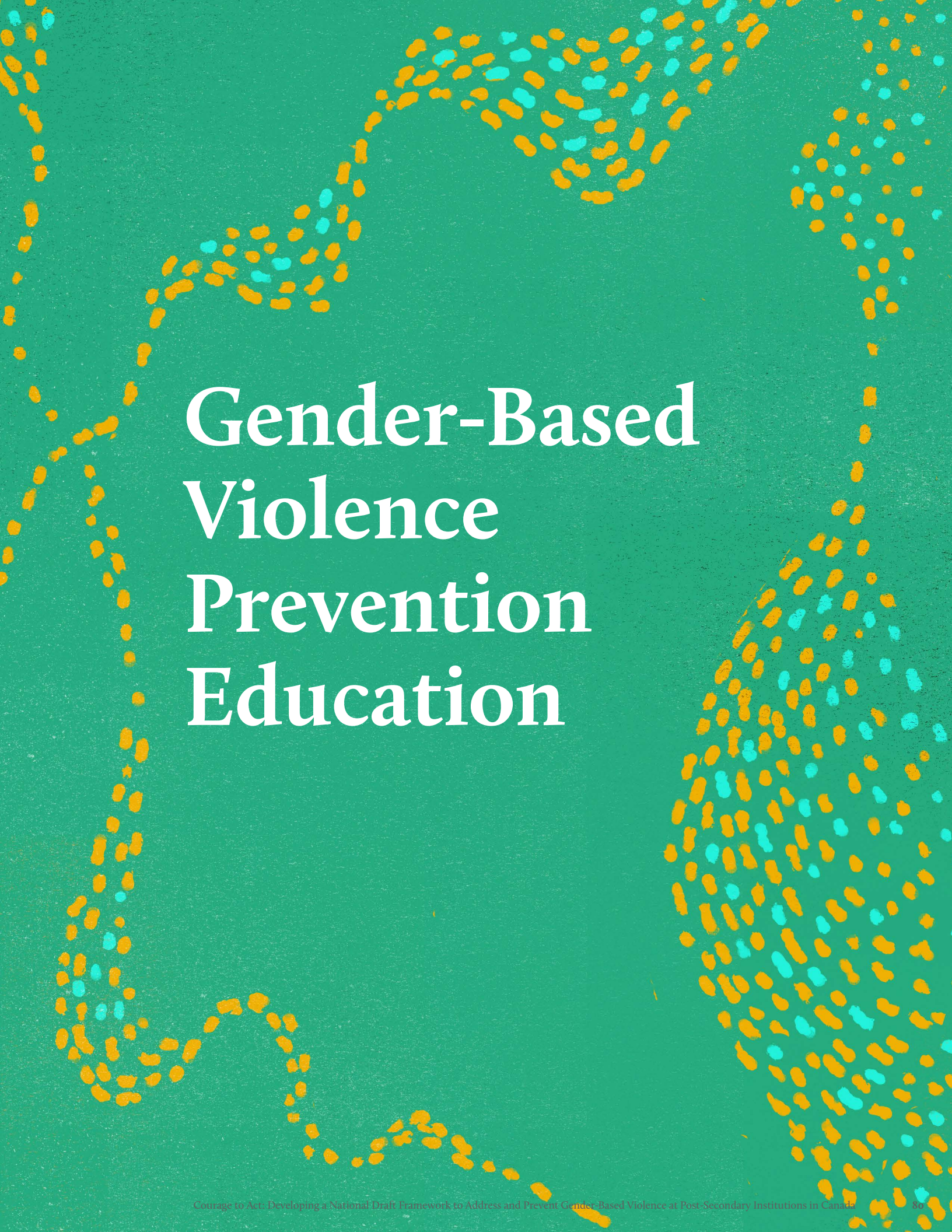
RESOURCES ON WORKING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE CAUSED HARM

- The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence within Activist Communities (2011)
- Fumbling Towards Repair: A Workbook for Community Accountability Facilitators (2019)
- Taking the First Step: Suggestions to People Called Out for Abusive Behavior  
<https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/anti-oppression/taking-the-first-step/>
- We Are All Survivors, We Are All Perpetrators / What To Do When Someone Tells You That You Violated Their Boundaries, Made Them Feel Uncomfortable, Or Committed Assault (A Start)  
<https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/accountability-consent/we-are-all-survivors/>

## Conclusion

Responding to disclosures of GBV and support for people affected by GBV is a natural first step in establishing a draft Framework. This first chapter explores three key themes including, a) developing capacity in PSIs to become trauma-responsive campuses, b) developing clear and well supported access to accommodations and academic concessions for those affected by GBV, and c) collaborating with both internal and external partners to ensure that the most holistic approaches to supporting those affected by GBV are employed.

Campus response to GBV and support of those impacted are cornerstones of the work at PSIs to address and prevent this violence. This chapter highlights that this work must be grounded in trauma-informed, intersectional, equity based approaches that recognize this is long term work. Many of the participants in the Listening and Learning sessions agreed that there is much more that needs to be done but to move the conversation forward further research is needed to support the work, particularly within a Canadian context.



# Gender-Based Violence Prevention Education



# QUICK REFERENCE

## Gender-Based Violence Prevention Education

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Culturally grounded
- Engaging
- Trauma-informed
- Survivor-centered
- Acknowledge power
- Space making
- Peer-to-peer
- Accessibility
- Intersectional

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION EDUCATION CONSIDERS THE COMPLEX INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

- Structural
- Community
- Individual
- Societal
- Relationship

EDUCATION STRATEGIES FOR POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS MUST BE:

- Comprehensive
  - Affect multiple settings.
  - Address a range of risk and protective factors.
  - Socio-culturally relevant.
- Appropriately timed.
- Sufficient in content scope.
- Administered by well-trained staff.
- Theory-driven.
- Include outcome evaluation.

# QUICK REFERENCE

## Gender-Based Violence Prevention Education

### POLICY AND PROCEDURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Commit to prevention education
- Establish a Central Office
- Maintain mandatory training
- Form an education task force or committee
- Seek partnerships
- Assessment and evaluation
- Deliver comprehensive prevention education that includes:
  - Relationships and consent
  - Norms change
  - Policy and access to supports
  - Coordinated effective response
  - Bystander intervention
  - Roots of gender-based violence and awareness raising
  - Risk reduction and resistance training

# QUICK REFERENCE

## Gender-Based Violence Prevention Education

### KEY COMPONENTS OF BUILDING AN INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS PLAN FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

- **Policy and support services**
- **Relationships and consent**
  - Consent and building a culture of consent
  - Healthy boundaries and making friends
  - Comprehensive sexual health
  - Gender Identity and expression
- **Understanding rape culture**
  - Rape myths and myths surrounding gender-based violence
  - Media literacy
- **Programming and awareness**
  - Responding to disclosures and supporting survivors
  - Resistance training
  - Bystander intervention
  - Men, masculinity and gender role socialization
  - Education for those who have done harm
  - Safer partying
- **Education for Faculty and Staff**

## Introduction

Education is key to creating lasting social change. This work is critical, ongoing, multi-faceted and ever evolving. This chapter is based on research, best practices, and experiences and insights shared from individuals working, supporting and living in campus communities. This framework has been developed to support post-secondary institutions in adopting robust and relevant educational initiatives for their campus communities. This chapter is meant to be a starting block, a place to begin and explore next steps.

**“Having and holding space for education and training is key. It needs to be ongoing and mandatory, multimodal and builds upon what has already been learned. It’s a continual process.”**

(Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

There’s no one reason that gender-based violence occurs. Misogyny, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, colonization, racism, and other power dynamics and social norms can all impact GBV. Often it is a combination of these factors that influence how and why a survivor experiences GBV. In creating this framework, the experiences of survivors and the

intersectionality of their identities were critical to our approach. We must also acknowledge that PSIs are not immune to the oppression, power and privilege that perpetuate violence. We know that this work is ongoing and will require consistent monitoring, evaluation and adaptation as culture change occurs and contexts shift.

# Gender Based-Violence Education Guiding Principles

Education and training are key components in supporting the prevention of and response to GBV on post-secondary campuses. Our approach to education and training are informed by the following principles:

- **CULTURALLY GROUNDED:** Provide a culturally-grounded, gendered analysis when developing and implementing educational opportunities. This approach is mindful of the myriad of experiences that may impact campus community members.
- **ENGAGING:** Developing education and training opportunities that are positive, fun, engaging, build curiosity and commitment to change, and are sex positive.
- **TRAUMA-INFORMED:** Trauma-informed prevention promotes empowerment and guides an approach that assumes that all campus community members have experienced GBV regardless of if they have or not. It provides us with opportunities to normalize the conversation and move from silence to challenging misconceptions that GBV is normal or acceptable.
- **SURVIVOR CENTERED:** Creating a supportive learning environment that assumes there are survivors in the room. Such education and training seeks to raise awareness around a survivor centered approach and prioritizes the rights, needs and wishes of survivors.
- **ACKNOWLEDGE POWER:** Acknowledging that GBV is a mechanism of power and is a product of colonialism, heteronormativity, patriarchy, as well as other systems of oppression.
- **SPACE MAKING:** Making safe and brave spaces for discussions, questions and thoughtful engagement for people to reflect upon and speak to their experiences and ways of healing.
- **PEER-TO-PEER:** Research on sexual violence prevention education demonstrates that the most effective approach to education for students is through a peer-to-peer approach. It is important to value and support peer-to-peer interactions and informal discussions on GBV.
- **ACCESSIBILITY:** Ensuring that prevention education materials are equally accessible to community members with disabilities. Online training modules and videos should be captioned and learners provided with transcripts. In-person sessions can be made accessible by including a section in the promotional material that indicates where community members can request accommodations. Another key element to accessibility is to work alongside of campus community members with disabilities in creating educational modules and initiatives. Ensure their voices are at the table.
- **INTERSECTIONAL:** Intersecting identities and individual and group lived experiences must be taken into account in the development and delivery of education and training initiatives. This will allow for education and training initiatives to speak to the experiences of those most impacted by GBV, explore the impacts of interlocking oppressions as well as educate and encourage others to step-up and become active bystanders.

# A Comprehensive Approach to Gender-Based Violence Education

To begin this chapter, it is important to highlight the tenets behind developing a comprehensive approach to GBV education. Within this chapter, we have chosen to work from a social-ecological approach to prevention education as research shows it to be the most efficient way of creating lasting social change (Banyard, V.L. 2014; Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; DeGue, S., 2014). Much like prevention education programs for HIV transmission, bullying, drunk driving, and others, we wanted an approach with prevention and intervention strategies at the peer and community

levels as well as prevention and health promotion strategies at the individual level. This approach also takes into account that there are a multitude of factors that shape human behaviour. Professional associations in higher education and student affairs such as the American College Health Association (ACHA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) support the application of this model to address sexual violence intervention and prevention education in post-secondary education.

## Underlying our approach to prevention education is our social-ecological model:

### Structural

- Address issues related to access to services for survivors
- Develop and implement policy that supports the elimination of gender-based violence

### Societal

- Change norms about the acceptance of rape culture and gender-based violence
- Increase willingness to intervene when gender-based violence occurs

### Community

- Partner with campus community in educational efforts
- Improve and sustain safe(r) environments and create opportunities to strengthen social connections

### Relationship

- Provide everyone with skills to build healthy, supportive and positive relationships

### Individual

- Build skills and knowledge, and shift attitudes through programming

(Adapted from Casey & Lindhorst, 2009 and McLeroy, Steckler, Bibeau, and Glanz, 1988)

GBV is a widespread and complex issue which needs a diverse approach to prevention and intervention education. Attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that allow GBV to occur are supported by the broader social environments and peer networks, and don't exist only within certain individuals.

There are six major components that predict the success of programs and that should be taken into consideration when developing a comprehensive approach to GBV:

- comprehensiveness;
- community engagement;
- contextualized programming;
- theory-based;
- health and strengths promotions;
- addressing structural factors.

## Educational Strategies

Programming and education must meet audiences where they are ready to learn and change. This includes students, staff, and faculty. An effective program is developmentally appropriate while still challenging learners enough for change.

Components of an effective approach to GBV prevention education (ACPA, 2015; EAB, 2015; & NASPA, 2017):

- **COMPREHENSIVE:** multiple intervention components that foster positive relationships with peers (i.e. promoting consent culture and healthy relationships, sexual health, bystander intervention, teaching how to support survivors, GBV, etc)
  - affect multiple settings
    - scenarios on and off campus
  - address a range of risk and protective factors
    - rape culture vs consent culture, supportive communities, education, policies, attitudes, etc
  - are socio-culturally relevant
    - reflective of community norms, cultural beliefs, etc

- **APPROPRIATELY TIMED:** tailored for the target age group. A critical period of intervention is in groups of young adults who are still in a school setting.
- **SUFFICIENT IN CONTENT SCOPE:** for behaviours as nuanced and complex as GBV, a multiple-session approach is more likely to change behaviour and have lasting effects than a one-session approach.
- **ADMINISTERED BY WELL-TRAINED STAFF:** staff that are committed, competent and can connect effectively with participants.
- **THEORY-DRIVEN:** based on relevant research and best practices (i.e. utilizing varied teaching methods, educational topics and approaches to learning).
- **INCLUDE OUTCOME EVALUATION:** provide time for reflection and opportunities to improve strategies and encourages maintaining accountability for the effectiveness of the strategy.

Education in PSIs should combine information, discussion and engagement activities in a well-sequenced, developmentally appropriate curriculum. This holistic approach could include:

- Posters, brochures, website, social media & newsletters,
- Campaigns (i.e. awareness, social norming)
- Events, films & panel discussions
- In-person and online training & workshops
- Multi-session programming
- Advanced programming for peer to peer programs (i.e. peer educators, mentoring)
- Train-the-trainer opportunities
- Embedded in academic curriculum (i.e. Academic courses, community-engaged and experiential learning projects)

“This is complex and every community has their own (GBV) issues... What’s important is that you are sending one message and everyone has to talk about the same messaging. The training has to be uniform... We need to find the right balance between the training for support staff, faculty and students. The professors will be seeing things inside of their class. [Professors] may be actors of inappropriate behaviour. Uniform training across the campus. Social change can’t be changed only in that training, it is a stage one that ensures that the entire campus community gets the same messaging.”

(Quebec Region, Listening and Learning Participant)

## Policy and Procedural Recommendations





Multiple entry points allow effective educational programming to reach students, faculty and staff. Such intervention and prevention education may include:

- staff, faculty and student orientation,
- first-year programming,
- peer education,
- student leader training,
- professional development opportunities,
- train-the-trainer opportunities,
- specialized training for decision makers.

These approaches should have consistent messages while being tailored to the specific experiences and roles of the learners. These audiences include, and are not limited to:

- athletics,
- international students,
- first-year students,
- new staff and faculty,
- faculty advisors,
- administrators,
- graduate students,
- men and people with masculine identities,
- queer, trans and two-spirit community members,
- people with disabilities,
- Indigenous community members,
- communities of colour,
- residence and housing staff,
- student government,
- unions,
- campus security.

## A. Commit to Prevention Education

During the Listening and Learning sessions there was interest in PSI policies explicitly articulating a commitment to address and prevent GBV through education. Such a policy statement would outline key campus audiences and acknowledge the need for tailored and ongoing messaging and education to address the unique experiences of community members and intersect with their roles on campus. As one participant shared “[T]he policy itself is not perfect, but it is a start” (People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant). Those presently engaged in sexual violence prevention education on campus are the ones with the lived experience to help revise campus policy.

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### POLICY

Existing policy on sexual violence and GBV in PSIs across the country typically include brief sections that speak to the need to educate the campus community on awareness, education and training strategies. Although policies vary from school to school, support for this work is clearly articulated by institutions through policy.



**POLICY EXAMPLE:** “The University will build the capacity of the Carleton community to address sexual violence and play a role in ending sexual violence in our community.” (Carleton University’s Sexual Violence Policy, December 2016).

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### PRACTICES

PSIs need to systematically prioritize and embed this work across the institution. This is about going beyond policy development to creating meaningful buy-in and investment for implementation of the policy and meaningful engagement in prevention education at all levels of the institution.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario developed a useful toolkit titled Campus Toolkit for Creating Consent Culture to support ongoing campus-based work at students' unions and gender resource centres. This toolkit explores a number of best practices for outreach, awareness and policy creation on campus.



**POLICY EXAMPLE:** "York University is committed to providing on-going training, education, and initiatives aimed at changing attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate sexual violence. The University will support these initiatives through dedicated staff, programming, and related University resources. The University will broadly communicate these initiatives and effectively respond to the needs of the diverse members of the University community." (York University's Policy on Sexual Violence, December 2016)

## B. Establish a Central Office

Policies should ensure that programming is well resourced to sustain, build and strengthen education and training with all campus communities. For many campuses, establishing a designated central office (depending on the size of the institution), allocating resources, and hiring appropriately trained staff and having well informed leadership to advance the prevention and intervention of GBV is key. During one of the Listening and Learning sessions a participant shared that PSIs should be "[e]nsuring there is a dedicated office and resources dedicated to dealing with gender-based violence and sexual violence. I think sometimes it can be overwhelming with a lack of resources and lack of opportunity for building education" (Education, People Who Do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant).



**POLICY EXAMPLE:** "The University will establish a Sexual Violence Support and Prevention Office as a centre utilizing current best practices in education, training and support for Sexual Violence and Misconduct, for all members of the University Community." (SFU's GP44, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Prevention, Education and Support, March 2017)

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### POLICY

In the development of policy, PSIs must clearly articulate the campus' commitment to supporting staff, programming and resources and, for those institutions that can, explicitly commit to the establishment of a central office. Here are two examples of sexual violence policy that do this:

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### PRACTICES

A number of participants in our Listening and Learning sessions mentioned that approaches to prevention education and training need to be strategic, ongoing and appropriately resourced. This approach will help ensure that education is available at all levels of understanding and will support ongoing learning. A centralized office and/or well trained staff on campus can spearhead and support a strategic and tailored approach to prevention education.

Full-time permanent positions for GBV educators are needed to support sustainable efforts of prevention and education. Many participants noted that the majority of this work is presently precarious in nature and staff are underpaid for an overwhelming amount of work.

## C. Maintain Mandatory Training

Within our Listening and Learning Sessions, a number of participants spoke to how policy could be strengthened to ensure that students, faculty and staff members engage in educational opportunities through mandatory training.

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### POLICY

Mandatory training for staff and faculty, like provincial legislation Bill 151 in Quebec, could be integrated into GBV policies.

Quebec provincial legislation Bill 151, *Act to prevent and fight sexual violence in higher education institutions*:

- includes an explicit requirement that each institution establishes a policy that requires mandatory training activities for students,
- annual mandatory training for “officers, personnel members, representatives of their respective associations and unions, and student association representatives.”

An educator from Quebec shared that they are, “doing our first year of mandatory trainings online: five modules to address gender-based violence. It’s enrolling in May for all incoming students. But over the next two years, we have a plan to get everybody trained. So it’s expanding beyond students. [I]t’s for staff faculty, everybody” (Educating Students, Listening and Learning Participant). This institution is taking a strategic approach in rolling out their programming and many in the session expressed interest in learning more about their experience.

During our session with Union representatives, a few participants noted that they felt some concern that institutions might mandate training with little oversight. If policy is developed that requires education and training, it should be relevant, ever evolving, evaluated and have content that is relevant to those engaged with the module. One participant shared concerns that GBV mandated training might roll out like the present online training around bullying and harassment. This participant shared that:

“It’s basically just a case of filling out the little quizzes and I believe you can redo them until you get a result. But the feeling is that once you do it you never have to worry about it again, I hope this doesn’t become another model where leadership is saying, ‘we’ve done it, so now let’s not put so much effort into it’ or ‘it’s up and running...’ unless there’s a lot of proactive education going on, continually, generally what we see with our policies... is it only comes into play when an event has happened.”

(Unions, Listening and Learning Participant)

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### PRACTICES

All staff and faculty could be trained to respond appropriately to disclosures of GBV. As one Union representative shared, “I would hope that members of the campus community would be trained in a kind of basic recognize and refer program, whereby everybody would the same way you would in terms of say fire safety, or a chemical spill” (Unions, Listening and Learning Participant). That said, other participants shared that they thought that building relationships with unions and university community groups was a more strategic way to ensure that training and education took place on campus. They thought that the policy should include a statement that strongly encourages campus community members to engage with education specifically around responding to disclosures of GBV through a trauma-informed, empathetic and supportive response.



**POLICY EXAMPLE:**

“All members of the University Community are strongly encouraged to be knowledgeable about how to appropriately receive and respond to a Disclosure”

(SFU's GP44, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Prevention, Education and Support, March 2017).

“I don't think we can expect stewards or trainers or whatever to be able to be experts in the area of trauma, but be able to know what the community resources is. So maybe that's another recommendation is there clearly, you know has to be a very strong link between community resources and or other campus resources and the work that the union does.”

(Unions, Listening and Learning Participant)

There are a number of areas on campus where mandatory GBV training should be implemented either through policy or procedures or in job descriptions. As one Listening and Learning session participant noted,

“[W]hether it's the student staff who are working within the residence halls or with students on campus and especially with the professional staff, I think training there is important and I think procedures and training should be placed into policy. So, I think that all of that is very important and should be mandatory.”

(First Responders, Listening and Learning Participant)

There are key skills and competencies that staff in first responder roles at PSIs, such as in Campus Security, Residence & Housing and campus pub/bar staff, should possess in order to respond to incidents and disclosures of GBV. Their understanding must include an empathetic response to survivors' experiences of GBV from multiple and intersecting identities.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:  
MANDATORY TRAINING.**

Mandatory training was a highlighted issue in a number of our conversations. We were reminded that mandatory training is not the same as educating for social transformation. Some Union representatives noted that some of their members may view a move towards mandatory training as a form of punishment especially if the training is not related to their job. One Union representative noted that “mandatory doesn't build trust, doesn't build a willingness to change behaviour” (Unions, Listening and Learning Participant). There is a growing body of research that examines the impacts of mandatory training within the US higher education setting which show mixed results and research should be done within the Canadian context to gauge the success of such an approach.

## D. Form an Education Task Force or Committee

There is a growing conversation within PSIs around the value of establishing GBV prevention educational task forces or committees on campuses. Some noted during our Listening and Learning sessions that they already have existing task forces or committees and expressed the value of such committees in developing educational campaigns and identifying gaps in education and training. Such committees also help enhance buy-in across the campus community as programming is established in ways that reflect the needs and incorporate the feedback of the broader community.

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### POLICY

Some Canadian policies on sexual violence already include a statement that frames the establishment of a committee such as Carleton University. Carleton University's policy reads:

**“The University has a Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Committee (SVPEC) with representation from students, staff, faculty and senior administrators.”**

(Carleton University's Sexual Violence Policy, December 2016)

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### PRACTICES

Task forces and committees should be well funded, provided institutional authority and be dedicated to the strategic development and support of GBV prevention on campus. Each task force or committee would be comprised of diverse representation from across the campus and community in non-tokenized ways. Membership should include GBV educators, community members, campus stakeholders, student leaders, union representatives and experts from the academic community.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** In Ontario, with the release of the Student Voices Surveys, each PSI is mandated to establish a GBV prevention and education task force.

## E. Seek Partnerships

Educating students, staff and faculty is clearly fundamental to any educational framework at PSIs. PSIs have an opportunity to support both social and cultural change by creating and maintaining ongoing learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom.

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### POLICY

Some policies clearly articulate the importance of working with partners both on- and off-campus. An example of this is Ryerson University's Sexual Violence Policy which states:

**“The Office of Sexual Violence Support and Education will work with on- and off-campus partners including, but not limited to, student organizations and unions, Student Affairs staff, academic departments, Human Resources, the Office of Vice Provost Faculty Affairs, the Learning and Teaching Office, Human Rights Services, and Security and Emergency Services...”**

(Ryerson University's Sexual Violence Policy, 2016)

Such statements recognize the inherent need for prevention education to be seen and understood as a broader campus community commitment, that all offices, groups and communities on campuses have a role in engaging with.

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## PRACTICES

GBV and social identities are interconnected in intricate and complex ways. In order to appropriately address the needs of the broader campus community we must work with programs of study, identity-based groups and other groups and supports on and off campus who work with these diverse populations to best meet the needs of these populations and to help the general campus community be better allies. These include:

- Women and Gender studies,
- LGBTQ2S+ centres,
- Accessibility Services,
- Counselling Centres,
- Wellness Centres,
- Women's Centres,
- Indigenous studies,
- Indigenous centres,
- Anti-violence community organizations.

“Can we expand this project in the next few years to highlight and centre the people with lived experience and with the theoretical experience so that they can be part of developing the more nuanced work that needs to be done? Make room to make the voices that are doing that work and elevate them and grow the work and make the education more complex.”

(Education, People Who Do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

“I just wanted to definitely emphasize even more collaboration with like student run initiatives and community initiatives with funding. I just want to extra underline that, because it's true that there is a lot of good things happening in different communities that working together would alleviate some of the strain that the university might feel as far as like employing more professionals - the professionals kind of already exist. It's just a matter of like giving them access to the students and vice versa and paying them for it.”

(Black and People of Colour, Listening and Learning Participant)

PSIs should be taking a community approach to GBV prevention education. Social change on campuses has typically been left to those on the margins to move forward. It is critical that PSIs consult with community members who hold a stake in these conversations in this change making. It is also important to work alongside faculty members who are doing work in communities, both on and off campus, and have established strong working relationships.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Developing a campus wide environmental scan template to assist PSIs in determining what programming is already available on campus and in the local community and consult with different communities to determine present gaps and needs for GBV prevention education. Drawing from the findings outlined in the scan, institutions could then create an educational plan template to help shape and prioritize the PSI's learning goals on campus.

## F. Deliver Comprehensive Prevention Education

Each campus should implement programming and initiatives that address:

- Relationships and Consent
- Changing Norms
- Policy and Access to Supports
- Coordinated Effective Response
- Bystander Intervention
- Roots of GBV and Awareness Raising
- Risk Reduction and Resistance Training

The following section outlines the above in more detail.

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### POLICY

A critical component to be integrated into GBV policy is a clear statement about the development, oversight and approach to prevention education on campus. For example, Simon Fraser University explicitly states the role of its Sexual Violence Support and Prevention Office in education for the campus community:



**POLICY EXAMPLE:** "In cooperation with relevant partners, the Sexual Violence Support and Prevention Office will oversee, develop and coordinate a proactive and sustained education plan for the University Community that may include a combination of campaigns, on-line and in-person training sessions, workshops, print and on-line resources, programs and other events on a range of topics." (SFU's Policy GP 44, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Prevention, Education and Support, March 2017)

## PRACTICES

In our approach to education for students, staff and faculty, we recognize that each campus community group will have differing and potentially unique needs based on their role at the institution. However, we also believe that there needs to be a common base of knowledge for all three groups. The grounding of all training and education should be similar but adapted to the specific roles of the group being trained and delivered in ways that will be appropriate, accessible and relatable for that particular group. Using our Social-Ecological Model, we've listed key components of an Institutional Education and Awareness Plan throughout the rest of this chapter.



**POLICY EXAMPLE:** "Providing or making available to members of the University community education and awareness training on this Policy and on the prevention of sexual violence, with content tailored to the audience and relevant to their role and responsibility in responding to and addressing sexual violence" (Carleton University's Sexual Violence Policy, December 2016).

## Key Components of Building an Institutional Education and Awareness Plan for Gender-Based Violence:

### 1. POLICY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

From our Listening and Learning sessions, we heard that policies are only as effective as individuals' understanding and use of them. One step in knowledge acquisition should centre on raising awareness about the policy, what will happen if policy is breached and where to access support services on and off campus.

#### a) Topic: What is the policy and how does it apply to students?

##### Social-Ecological Model Components: Individual

Knowing how campus policies, protocols and Canadian law define GBV, as well as how it impacts them and others is an important part of education for the campus community. This should include clear articulation of expectations, policy, protocol, non-academic misconduct policy and definitions. Ways to accomplish this include listing policies and definitions in the student handbook, in staff and faculty onboarding packages, online and through ongoing discourse and dialogue surrounding GBV. Topics like how relationships and experiences on campus impact safety and belonging, and victim-blaming could lead to better support of their peers and colleagues who have been impacted by GBV.

**"Our policy has a fairly small section about training and education but it does commit to training about the content of the policy which include you know, what is sexual violence. What is sexual harassment? How do we respond to it? What are your rights?"**

(Education, People Who Do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)



## b) Topic: How and where to access support services on and off campus?

### Social-Ecological Model Components: Individual & Relationship

All campus community members should be made aware of relevant campus and community resources for support and reporting options of GBV. PSIs must provide information about support services and links to resources both on and off campus as some individuals may not feel comfortable accessing support services on campus and may choose to seek support off campus instead of or in addition to the supports they are accessing on campus.

“[Our] students were informed about all of the gender-based violence training, programming and support services that was available within their grab bags that they were receiving at orientation... there was just a lot of coordination between new students coming in and the sexual assault centre in terms of an exchange of media and swag and content and there was a paralleling of consent training that was delivered at the same time of orientation at our campuses.”

(Educating Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

## 2. RELATIONSHIPS AND CONSENT

Many campus community members arrive on campus with little prior knowledge of issues like consent, how to engage in positive sexual and non-sexual relationships, setting personal boundaries and respecting the personal boundaries of others.

The table below outlines topics and approaches an institution may take in educating the campus community around healthy relationships. Students, faculty and staff are all impacted by GBV and should learn about consent, the dangers of engaging in relationships of unequal power and the supports and services that are available to them should they or their colleagues be impacted by GBV. While many of the promising practices outlined below have been designed with a student audience in mind, some have been adapted to meet the needs of faculty and staff members.

During a Listening and Learning Session a participant shared a toolkit and report prepared by the Women’s Earth Alliance and Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) titled *Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies*. In our conversation, they shared that this toolkit is “a really important place to start... because they were developing this toolkit around being able to understand consent, understanding consent and colonialism. Which is also not the level of nuance that most Canadians deal with.” Educators at PSIs were encouraged to build out the nuanced realities surrounding consent and to encourage learners to go deeper in their understanding to make links between consent, the impacts of colonization and ways for change moving forward.

# Factors to help student education on healthy relationships and consent

TOPIC	KEY MESSAGES AND CONTENT	PROMISING PRACTICES	SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL COMPONENTS
<p><b>Consent and Building a Culture of Consent</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop positive messaging around what consent is</li> <li>▪ What does consent look like under colonization</li> <li>▪ Build connections between the land and our bodies</li> <li>▪ Social norms of what consent is</li> <li>▪ Through peer to peer discussions, campaigns, engagement opportunities, social marketing campaigns</li> </ul>	<p>Ryerson’s Consent Comes First Consent Action Team (CAT)</p> <p>Humber’s Consent Peer Education Program (CPEP)</p> <p>#ConsentMcGill’s Peer Educator Program</p> <p>L’Université Laval’s Sans oui c’est non! campaign.</p>	<p>Individual Relationship Community</p>
<p><b>Healthy Boundaries and Making Friends</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore what healthy relationships can look like</li> <li>▪ Skills needed to develop healthy friendships and intimate relationships</li> <li>▪ Strong messaging around personal boundaries, consent and communication</li> <li>▪ Engage in conversation about GBV prevention, communicating desire, identifying unhealthy relationship patterns, learning tools to build healthy and respectful relationships with others</li> <li>▪ The dangers of engaging in relationships of unequal power</li> <li>▪ Expose campus community to on and off campus resources</li> </ul>	<p>Ending Violence of BC’s Safer Choices Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health and safety of LGBT2SQ folks and gender diverse individuals.</li> <li>▪ Workshops on building knowledge and relationship skills, reducing isolation, relationship abuse</li> <li>▪ Provides practical information and referrals</li> </ul> <p>University of Manitoba</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relationships between employees and students information sheet</li> <li>▪ Relationships between Employees with power differentials information sheet</li> </ul>	<p>Individual Relationship</p>

## Factors to help student education on healthy relationships and consent (continued)

TOPIC	KEY MESSAGES AND CONTENT	PROMISING PRACTICES	SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL COMPONENTS
<p><b>Comprehensive Sexual Health</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated/supported by staff, faculty and peer leaders</li> <li>Addresses the unique needs of diverse populations of campus community members</li> <li>Takes into consideration campus culture, intercultural values</li> <li>Accounts for different levels of previous sex education and awareness of diversity of sexualities, from very little to comprehensive understanding</li> <li>Accounts for each individual arriving with their own experiences and understandings.</li> <li>Possible topics: sexual health and wellbeing, establishing personal boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others, digital literacy and online dating/hook ups, masturbation and pleasure, understanding sexuality, STIs and both on and off campus sexual health resources.</li> </ul>	<p>SFU's Health Peers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer program designed to facilitate health education and outreach programming</li> <li>Includes sexual health, social connectedness and positive body image</li> </ul> <p>Sex and You</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A comprehensive online resource developed by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada</li> </ul>	<p>Individual Relationship Community</p>

## Factors to help student education on healthy relationships and consent (continued)

TOPIC	KEY MESSAGES AND CONTENT	PROMISING PRACTICES	SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL COMPONENTS
<p><b>Gender Identity and Expression</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the entire campus community</li> <li>Programs and initiatives that address transphobic attitudes</li> <li>Builds awareness of the effects of colonialism and its historic and ongoing impacts on two-spirit individuals and Indigenous communities</li> <li>Moves participants to reduce their own participation in GBV and positively impact on their campus' living and learning environment</li> <li>Work with gender diverse community members to develop prevention strategies that allow them to fully participate in campus life               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. access to gender inclusive washrooms and change rooms, use of inclusive signage, name change options on all campus systems, waiving fees for name changes on ID cards, supporting trans and gender non-binary individuals in the workplace</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>UBC's Inclusive Washroom &amp; Change Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains what an inclusive washroom is and why they are important</li> <li>Demonstrates the signage used on campus</li> </ul> <p>"Opening the door to the inclusion of trans* people"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outlines the nine keys to making Canadian organizations more trans* - inclusive</li> </ul> <p>Being Seen, Being Counted: Establishing expanded gender and naming declarations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A report developed to determine the optimal methods for achieving more inclusive and flexible naming and gender category practices within PSI systems</li> </ul>	<p>Individual Relationship Community Societal Structural</p>

“So I think there has to be an actual investment in the nuanced conversations rather than simply doing these LGBTQ2S+ 101 workshops with service providers that don’t kind of speak to the more nuanced pieces and the fact that we have to absolutely shift our lens and fundamentally change how we’re seeing things for folks to actually have their needs met.”

(LGBTQ2S+, Listening and Learning Participant)

“Staff and faculty should be educated on policy and needs to address staff, faculty and student relationships, the context and potentially harmful nature of such relationships. Many may not understand the context and the potential to do harm.”

(Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

### 3. UNDERSTANDING RAPE CULTURE

During the Listening and Learning session, student activists highlighted the importance of a campus community understanding of the root causes of rape culture. Rape culture is normalized, trivialized and accepted within our social fabric. It is one way that GBV manifests and it is part of our everyday lives and is shaped by the structures of power and the dynamics between communities. It is also historically embedded into the ways that it persists today.

Indicators of rape culture include:

- the objectification of certain bodies and identities (i.e. hypersexualization of young Black girls in media stories, “Pocahontas” Halloween costumes that sexualize Indigenous women),
- the perpetuation of patriarchal constructs (i.e. beliefs that women are liars, overly emotional and sexually manipulative),
- blaming individuals for the violence they experience (i.e. focusing on the clothing a person was wearing when they were harmed or the occupation they hold as a justification for the violence),
- fostering misogynist and sexist notions of sexual aggressiveness and sexual passivity (i.e. using sentiments like “boys will be boys” or men cannot control themselves when sexually excited).

These intermix with intersecting forms of oppression such as transphobia, heterosexism, colonialism, racism, classism and more. Experiences of GBV are usually portrayed in film, television, magazines, social media and other popular media with a male perpetrator and female victim. Conversations in locker rooms, classrooms, residence rooms, offices and dining halls can all support the notion that this is the only kind of GBV that does and can exist. A deeper and more nuanced understanding of this is needed to begin dismantling rape culture and the root causes of GBV.

“[T]he university recognizes rape culture so I think that helps us be able to educate without delving too deep into whether rape culture truly exists or not.”

(Education, People Who Do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

**a) Topic: Rape Myths and Myths Surrounding Gender-Based Violence**

**Social-Ecological Model Components: Individual, Relationship, Community & Societal**

Rape myths are widely held inaccurate understandings surrounding sexual violence and GBV. They often blame victims, minimize the violence or make excuses which all work to legitimize the violence or deny it has occurred. These myths create misunderstandings of consent, minimize lived experiences and discourage survivors in seeking support. Myth-busting is an important way to increase understanding of GBV and support survivors. Understanding and de-bunking myths around rape and GBV will shed light on how GBV occurs and is perpetuated.

By addressing social issues like misogyny, systemic sexism, transphobia and colonialism that impact GBV, GBV prevention education looks to create change in social attitudes. We must look at how each of these issues interact and intersect in today's society and materialize in real ways on our campuses.

“There are myths we have to bust. There are basic attitudes that people have. When someone comes to see us to disclose something how do we not add to their pain. There is some basic messages that can be part of overarching messaging. What should the Deans be doing, TAs, etc.”

(Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

**b) Topic: Media Literacy**

**Social-Ecological Model Components: Individual & Community**

Media plays a huge part in how we develop attitudes around many issues, including GBV. Programming around thinking critically about how the media portrays people of all genders, gender roles, sex, sexuality and objectification will encourage the campus community to think differently and create positive social change. Topics explored should include viewing certain bodies as sexual objects, body shame, misconceptions surrounding sexual pleasure and gender roles. We should also include students in the creation of prevention messaging especially on social media (i.e. social networking, picture sharing, blogs, videos, etc).

# Programming and Awareness needed in campus environments around GBV

TOPIC	KEY MESSAGES AND CONTENT	PROMISING PRACTICES	SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL COMPONENTS
<p><b>Responding to Disclosures and Supporting Survivors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 in 4 women will experience sexual assault during their time in higher education (SexAssault, 2019)</li> <li>• For 65% of survivors who disclose incidents of sexual assault, the first person they talk to will influence how and whether they talk about it again (Lindsay, 2014)</li> <li>• Greater number of students will experience trauma related to sexual assault directly and indirectly</li> <li>• Many students will have experienced GBV-related trauma before they arrive on campus.</li> <li>• Education should include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· impacts of trauma,</li> <li>· building empathy,</li> <li>· the dynamics of gender-based violence,</li> <li>· supports and services available to survivors both on and off campus.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Survivor centred and trauma-informed approach.</li> <li>• All survivors are believed and supported.</li> </ul>	<p>Nova Scotia's <i>Breaking the Silence: Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Free online training module</li> <li>▪ Part of NS Sexual Violence Strategy</li> </ul> <p>Ryerson University's Consent Comes First Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ BRAVE model of supporting survivors</li> </ul> <p>UBC's <i>Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence</i> booklet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ guides a campus community member through the steps needed to respond to a disclosure</li> </ul> <p>MacEwan University's Sexual violence support guides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ trained staff and faculty available to assist those affected by sexual violence</li> </ul>	<p>Individual, Relationship and Community</p>

# Programming and Awareness needed in campus environments around GBV (continued)

TOPIC	KEY MESSAGES AND CONTENT	PROMISING PRACTICES	SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL COMPONENTS
<p><b>Resistance Training</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Risk reduction not prevention</li> <li>▪ Build confidence to effectively resist assault</li> <li>▪ Reduce woman-blaming/self blaming attitudes and beliefs</li> <li>▪ Focus on resisting sexual assault by acquaintances and strangers</li> </ul>	<p>The Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAA) Sexual Assault Resistance Program “Flip the Script”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ reduce self-blaming attitudes</li> <li>▪ build self confidence</li> <li>▪ provide tools to resist assault from acquaintances.</li> </ul> <p>Wen-Do Women’s Self Defence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 15 hour basic course</li> <li>▪ physical and verbal self-defence techniques</li> <li>▪ awareness and avoidance of threatening situations</li> <li>▪ taught for women by women</li> <li>▪ inclusive of cis and transgender women and women and girls of all abilities.</li> </ul> <p>ACTION: Autodéfense pour femmes et adolescentes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ offers verbal and physical self-defense workshops</li> <li>▪ specialized training developed to address the needs of Indigenous women, women of colour, immigrant women and transgender women</li> <li>▪ focuses on subtle as well as obvious forms of assault committed by known aggressors or by strangers</li> </ul>	<p>Individual Relationship</p>



# Programming and Awareness needed in campus environments around GBV (continued)

TOPIC	KEY MESSAGES AND CONTENT	PROMISING PRACTICES	SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL COMPONENTS
<p><b>Bystander Intervention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empower members of the campus community to take action when they witness behaviours related to GBV</li> <li>Can engage the larger campus community</li> <li>Increase bystander behavior</li> <li>Improve ability to recognize problematic attitudes and situations</li> <li>Equip with practical and realistic tools to intervene</li> <li>Decrease support of comments, jokes and attitudes that reinforce rape culture</li> <li>Identify unintended consequences of “harmless” traditions and attitudes</li> <li>Foster healthier practices and attitudes in communities</li> <li>Facilitated peer to peer</li> </ul>	<p>Bystander intervention campaigns, workshops and peer programs as part of strategic sexual and gender-based violence prevention strategies e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The University of Windsor’s Bystander Initiative</li> <li>Western University’s Upstander Training</li> <li>Students For Consent Culture Bystander Intervention and Sexual Violence Prevention Training</li> <li>BWB Training Institute’s Bystander Mixtape is training designed to encourage Black Men to take a more aggressive stance against patriarchy, abuse and other acts of violence</li> <li>Campus Technical Assistance Project’s It’s Your Business! HBCU Bystander Intervention Curriculum, a culturally specific prevention curriculum for Historically Black Colleges and Universities</li> <li>The Ontario based DRAW THE LINE campaign. An interactive campaign that aims to engage Ontarians in a dialogue about sexual violence. The campaign challenges common myths about sexual violence and equips bystanders with information on how to intervene safely and effectively.</li> </ul>	<p>Individual Relationship Community Societal Structural</p>

# Programming and Awareness needed in campus environments around GBV (continued)

TOPIC	KEY MESSAGES AND CONTENT	PROMISING PRACTICES	SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL COMPONENTS
<p><b>Men, Masculinity and Gender Role Socialization</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reaching out to and educating men and masculine identified individuals</li> <li>▪ Statistically, men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of GBV regardless of the gender-identity and sexual orientation of the survivor (Lisak and Miller, 2002; Swartout, Koss, White, Thompson, Abbey and Bellis, 2015)</li> <li>▪ Engage men as allies using a strengths-based approach</li> <li>▪ Recognize men’s experiences of racism, disempowerment as youth, impact of toxic masculinity on individuals</li> <li>▪ Explore how to navigate intimacy and consent, what healthy masculinity can look like and how to engage in healthy relationships.</li> </ul>	<p>UBC’s AMS SASC’s Healthier Masculinities Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical examination of damaging stereotypes about masculinity, what it means to be masculine.</li> </ul> <p>I Can MANifest Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Empower men and boys to challenge violence against women and GBV wherever they encounter it.</li> </ul> <p>Moose Hide Campaign</p> <p>A grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and girls.</p>	<p>Individual Relationship Community Societal Structural</p>
<p><b>Education for those who have done harm</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding ways that men are socialized to engage sexually through the media, family, the school system and broadly accepted social norms.</li> <li>▪ Positive educational opportunities for those who have committed harm               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· mentorship opportunities</li> <li>· learning about the impacts of their behaviour</li> <li>· build accountability</li> <li>· changing behaviour</li> <li>· support the changes in behaviour of those around them</li> <li>· building emotional intelligence</li> <li>· healthy relationships</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>ManMade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partnership between Windsor University and AVONA, a local community-based organization</li> <li>▪ An opportunity for all men, including those who have done harm</li> </ul> <p>White Ribbon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partnership with the Congress of Aboriginal People’s</li> <li>▪ Tools for educators</li> </ul>	<p>Individual Relationship Community</p>

## Programming and Awareness needed in campus environments around GBV (continued)

TOPIC	KEY MESSAGES AND CONTENT	PROMISING PRACTICES	SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL COMPONENTS
<b>Safer Partying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize that alcohol is the primary “date rape drug” in the country</li> <li>Identify negative victim-blaming</li> <li>Bystander intervention</li> <li>Develop prevention messaging</li> <li>Supporting those impacted by GBV</li> <li>Empower party organizers and volunteers to build a sense of community accountability</li> </ul>	<p>Ryerson’s Consent Comes First Office’s Orientation Guide</p> <p>Good Night Out Vancouver</p> <p>A local chapter of an international initiative dedicated to raising awareness about sexual harassment and assault on nights out</p>	<p>Individual Relationship Community</p>

#### 4. PROGRAMMING AND AWARENESS

GBV can be prevented with both individual and institutional involvement through the lens of social change. Using empowering, solution-based, social change informed approaches has the power to bring about a vision of the world we would like to see.

“We have been working in [Nova Scotia] with developing a new bystander curriculum which would be a bystander invention program that would be five modules that are evidence-based and researched it has been a project that has been going on for a few years and it is designed through a status of women grant through one of the women centres in the province who has been working with a committee with stakeholder from across Nova Scotia to develop this program that is Nova Scotia specific but it very grounded in a intersectional feminist and anti-oppressive approach.”

(Atlantic Provinces, Listening and Learning Participant)

“[W]e also need to be building skills to let perpetrators build empathy, build accountability and start to understand the socialization that has happened that doesn’t justify the choice, but definitely brings this different type of awareness [forward].”

(Faculty and Staff Education, Listening and Learning Participant)

“Our bystander initiatives we work to do what we what we call institutionalizing it which ended deeply embedded in our academic curriculum both in the training of the peer facilitators who are trained in two courses. And so then that is completely relevant to their academic programs and we made sure that those courses were open to students they can get credit for them in a number of disciplines.”

(Educating Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

There are a growing number of educational modules available for purchase in the United States and increasingly in Canada. For some PSIs, using costly programs is not a viable option. Instead, many draw on affordable or free programming and tailor it to their unique campus community. Resources should be allocated to ensure that institutions are able to access appropriate programming that meets the unique realities of their campus communities.



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**

##### **GBV EDUCATION TOOLKIT.**

A number of individuals during the Listening and Learning sessions suggested that educational toolkits could be developed at the national level and include approaches that integrate some of the more nuanced conversations outlined above (i.e. programming that is inclusive of transgender and gender-nonbinary campus community members, modules that speak to the role of GBV as it impacts Indigenous communities and the ongoing impacts of colonization). This approach would provide building blocks so that individual institutions could build upon and adopt the toolkits to speak to the needs of their unique communities. These toolkits would include an evaluation framework along with a module that would support PSIs in implementing the evaluation.

## **5. EDUCATION FOR FACULTY AND STAFF**

Many view prevention education on campus as a student issue. It was made clear through the Listening and Learning sessions that this is a campus wide issue that is embedded within post-secondary cultures and in broader society more generally. A strategic approach to education directly speaks to the individuals engaged in the learning opportunity, is relevant to their lived experience and roles on campus. A clear statement in policies that support education builds buy-in and institutional commitment.

As with student learners, programming and competency building will need to meet the faculty and staff members where they are in their previous learning and have clear ties to their role at the institution. Various levels of learning should be offered. Institutions should decide on the baseline knowledge needed to support faculty and staff and develop ways to engage in this learning on an ongoing basis. A common baseline understanding should include anti-oppression education and training. From this point, education could be scaffolded so that learning continues to support much needed culture change.

“Think about what roles [staff and faculty] have around creating the culture of consent on our campuses. So what are ways that they might be able to integrate some of this material into their curriculum? What are the ways in which they’re talking about help-seeking behavior and supportive resources to their students”

(Faculty and Staff Education, Listening and Learning Participant)

Whether it’s addressing these issues in the classroom, in the workplace or within the campus community, faculty and staff play a significant role in leading the ongoing work required to address GBV. Many campuses have faculty members who are meaningfully engaged in research and leadership in this area.

“[W]e’ve also tried to engage faculties and individual faculty members who are champions around these issues to start to talk to within their faculties to get a sense of how they might encourage the people they work with in terms of uptake for viewing, and how they can use some of the modules and... information as starting off points to have conversations they might not otherwise have the opportunity to have.”

(Faculty and Staff Education, Listening and Learning Participant)



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** “[D]uring Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we hosted a feast in the Longhouse that was targeted at student services staff and we brought in Indigenous experts on sexual violence to do like an evening of talking training with them sometimes. It’s not about what we deliver, but it’s about what teachings we can bring from out there. You know what we can kind of collect and curate together.” (Faculty and Staff Education, Listening and Learning Participant). Visit a write up on the event, Sovereign bodies: Decolonizing consent.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** CANADIAN BASED RESEARCH ON GBV PREVENTION EDUCATION.

The majority of the research drawn on in this chapter on prevention education is based on the experiences of students in American PSIs. There is a need for more Canadian based research on GBV prevention education so that we can begin to understand the impacts of GBV prevention education and its long term impacts on individuals and campus communities. Research should also be designed to gauge the efficacy of prevention education for staff and faculty in PSIs.

## Programming Gaps

During the Listening and Learning sessions and through our review of research, a number of programming gaps emerged. Some identified gaps include:

### 1) FOR STUDENTS:

- Engaging and consulting with international students, leaders and experts who work with international students to understand how best to educate and support international students (i.e. develop educational opportunities in accessible language, develop culturally competent programming, etc).
- Working with graduate students to develop programs and initiatives that best meet the needs of and are reflective of the unique roles supported by graduate students in PSIs.
- Increasing awareness, safety and education on GBV for those students engaged in work integrated learning opportunities, co-op terms, work placements, field work, practicums and other learning opportunities that take place on and off campus as part of their educational programming. This includes tailored learning on supports available to them in the community and on campus, their rights as an employee, etc.
- Developing prevention education in partnership with Athletes and Athletics Departments to address the unique realities of team culture and masculinity in sport.

“I think there is a gap in our conversation with some of our international students. Some students have expressed a desire to know more about healthy relationships, dating norms and other bits.”

(Education, People Who Do the Work, Listening and Learning Participant)

### 2) FOR STAFF AND FACULTY

- Developing appropriate training and ongoing professional development for staff involved in the reporting, investigations and adjudication of GBV on post-secondary campuses. The baseline knowledge needed to support this work should be explored and established. (Please note the Reporting, Investigations and Adjudicating Chapter for more information.)

### 3) FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EDUCATORS

- Developing standardized training for those engaged with this work and providing on-going professional development opportunities that are affordable for staff from PSIs to attend.
- Establishing a strong network for resource sharing and coalition building amongst those spearheading GBV prevention initiatives and education on campus. Some strategies could include establishing provincial roundtables, developing a national platform to allow educators with opportunities to build connections, share best practices and provide opportunities for professional growth.

#### 4) FOR ALL

- Dedicating resources to ensure that the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action are acted upon and embedded in GBV prevention education. A piece of this training would explore the impacts of and interconnections between GBV and the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism.
- Exploring the role of the built environment and spaces on campuses in addressing GBV. In particular, address the lack of queer and trans inclusive amenities (i.e. all gender washrooms, gender inclusive washrooms integrated into building codes, changerooms and privacy concerns and signage, etc).
- Co-creating educational initiatives and programming (in partnership with community centers, organizations, etc) that addresses anti-Black racism at the intersections of GBV. Such programming would consider the lived realities and unique experiences of Black community members.
- Developing programming and initiatives that are engaging and relevant to students, staff and faculty with disabilities.
- Establishing programming (in partnership with community centres, organizations, etc.) that consider the lived realities and impacts of GBV on those who identify as LGBTQ2S+.
- Building a communications plan comprised of key campus community messaging on the prevention of GBV. Part of this guide would include key indicators which could be used to evaluate the impact and uptake of the messaging on the broader campus community.

“I think again people educating themselves and having more opportunities for folks like NYSHN to come in and do trainings at places. I think about how much resource and money and time is put into these things having people who have experience in their own lives doing these trainings is important.”

(Indigenous Peoples, Listening and Learning Participant)

“[M]aking sure that any information provided is accessible. Any online information needs to be accessible for anyone using screen readers, for example. Possibly having information available in ASL.”

(Disability Justice, Listening and Learning Participant)

## G. Assessment and Evaluation

Good programming does presently exist in Canada and in PSIs, however there is little to no evaluation being done to assess what works and what doesn't work in GBV prevention education. One Listening and Learning session participant shared:

“[S]ome programming is really promising but we don't know as we don't have the data to prove that it is having an impact on individuals and the campus culture.”

(Educating Faculty and Staff, Listening and Learning Participant)

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### POLICY

Assessment and evaluation does not currently appear to be an integrated component in policy or in the protocols supporting policy. As one Listening and Learning session participant noted:

“[As campus educators] we're limited in our own resources. We're given such a large portfolio and unfortunately often what we see is that the research components fall short of what we really need to accomplish our work and so [it would be helpful if it was] either embedded in policy or if it's in part of the accompanying documents”

(Educating Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

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### PRACTICES

Sexual assault and GBV programs and policies cannot be properly designed, implemented, and evaluated without adequate data. Evaluation and assessment are key to the ongoing sustainability of GBV prevention education.

“If we're using homegrown kinds of programming then we do need to do some sort of evaluation to make sure that we're actually accomplishing something and we know that those sort of satisfaction kind of evaluations at the end are not what we need to be doing but then there should be funding to actually hire the research staff to actually assist with this to do it properly and it shouldn't be like that.”

(Educating Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

Too often there is little capacity and resources to support meaningful program evaluation despite the importance of this kind of assessment. Institutions must dedicate resources specifically for evaluation. Evaluation, assessment and change are lengthy processes. Given that culture change happens gradually over 10 to 20 years, we need institutions to value the implementation of concrete assessment tools with a long-term strategy in mind. By documenting the efficacy of programming, we can maximize the impact of activities and encourage replication of effective programming and strategies on a long-term and ongoing basis.



“Data collection that is appropriate and measured and includes a sense of the impacts of policy, behaviour change, effectiveness of support services, etc. should be done as needed.”

(Students, Listening and Learning Participant)

Evaluation and assessment could come from resources and methods that already exist on campuses. Some strategies include:

- **BUILD** assessment, evaluation and research partnerships with faculty, students and staff on research that is already being or could be done could help advance our understanding of GBV and how we can effectively respond to and educate to prevent it from happening in the first place.
- **INTEGRATE** key questions into existing cyclical campus surveys and data collection methods such as the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey or the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE). This approach can help determine and gauge meaningful culture change on campus.
- **HOLD** climate surveys to determine the scope of GBV on campus. Climate surveys have been used within the US context to better understand and improve their campus climates in regards to sexual violence. An institutional, provincial or national climate survey and the release of the full results could help PSIs and relevant stakeholders better understand their present climate and gauge social change over time and in relation to other institutions.
- **EVALUATE** the impact of specific programming is helpful to ensure that the individual program is meeting the learning objectives outlined in the module itself. There is a diverse array of tools that can be drawn upon and integrated into specific programming for such purposes.

## Conclusion

Throughout the community engagement process, participants noted that GBV intervention and prevention programming needs to be ongoing and adapt to address the ever-evolving landscapes of life at PSIs. PSIs have an opportunity to contribute to ongoing conversations in research around GBV intervention and prevention education, however no one program, no matter its length and depth should be expected to tackle the full extent of GBV intervention and prevention education in our communities. As we have explored throughout this section of the draft Framework, multiple tools, pedagogical approaches and techniques are needed to deliver effective educational programming. These approaches to intervention and prevention should be grounded theoretically and be based on and informed by empirical evidence whenever possible. Students, faculty and staff should be exposed to consistent prevention messages and education at multiple points in time over their tenure at PSIs. These educational opportunities should be developmentally sequenced both in terms of method of delivery and content. The opportunities outlined in this document create the foundation for new and ongoing programs and approaches to be assessed for their effectiveness in fostering community learning and culture change.



# Reporting, Investigations, and Adjudication in Cases Involving Gender-Based Violence

# QUICK REFERENCE

## Reporting, Investigations, and Adjudication

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REPORTING, INVESTIGATIONS AND ADJUDICATION

- Trauma-informed approach
- Plain language
- Procedural fairness
- Clear communication
- Informed consent
- Institutional accountability

### POLICY AND PROCEDURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

#### ■ Reporting

- Eliminating limitation periods
- Immunity clauses
- Third Party/anonymous reporting

#### ■ Interim Measures

- Interim measures should be non-disciplinary
- Reviews and check-ins

#### ■ Alternative Solutions

- Considering collaborative resolution options
- Restorative practices
- Transformative justice

# QUICK REFERENCE

## Reporting, Investigations, and Adjudication

### INVESTIGATIONS

#### ■ Policy

- Notification and communication
- Concurrent proceedings

#### ■ Choosing an Investigator

- Internal Investigator
- External Investigator

#### ■ Adjudication (Decision Making)

- Confidentiality and sanctioning.
- Choosing an Adjudicator
- Guidance on sanctioning

#### ■ Appeals

### POLICY AND PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS FOR INVESTIGATORS AND ADJUDICATORS

#### ■ Role clarification

#### ■ Supports for Investigators and Adjudicators

#### ■ Specialized training

- Gender-based violence
- Trauma-informed practices
- Understanding and evaluating evidence
- Cultural safety

## Introduction

Post-secondary institutions have a responsibility to ensure that campuses are a safe space free of gender-based violence for all community members. One of the many tools available to PSIs that can be used to address GBV on campus is the processing of cases where a community member has reported a violation of their GBV policy.

### Steps in this process include:

Reporting

Investigations

Adjudication

Appeal Process

This process, also referred to as RIA, aims to address the harm caused by GBV and deter others from causing harm in the community. However, community members from all sides of the adjudication process have shared their concerns about harmful practices in the RIA and appeal processes, which can deter community members from engaging in them. PSIs must work to identify and remove systemic barriers that prevent community members from accessing these processes.

This chapter of the framework builds upon research and promising practices surrounding reporting, investigations, adjudication, and appeal processes. In addition, it incorporates feedback received by those most familiar with these systems - complainants themselves and those who work with RIA. During the Listening and Learning sessions, it became clear that there are many nuances and contradictory

ideas on how RIA processes should unfold for students, faculty and staff affected by GBV on PSIs. Within this chapter, we attempt to address the issues surrounding the increasingly complex topics of student conduct and labour relations while acknowledging that there are intersecting legal frameworks which must be taken into account at the provincial, territorial and federal levels. Such legal frameworks include, but are not limited to, human rights law, child welfare law, administrative law, criminal law and privacy law. These laws confer rights and obligations of PSI administrators, not just best practices. With that in mind, more research is needed to fully grasp the scope of complexities inherent in RIA processes within the unique provincial and territorial landscapes.

# Guiding Principles for Reporting, Investigations and Adjudication

These guiding principles have been created and informed by community stakeholders and are based on research for best approaches to RIA. Examples of how institutions can incorporate these guiding principles in their policies and practices are included throughout this chapter.

## Trauma-informed Approach

In the context of RIA, a trauma-informed approach means that the investigator or adjudicator possesses an awareness of trauma and the traumatic nature of the subject matter. They are able to accommodate the physical, psychological and emotional needs of the traumatized party in order to avoid retraumatizing them as a result of the RIA process. A trauma-informed approach is a uniquely critical element for RIA processes and procedures to become credible for all parties involved as it offers a more compassionate way of navigating through administrative processes. Trauma is inherent in GBV work, which can have short or long-term mental health implications for all parties involved as a result of retraumatization.

Traditional RIA processes fail to acknowledge their own harmful effects. For example, traditional investigative models focus on physical evidence and a requirement that the complainant be able to recount traumatic events in a detailed and chronological order to establish credibility. However, research on the effects of trauma suggests that investigators should focus on the subjective experience of the complainant rather than a linear description of the incident of GBV because this method is more reliable and trauma-informed. Trauma-informed practices recognize the connections between violence, trauma, negative health outcomes, communication styles and impacts on memory. Strict and narrow traditional RIA processes have deterred complainants from making reports out of fear of not being believed or the propensity for retraumatization.

Trauma-informed approaches not only benefit the parties involved in an investigation, but establishes credibility in the RIA processes as well as the PSIs which implement them. Without a higher standard of care and a solid understanding of trauma, systemic and social contributors which lead to GBV, and an awareness of the direct and vicarious impacts of trauma, PSIs would be vulnerable to reputational harm, survivor advocacy criticism and liability risks. An investigator and an investigative process founded on a solid understanding of trauma-informed practice and GBV ensures that the principles of procedural fairness are upheld while effectively minimizing the risk of causing further harm to the participants.

## Procedural Fairness

**“I think in the end if we’re going to resolve this we need a cross country wide conversation about what procedural fairness really is... We’re looking at fairness for all the parties... We have to think about how our processes have to be fair for respondents because part of the problem is in the absence of that discussion it goes to extremes, usually at the expense of survivors.”**

(Decision Making and Appeals, Listening and Learning Participant, Chris Hackett - University of Alberta)

Procedural fairness is a legal construct often seen in administrative processes which impact an individual’s rights or privileges. In the context of investigations, procedural fairness safeguards the rights of the participants and ensures that equal treatment and disclosure of information is provided

when resolving and responding to a complaint of sexual misconduct or GBV. Procedural fairness must be a guiding principle from beginning to end. Not ensuring fairness for one or more parties will compromise one or more steps of the RIA process.

It is critically important to understand that PSI GBV policies are not governed by the Criminal Code of Canada, even though acts of sexual violence and GBV can be criminal in nature. Instead, PSIs mandated to address GBV do so through policies which rely on procedural fairness as a guiding principle. However, mirroring criminal processes too closely poses a number of institutional risks, including but not limited to creating a barrier to disclosing GBV on campus. Using non-criminal terminology and sound student conduct or human resources practices is vital for transparency and clarity.

The Manitoba Ombudsman outlines the application of procedural fairness at various stages of an administrative process below:

- Those affected by the decision will be given advance notice that a decision will be made. They will be given information on the issue being considered and reasonable time to prepare any submissions for the decision-maker.
- Those affected by the decision will be given the information that will be considered when a decision is made and access to information the decision-maker will be reviewing.
- Those affected will be given a meaningful opportunity to state or present their case. Those affected have the right to share their opinion, and may be able to state their case at a hearing or through a written submission.
- Those affected will be given an opportunity to challenge or dispute any information that might be contrary to their position when a decision is being made.
- The decision-maker be impartial or unbiased and without a personal interest in the outcome of the decision.
- The decision must be communicated in plain language and demonstrate that the decision-maker has fully and fairly considered the issues. The decision will be explained clearly, including reasons for reaching the decision.

In the past, we have seen PSIs in North America face backlash for mishandling GBV cases. This has been for a variety of reasons including adjudicators not allowing respondents to respond to allegations before making a decision, permitting cross-examinations of complainants by respondents and their lawyers without ensuring legal representation for complainants, or not giving complainants an opportunity to decide whether they agree to a request for cross-examination. Procedural fairness is critical at all stages of the RIA process. Failure to ensure fairness for one party could result in an application to the court for judicial review of an investigation. If accepted, the parties could be compelled to attend court and provide testimony which is likely to result in re-traumatization. As for the institution itself, prioritizing procedural fairness will serve to avoid costly mistakes that could compromise the reputation of the RIA policies and procedures as well as the institution itself.



#### **PROMISING PRACTICES:**

Lynn Smith and Brandy Usick updated a monograph titled *Procedural Fairness for University and College Students* in 2016 for the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services. The tool was developed for student affairs professionals within the university and college contexts who support the investigations of academic and non-academic decisions and appeals.

Lakehead University uses the fairness triangle to describe procedural fairness when considering the process of decision-making or a completed decision with campus community members. It was originally developed by Ombudsman Saskatchewan and adapted by the University of Victoria Ombudsperson.

## Elements of Relational Fairness

- Being approachable
- Listening
- Respecting confidentiality
- Being honest and forthright
- Making information clear and easily available
- Providing accessible problem-solving options
- Being clear about what you can and cannot do
- Offering and apology if a mistake is made

# The Fairness Triangle

## Elements of Procedural Fairness

- Providing notice that a decision is to be made and sufficient information for an affected person to know what is required or what is at stake
- Providing an appropriate forum for an affected person to present his or her views and to be heard
- Being impartial and unbiased
- Making a decision in a reasonable time
- Providing clear and appropriate reasons for decisions

## Elements of Substantive Fairness

- Having appropriate authority to make a decision
- Ensuring that decisions are based on relevant information
- ...are not unjust, oppressive or discriminatory
- ...are not wrong in fact or law
- ...are reasonable

Lakehead University (n.d). The Fairness Triangle.





#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** GUIDELINES FOR PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS.

While promising practices includes procedural fairness, this is an area that varies greatly between policies. Many PSIs permit the parties to bring an advisor or support person, which can include legal counsel, a relative, community elder, friend, or other person to the investigation interview. For cases that involve unionized staff or faculty, where representation is not mandatory, these individuals should be informed that they have the right to bring a union representative.

However, it is important that the presence of an advisor or support person does not hinder the investigatory process, particularly in cases involving students where one side may have representation while the other side does not. For example, some participants in Listening and Learning sessions shared that there had been cases that disproportionately favoured wealthier students when lawyers were able to speak on their behalf. It is therefore important that the policy clearly identifies the advisor or support person as counsel and not legal representation, and to have students speak for themselves. Policies that allow parties to bring an advisor or support person should adopt an equity lens to ensure that the allowance of such support does not unduly advantage one party based on their ability to access legal services. This area would benefit from further research in order to identify clear promising practices.

There are several other principles that PSIs should consider adapting into their GBV policies and practices regarding the RIA process:

- **Informed consent:** Providing all parties with information about the (RIA) process and its possible outcome. All parties should be informed about what they can expect from the RIA process if they choose to formally report so they can make an informed decision whether or not to continue. This can include providing clear timelines for each step of the RIA processes, outlining the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the RIA and limits of confidentiality.
- **Plain language:** Policies should be made available to all community members. This can be accomplished in several ways including developing and reviewing policy while being conscious of the language used and providing policies to the campus community in multiple languages.
- **Clear communication:** Those involved should receive regular communication, as per their preferred delivery method, throughout the process on how things are proceeding, in particular if there are any unexpected delays.
- **Institutional accountability:** Data should be collected throughout the RIA process and when policy is under review this data should be used to inform the review process. Through this practice, the PSI should acknowledge where there are shortcomings and attempt to remedy them.

# Policy and Procedural Recommendations

Based on research, Listening and Learning sessions with stakeholders, and the principles outlined above, the following outlines the policy sections and promising practices for PSIs to consider when developing RIA practices.

## 1. Reporting

In this section we will refer to those who have experienced GBV as complainants. Complainants have reported experiencing the same systemic barriers at the reporting, investigation, and adjudication stages, as those who have gone through the criminal justice system. A lack of confidence in the system based on previous negative experiences and “institutional betrayal” is a barrier to accessing reporting options. This results in complainants choosing not to make a report and/or discouraging others from accessing reporting options.

Some common barriers in this process include:

- complex and disjointed processes;
- confusing policies and procedures;
- concerns about confidentiality and control;
- difficulty accessing information;
- procedures, processes or practices that re-traumatize or cause further harm.

These challenges have been a common experience for many complainants and, consequently, a large number of incidents of GBV on campus go unreported. Below are some recommendations for policies and practices that can encourage complainants to report.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** Ryerson University’s Consent Comes First Office of Sexual Violence Support and Education and Human Rights Services clearly walks individuals through “How to File a Report with the University” on their website. This page clearly articulates the reporting process, addresses issues surrounding confidentiality and interim measures along with other key factors for students, faculty and staff to consider should they choose to engage in a reporting process.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** Simon Fraser University’s Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office walks university community members through the reporting process with the use of flowcharts and encourages those affected by sexual violence to connect with a member of their team to discuss options more fully.

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## POLICY

### Eliminating limitation periods

Time limits on reporting an incident of GBV is a common area of concern for complainants. This parameter fails to consider the reasons why a survivor may not immediately make a report. Others experience additional barriers to reporting, such as a previous or ongoing personal relationship with the respondent, lack of a support system, social dynamics at the PSI, and family dynamics just to name a few. On average, 40% of people affected by GBV at PSIs delay reporting, with an average delay of 11 months (NASPA, 2017). Whatever the reason, it's important to acknowledge that when a complainant chooses to report, timelines should not serve as a barrier, preventing access to RIA processes. This recommendation was mentioned in Students For Consent Culture's (SFCC) OurTurn National Action Plan (Salvino, et al, 2017) as well as from participants from our Listening and Learning sessions:

**“I'm in favour of not having a time limitation on reporting. I think at the very minimum you have to consider the length of someone's degree.”**

(Reporting, Listening and Learning Participant, Allison Kilgour - University of Manitoba)

If time limits were eliminated, PSI policies would mirror civil and criminal law as there is no statute of limitations on when a complainant can bring forward allegations of sexual assault. No limits on timelines also provides the PSI with an opportunity to hold those who have caused harm and who have remained or returned to campus accountable regardless of how much time has passed.



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PSI.

PSIs should directly acknowledge that a delay in reporting may affect an institution's ability to proceed. For example, complications may arise if the respondent is no longer a campus community member. Some reports have suggested that an institution may (depending on the enabling statute or authority) exert control over a graduate's presence on campus and/or place a hold on a graduate's transcript as a means to facilitate engagement in an investigation or implement disciplinary measures post-investigation. Further research would need to be done in order to explore what the role and responsibilities of the PSI are in these circumstances.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** There are a few PSIs that have eliminated limitation periods including McMaster University's Sexual Violence Policy;

**“There are no time limitations on bringing forward a Complaint. However, individuals are encouraged to report a Complaint at the earliest opportunity, as the longer the time lapse between the incident and the Complaint, the more difficult it becomes to investigate effectively. Once a Complaint is received, it will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible”**  
(2016, p.7)

## Immunity clauses

The immunity clause is used to protect complainants from being penalized for minor infractions related to drugs or alcohol (e.g. underage drinking) that might be brought up when reporting an incident of GBV. More well-known on campuses in the United States as an ‘Amnesty clause’, this policy clause was created in response to administrators using punitive measures when complainants would report incidents of GBV that violated the institutions’ Honor Codes. In some cases, Honor Codes mandated that students abstain from the use of alcohol, premarital sex, coffee, and being in the bedroom of someone of the opposite sex. This was highly problematic as investigations into incidents of GBV could be shifted onto the complainants’ violations of Honor Codes, resulting in sanctions as serious as expulsion for the complainant. The implementation of an immunity clause has been recommended by student activists and was included as another recommendation in the OurTurn National Action Plan.

“While they (immunity clauses) aren’t in our current policies, we are operating with a number of those recommendations in our process.”

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant, Sunand Sharma - Sheridan College)

Immunity clauses in sexual violence and GBV policies are most often utilized by PSIs in the United States. While immunity is being used formally in some Canadian PSI policies such as at the University of Winnipeg, a number of stakeholders during the Listening and Learning sessions shared that this practice is being used informally by others. It is recommended that immunity be incorporated formally into policies as it would serve to remove one barrier to reporting for those complainants who have violated Honor Codes or other PSI policies and who fear possible consequences imposed by the PSI based on the information they provided in their report.

It is important for PSIs to consider how their own conduct policies have created barriers to reporting and what protective factors they can put in place to remove them. This clause has been included in recommendations from several student-led reports, including SFCC’s.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** A policy example of immunity being used in a Canadian context is from York University’s Policy on Sexual Violence;

“A survivor or community member acting in good faith who discloses or reports sexual violence will not be subject to actions for violations of the University’s policies related to drug and alcohol use at the time that the sexual violence took place.”

(2016, Section 8.3)



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**  
IMMUNITY CLAUSES

It should be noted that further research would have to be conducted in order to determine the effects that immunity clauses would have on reporting rates at Canadian PSIs, as People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant Chris Hackett from the University of Alberta, noted;

“...the reason those are such a big deal is because of the U.S. where alcohol and drug cases are often a very significant focus of their conduct processes due to higher legal drinking age. It’s much less of an issue in Canada.”

### Third party/anonymous reporting

Third party and anonymous reporting are both practices that allow a person affected by GBV to provide the institution with information about an incident without revealing their identity. The purpose for third party and anonymous reporting is driven by a need for community safety and does not necessarily focus on holding an individual who has caused harm accountable.

Although third party and anonymous reporting share the same purpose, the way they are executed slightly differs;

- **THIRD PARTY REPORTING** allows for a trusted third party, an individual or an organization, to file a report (with the PSI or police) on their behalf without providing information about the complainant’s identity.
- **ANONYMOUS REPORTING** involves the complainant filing a report themselves, but not being required to provide information about their identity. Usually this is done through an anonymous online reporting system.

There has been research to support third party and anonymous reporting in the criminal justice system. It has been adopted by a number of institutions over the past couple of years, such as Brock University in 2016 and Lakehead University in 2018, and was recommended by SFCC. This option can be empowering and provide some relief to a person affected by GBV. These individuals may have concerns for community safety, and this reporting route allows them an opportunity to notify the institution of the perpetrator’s behaviour. This process allows a survivor more room to consider if and when they want to pursue a more formal investigation. This is an example of a trauma-informed practice discussed in a Listening and Learning session:

“[I]t provides the ability to track patterns and allows survivors to provide that information without having to put themselves through the process of an investigation.”

(Reporting, Listening and Learning Participant, Allison Kilgour - University of Manitoba)

Documenting incidents is necessary because it helps demonstrate the severity of the problem on campus, including trends in incident locations or perpetrators.

Many of the stakeholders in the Listening and Learning sessions pointed out that one of the most common challenges with third party and anonymous reporting is that there are few, if any, cases where such reports provide enough information to initiate an investigation. In cases where there is enough information to proceed, the question of procedural fairness is often raised, as the respondent has a right to hear and respond to the accusation. This limits the type of situations in which anonymous reports can move forward.

“Expectations need to be set up beforehand, that there are limits in terms of how an anonymous complaint can be acted on in the investigation. If a respondent is not able to respond to the details of the complaint then it really limits how an investigation can progress.”

(Reporting, Listening and Learning Participant,  
Meagan Simon - MacEwan University)

One of the more controversial reporting options is anonymous online reporting, mainly due to confusion about what will happen with the information provided in anonymous reports. There are questions about what should happen when there is some but not enough information to allow a PSI to initiate an investigation, and where this information should be held. To address this, systems like Callisto, which aims to connect survivors of repeat offenders to on-campus support and resources, have been suggested. The application records entries made by potential complainants, which include the names of respondents involved in multiple incidents and forwards the name of the person who caused harm to the institution.

It should be noted that there are a number of interventions that can take place when an anonymous or third party report is made, including: recording the name of the respondent, initiating an inquiry or, less often, initiating a full investigation. It is important for PSIs to be transparent and to manage expectations about what action can be taken in individual cases due to the limited information that can be provided. The focus should be on how third party and anonymous reporting can support PSIs in identifying repeat offenders and address concerns for community safety. It can also encourage more community members to report and seek support after experiencing GBV.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** The Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS) is a database utilized by police departments to identify crimes committed by a common perpetrator. This system intakes specific details offered by the complainants and matches them with details provided by other individuals with the eventual goal of identifying repeat offenders and serial criminals. Complainants are then informed when the respondent in question is involved in multiple crimes and may want to come forward to pursue formal charges.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**  
RISK ASSESSMENTS

Many of the Listening and Learning participants requested standardized risk assessments for when a PSI should initiate an inquiry or investigation based on information provided from third party and anonymous reporting. It would allow PSIs to act on issues of community safety while also protecting the needs of the person affected by GBV wherever possible.

Allison Kilgour from the University of Manitoba echoes that there needs to be an opportunity to address concerns for the safety of the community especially “[w]hen there has been a clear pattern of a repeated perpetration (by an individual) which is clearly posing a risk to other individuals on the community campus.”

Risk assessments can help address the institution’s responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for its community members, but it unfortunately can come at a cost that can greatly impact a survivor who may not want to proceed with a complaint.

Meagan Simon from MacEwan University suggested that “[i]f it’s going to be in policy there needs to be a systematic way of implementing it. Whether you have a threat assessor on campus or you have someone doing a structured risk assessment to determine what reaches that threshold of community safety standard.”

It is important to put safeguards in place to protect parties from being involved in RIA process against their wishes, possibly doing further harm. There need to be standards for determining what that threshold looks like and a clear pathway to deciding who is making this assessment and determination.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** University of Alberta’s Student Conduct and Accountability clearly outlines the limits of when and how anonymous reporting can take place when students witness other students engaging in dishonest behaviour. These principles can be applied to anonymous reporting when it is used in cases of GBV. It is key to set clear expectations when institutions choose to implement this form of reporting.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** Callisto Campus is a web-based reporting tool that allows survivors to learn about their institutional and police reporting channels, connect with local resources and take actions related to recording or reporting their experiences of sexual violence. <https://www.projectcallisto.org>

## 2. Interim Measures

Interim measures are non-disciplinary conditions or restrictions placed on a person who is alleged to have committed GBV. These measures can be used at any point after a formal report has been made, prior to the conclusion of the investigation. Interim measures can include no-contact orders, making changes to class scheduling, and restricting access to campus or the workplace. Interim measures are important tools needed to help address safety concerns by offering protection for both parties from retaliation, preserve the rights of the survivor to access a safe working or learning environment, preserve and maintain the integrity of the RIA process, and to preserve the reputation of and uphold community confidence in the PSI.

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### POLICY:

#### Interim measures should be non-disciplinary

It should be made clear in GBV policies that interim measures are not a sanction due to a determination of guilt.

“The clear statement in policy that interim measures are non-disciplinary goes a long way.”

(Interim Measures and Remedies, Listening and Learning Participant, Mark Walma - University New Brunswick)

Where interim measures are necessary, the PSI should seek to implement the least disruptive measures that still promote safety and security. They cannot involve restrictions that encroach on someone’s rights as a community member - for both parties.

“We offer the resources that are available on campus to the student or professional despite their time away from our community... so if a person is in counselling or seeing a psychologist or others are resources they rely on... by no means should have those resources that we offer on campus be removed from them as an interim measure.”

(Interim Measures and Remedies, Listening and Learning Participant, Darryl Veld - Brock University)



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** CONSULTATION WITH AFFECTED PARTIES ON INTERIM MEASURES.

One recommendation that could help reassure parties that interim measures are non-disciplinary is to consult with them before a decision is made. Other stakeholders noted that this is already a practice being used at their institutions informally. It would be helpful to engage in further research to consider how both parties can be consulted about interim measures before they are decided on, as this may reduce the need for review of interim measures after they have been implemented and reduce the risk of violating a respondent's procedural fairness rights.

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**PRACTICES:**

**Interim Measures Reviews and Check-ins**

PSIs should have practices in place to regularly assess the effectiveness of the implemented interim measures as well as opportunities to improve upon them, or even remove them, if they are not effective.

Stakeholders in the Listening and Learning session discussed practices, informally and formally, to review whether the imposed interim measures were effective in individual cases. One practice shared was having scheduled check-ins with the involved parties at regular intervals to ensure that the measures were effective and not unintentionally disciplinary. Stakeholders felt that interim measures were more sustainable and effective if the parties were involved and had regular check-ins to assess their well-being.

One of our Interim Measures and Remedies Participants, Darryl Veld, commented that staff at Brock University offers support to the person who has experienced GBV as well as to the respondent to ensure that interim measures are effective and non-punitive. “It’s just one point of contact that helps us... are they (the respondent) complying, are there challenges that mean they can’t comply, are the measures affecting their grades unduly... we’re finding it very effective to have a regular check-ins.”

Survivors in one Listening and Learning session noted that they often feel the pressure to monitor interim measures to help ensure that the respondent is adhering to them. This is a real burden expressed by survivor/complainants. Check-ins can be important as they could help alleviate the pressure that some of these student survivors shared.



### 3. Alternative Resolutions

Alternative resolutions have often been interpreted to mean mediation or other conflict resolution. However, mediation and conflict resolution are not appropriate approaches to draw upon in cases involving GBV as they are not “conflicts” which are responsive to mediation or equal responsibility declarations. That said, alternative resolutions can also be interpreted more broadly to refer to any facilitated resolution option outside of procedures in the collective agreements and discipline policies. While these are often referred to as informal processes, it is important to note that they require specially trained facilitators, careful preparation of the participants, and appropriate follow up. There also needs to be an acknowledgment that these types of accountability models and responses to GBV did not originate out of PSIs. This work comes from grassroots Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour communities - communities that created these approaches to healing and accountability as vital alternatives to the harms and violence created through the criminal justice system.

Alternative resolution may include, but is not limited to;

- **COLLABORATIVE RESOLUTION OPTIONS:**
  - At any point before a decision is made in a formal RIA process, either or both parties may be willing to resolve the matter through an alternative process.
  - Collaborative resolutions offer alternative ways of addressing harm that are voluntary, survivor-driven, trauma-informed, and collaborative in nature.
  - Options include, but are not limited to restorative practices, transformative justice, healing or peacemaking circles, cultural ceremonies, and others. Many of these methods are derived from or inspired by Indigenous community practices (both historical and current).
  - Rather than the PSI imposing consequences, these approaches allow for the parties involved (person who caused harm, person who experienced harm and affected community members) to agree on what actions must be undertaken in order for the survivor to be able to move on and feel safe.
- Because the outcome is decided upon and agreed to by the participants, there is no need for an appeal mechanism. Should a collaborative process fail, the complaints/discipline route is available for recourse.
- Any agreement is followed up to ensure the actions have been undertaken.
- **RESTORATIVE PRACTICES** are based on an approach that reframes misconduct as harm to a person and/or community.
  - Drawn from and grounded in Indigenous knowledge and practices.
  - Centred on accountability, where the person acknowledges the harm they have caused and their obligations to make amends for that harm.
  - Provide a framework for those harmed to articulate the negative effects of the behaviour on them and what they need to make it right.
- **TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE** is an approach that seeks change at both the interpersonal level and within wider social structures and institutional policies. Resolution involves transforming wider social systems in ways that help to prevent the occurrence and recurrence of harmful incidents.
  - Created by and made for (including but not limited to) Black, Indigenous and People of Colour communities, people with disabilities, sex workers, and queer and trans communities.
  - Stands against violence and punishment, institutionalization and imprisonment.
  - Understands that these systems perpetrate further violence and harm in order to maintain social order through oppressive norms.
  - Relies on community members instead of the police, the law, or the government (or, in this case, PSIs).
  - Aims to prevent violence through healing, accountability, resilience, and safety for all involved.
- **EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE OUTCOMES INCLUDE:**
  - Education and training related to anti-violence, anti-oppression, and consent.
  - Apologies, explanations, or assurances, as needed by the survivor.
  - Actions to rebuild trust in the community.

“I would also be interested in seeing the benefits and challenges of incorporating restorative justice practices and/or programming for those who cause harm. In our policy right now it can feel very “all or nothing” and I have had survivors not necessarily want a disciplinary sanction but want the perpetrator to have education about the impacts of their actions and education in hopes of supporting prevention.”

(Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response, Listening and Learning Participant, Meaghan Hagerty - Thompson Rivers University)

It is critical for PSIs to provide alternative opportunities to address additional harms experienced, due to barriers that many people affected by GBV face when reporting. Having more options available, including alternative resolutions, allow for complainants to choose what works best for them; on their own terms without any pressure.

“We recognize that the disciplinary and conduct processes are not working for most people and we can tell that because very few survivors are using those processes or are making formal complaints. This was a way to offer a more trauma-informed approach.”

(Interim Measures and Remedies, Listening and Learning Participant, Deborah Eekes - University of Alberta)

There is also opportunity for respondents to benefit from collaborative resolutions. It provides a developmental opportunity for respondents to be accountable for and be educated about the harm caused by their behaviour. Typical adversarial models used in resolving complaints force respondents to defend themselves rather than taking responsibility and learning how to change their behaviour.

“...if you have been brought up in a system where acts of violence and harm, sexual or not, are not punished and essentially treated as every day, the whole piece around how the ways we are raised and it’s enforced, that you may not actually understand that you have harmed someone. And I think that is a tension for me because it doesn’t take away the accountability of the fact that harm has occurred. Whether your intent was to harm that person or not, the fact that you crossed that line into harming them there should be consequences for that, but again we don’t necessarily have the resources within institutions to be able to deal with that – which is where there are lessons to be learned from our communities prior to the impacts of settler colonialism.”

(Indigenous Listening and Learning Session Participant, Seán Carson – Centennial College)

“This mechanism has come to be used more than our complaints/reporting option by our students. I think it demonstrates that, in order to be truly trauma-informed... we have to stop focusing on punishment for the offender...”

(Online Submission, Anonymous)

PSIs should also consider that this process may look different in a workplace setting and under labour codes. For example, the Ontario Ministry of Labour notes that there is legislation that mandates an investigation must be completed as part of a resolution even if the parties involved decide to use alternative resolutions. The employer would still have to provide results of the investigation with the parties involved.



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED: ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTIONS.**

Although it is an option for some, alternative resolution does not work for everyone or in every situation. For it to be a meaningful process, participants must engage voluntarily and remain free from pressure or reprisal. In appropriate circumstances, at any stage of the process, either the complainant or the respondent may indicate they would like the complaint to move to or resume the investigation and decision-making process. If there is a failure to comply with the terms of a resolution, the complaint may be moved to an investigation and decision-making process. In addition to this, there are certain situations where it may not be appropriate to engage in these types of resolutions. This can include when a member of a union is involved and depends on their collective bargaining agreement, when there is a clear power imbalance between the parties, such as cases involving faculty and students, or when one of the parties does not feel safe enough to participate. More research should be conducted to better understand the role of alternative resolutions within the PSI setting.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** In August 2018 members of the University of Alberta developed a *Report from the Working Group on Restorative Initiative for Sexual Violence* which was presented to the sexual violence response advisory council executive steering committee. The report examines the possibility of using restorative justice to address incidents of sexual assault on campus and concludes with a number of recommendations to help frame next steps including parameters of use, place in policy and systemic response, and facilitation.

## 4. Investigations

Investigations focus on the collection of evidence and information from both parties as well as any witnesses to cases of GBV. In some models, the investigator makes the decision as to whether or not there has been a breach of the policy. This stage of the process is typically the most time-consuming stage in the RIA process. Depending on the case, investigations can take up to several months to be completed. Several student-led groups, including SFCC and Silence is Violence (SiV) have acknowledged that RIA processes, particularly the investigation process, are time-consuming and therefore, while it's important that steps are taken to expedite this process, these measures should not interfere with the thoroughness of the investigation.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** United Educators Insurance's Checklist for Conducting Student Sexual Assault Investigations focuses on recommended practices for investigating an alleged sexual assault of a student. It is based on materials created by Jody Shipper for a workshop of the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA).

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### POLICY:

#### Notification and Communication

Due to the often lengthy investigation process, a trauma-informed and good practice is to ensure that the parties are regularly updated on any changes or delays which may impact the timeliness of the investigation. Being transparent and accountable about the investigation process and developments can be instrumental in building confidence in the process for all parties. There have been many requests by community stakeholders for clear and reasonable timelines to be given to parties involved in a complaint, including from the SFCC. PSIs should consider what policies are in place surrounding communications and how timelines are communicated.

Parties should receive regular updates on the progress of their case and should be notified of any delays related to the resolution of their case. Types and frequency of these updates will be determined through discussion with each complainant.

#### Concurrent Proceedings

In some circumstances a respondent might be involved in both a criminal proceeding and a RIA process at their PSI. Questions have been raised about whether the proceedings at the PSI should be delayed until after the criminal proceedings have adjourned.

**“It appears that most post-secondary institutions’ sexual violence policies take diverse approaches to what should happen when criminal, professional or other proceedings have been commenced. Only a few policies explicitly provide that the institutional proceeding should go ahead even while a criminal proceeding is ongoing.”**

(Investigations, Listening and Learning Participant, Karen Busby - University of Manitoba)

Some research suggests that an administrative proceeding should not be delayed, even if there are criminal proceedings pending against an individual for the same matter. PSIs have a responsibility to their community members to ensure safety and to address GBV when it occurs in the campus community. PSIs cannot neglect this duty, especially in light of lengthy criminal court proceedings. As Karen Busby notes,

“There must be exceptional or extraordinary circumstances to justify a stay. [Previous legal] cases suggest that while adjournments could be granted in some cases, it is more likely that an adjournment will be denied even where Charter rights (right to silence) may be at play.”

Busby went on to share, “I struggle with this issue. I don’t like the idea of an investigation being suspended pending a criminal investigation because I think these investigations should go ahead and go ahead quickly but I also recognize that there is some serious unfairness.”

A number of concerns were shared about concurrent RIA and criminal proceedings involving the same respondent. During a Listening and Learning session it was shared that information gathered from internal PSI investigations may be used in a criminal case. Not surprising, this has been seen as a deterrent for respondents to participate in PSI RIA proceedings when there are concerns that their responses can be subpoenaed.

“When you’re dealing with the criminal and the investigative standard of proof, you have to consider that on the criminal side you’re dealing with beyond a reasonable doubt. So the Crown has to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the offense was committed. So in theory and quite often the Crown can present its case and the defense can actually choose to remain silent and challenge the case just based on the Crown’s presentation of the case. If you compare that to the university proceedings that operates on a balance of probabilities, which is 51 percent... realistically, there is no way that a respondent could defend himself or herself if they didn’t speak. So what that would mean is ultimately left with the choice of being found guilty in that investigative proceeding.”

(Investigation, Listening and Learning Participant, Kathryn Piche – Patterson Law)

However, there may be protective factors a PSI can put in place to address these concerns through measures similar to derivative use immunity. Derivative use immunity stems from the Canadian Charter and Evidence Act, and it protects an individual against having self-incriminating evidence that the person was compelled to give in one proceeding used against them in another proceeding.

“Post secondary institutions may wish to consider whether some measure similar to derivative use immunity might be applied to protect the admissions of respondents, the testimony of complainants and the identities of witnesses from being used in another proceeding. Protective measures would promote a sense of trust, credibility and safety for all participants involved in a post-secondary institution investigation process.”

(Investigations, Listening and Learning Participant, Myrna McCallum - Miyo Pimatisiwin Legal Services)



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** ALTERNATIVES TO DERIVATIVE USE IMMUNITY

The concept of derivative use immunity was discussed in our Listening and Learning session for the protections it offers. However, it unfortunately has no application in PSI proceedings. The statements made by the parties are voluntarily offered and not compelled by law. That said, there may be alternatives to derivative use immunity which PSIs can explore which offer a similar benefit. For example, PSIs could consider establishing a Wigmore privilege that protects confidential communications. Accordingly, PSIs could determine, on a case by case basis, where privilege should attach to communications in a RIA process. With this potential in mind, consideration should be given to finding a balance between a commitment to confidentiality, fairness, community safety, and

ensuring a timely process. There is still much work to be done to determine when a stay of the PSI proceedings should be granted when there is a concurrent criminal proceeding. There also needs to be a consideration for what protections should be put into place to ensure fairness and absolute confidentiality for those involved.

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## **PRACTICES:**

### **Choosing an Investigator**

It is critical for PSIs to hire culturally competent and trauma-informed trained investigators to engage in GBV investigatory processes. The ability to remain impartial and well reasoned in an investigation and subsequent report is equally imperative and necessary. However, the investigator tasked with conducting the interview and making a credibility assessment must also possess a deep understanding of GBV, the effects of trauma on behaviour, memory, and communication, and the ability to recognize and respond to traumatic symptoms or triggers when they surface. Without this level of competency, expertise, and awareness, a PSI runs the risk of perpetuating further harm to the complainant during the investigation process. Utilizing an investigator who is biased, uninformed, or operates with a deeply flawed understanding of GBV may compromise the findings as well as the reputation of the PSI who retained them.

“People are relying on lawyers who don’t get trained in investigations, nor are they trained in [investigating instances of] sexual violence. Investigators who come from traditional models are not appropriate in sexual violence cases.”

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant, Chris Hackett - University of Alberta)

An investigator can be either internal to the PSI or external. During the Listening and Learning sessions, many working within PSIs remarked that it would be helpful if there was a registry or roster of Canadian investigators who are appropriately trained to investigate instances of GBV and understand the PSI context. This is a clear gap and also an opportunity to establish higher competency standards for investigators who want to work with PSIs to address GBV on campus.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** Myrna McCallum developed a presentation outlining the core components necessary to conduct an effective and trauma-informed investigation: trauma-informed Practice in Workplace Investigations (March 13, 2019).

### Internal investigator

An internal investigator can be a PSI staff member that is trained to investigate a complaint and who possesses competency or training and experience in GBV. Using an internal investigator is usually a more affordable option and allows PSIs to regulate and determine appropriate training. However, there is a possibility of a conflict of interest or an apprehension of bias if the internal investigator is employed in other capacities on campus. It is also important to be aware of who is providing the training, what model the training follows, and in what contexts the training can be applied. As one Listening and Learning participant shared:

“We ended up having our own follow-up training session to clarify some of the points we weren’t happy about. The trainer was saying things like ‘you need to collect forensic evidence, that might include taking computers and cell phones’... that’s not how we’re going to be doing things on campus. That’s a policing model.”

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant, Lyndsay Anderson - Dalhousie University)

### External investigator

An external investigator is brought from an off-campus organization. Since they are not a regular part of the campus community, there is less chance of a conflict of interest. They are also more likely to be received as a neutral party by the individuals involved and the community at large. External investigators have the experience needed to conduct an investigation, but may not have specialized training in GBV cases or an understanding of campus communities. A PSI can require that an external investigator be appropriately trained and experienced in engaging in investigations concerning GBV. However, this may lengthen the process of finding an investigator with these necessary qualifications.

“It’s not just training, it’s training and experience. We can’t just train someone and expect they’ll be an expert at it.”

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant, Chris Hackett - University of Alberta)

Finding investigators that are educated both in the nuances of GBV and a campus community setting can be difficult. PSIs should choose which type of investigator works for their campus and for individual cases as long as they have received the appropriate specialized training to ensure a fair investigation process that does no harm.

“I’d say we have a hybrid model here. We want to have some internal folks we can draw upon but also sometimes there is a need for external investigators if it involves staff, faculty or an employee on campus.”

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant, Lyndsay Anderson - Dalhousie University)



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** HOW PSIs CAN BE SUPPORTED IN TRAINING OR FINDING SKILLED INVESTIGATORS.

It was brought up in several of the Listening and Learning sessions that, depending on the size and resources available to the PSI, choosing an appropriate investigator can be difficult. More research and discussion is needed to determine how PSIs can be supported in training or finding skilled investigators whether that be through some form of funding or shared investigators services.

“In the Maritimes it has come up that other schools are struggling with how to effectively do investigations when they’re so under-resourced. We’ve often talked about this idea of sharing investigator resources with schools who can’t afford \$15-30,000 external investigators.”

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant, Lyndsay Anderson - Dalhousie University)

## 5. Adjudication (Decision Making)

Adjudication has two goals; deciding whether there has been a breach of policy, and in circumstances where there has, what tools will be used to address the harm caused, i.e. sanctioning. These decisions can aid a PSI in addressing GBV on both an individual and a community level. However, provincial and territorial legislation across Canada has not made it clear what the expectations are of how campus adjudicative processes should look like. This has left PSIs to fill the gap.

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### POLICY:

#### Confidentiality and Sanctioning

Confidentiality is necessary to the RIA processes. This ensures all parties’ privacy rights are protected as well as the integrity of the process. Some PSIs have interpreted privacy law to include not sharing outcomes and sanction decisions with complainants. This may be a result of variations in privacy law requirements within each province and territory, which determine sanctioning information to be considered personal information of the respondent.



However there also appears to be inconsistencies from PSI to PSI, within the same province and territory, due to differences in legal interpretations of these privacy laws. In some instances, complainants may get excerpts from investigators' reports about information they've provided or a high-level summary. Advocates have continuously requested that information about what measures and sanctions were taken to address an incident of GBV be shared with the complainant. PSIs should consider whether their interpretations of their respective provincial and territorial privacy laws are accurate, provide transparency about how much information can be shared under their privacy laws, and aim to provide as much information as possible to complainants. There are tensions here that need to be reconciled.

Sharing or explaining decision and sanctioning results can be very important to support complainants and assess whether justice has been done in individual cases. Not sharing or explaining decisions may create barriers for complainants who may want to access the appeal process or employees who wish to grieve a decision or disciplinary action. For example, at Ryerson and York University, parties can utilize the appeal process to address concerns they may have about the appropriateness of a sanction. However, if complainants are not aware of this information, they can't make that determination. If we are to acknowledge that a complainant is a party, with rights to provide and challenge information before a decision is made, there should be consideration for equal access to the same information, including outcome.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**  
INFORMATION SHARING WITH COMPLAINANT  
AND RESPONDENT.

Even if there are privacy restrictions, there is still an opportunity to look for ways to work with both parties to obtain consent to share information. There should be further exploration into how this information can be shared with both parties to give them, at the very least, equal access to the appeal processes available to them.

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## PRACTICES:

### Choosing an Adjudicator

Similarly to choosing an investigator, adjudicators should be trained, impartial, not pose a conflict of interest, and be provided with resources to ensure a fair process. Adjudicators should be trained in RIA processes specifically in a PSI setting and, as SFCC noted in their student-led report, should receive specialized training in how to address cases of GBV. This includes topics like cultural competency and trauma so they can engage survivors in an informed, respectful and effective manner, that recognizes different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds.

Adjudicators should be able to make impartial decisions and not pose a conflict of interest. Some PSIs have chosen their investigators to not only collect evidence but also to make assessments about whether there was a breach of policy and determine sanctions.

Adjudicators should have sufficient understanding of administrative law that they can make sound decisions on procedural matters (including admissibility of evidence), understand the standard of proof required (balance of probabilities), and are able to effectively control their own procedures. It is not necessary for adjudicators to have legal training, but they must have access to legal advice when needed.

### Guidance on Sanctioning

In 2014, Columbia University experienced multiple instances where punishments for students found to have committed laptop theft were more severe than for those found to have committed sexual assault. Based on this case study alone, it is understandable that the severity and consistency of sanctions in GBV cases is a hotly contested issue. Adjudicators who act as decision-makers in student misconduct cases may have limited experience adjudicating cases involving GBV. Along with training, it is important to provide adjudicators with the resources to help fill in the knowledge gaps necessary to ensure they are able to make reasonable and informed decisions.

A resource that would be helpful for decision-makers is a sanctioning guide. These guides outline factors that, specifically in cases of GBV, may affect their decision regarding sanctioning options. A similar need exists in the adjudication of staff and faculty conduct.

“There’s nothing on the standards or what are approaches taken (in deciding sanctions). So if you were new to one of these positions and you were the decision-maker, you don’t have anything to go on to figure out what is an appropriate range of remedies to choose.”

(Interim Measures and Remedies, Listening and Learning Participant, Karen Busby - University of Manitoba)

“It’s (ATIXA Guide) a really great rubric to start thinking about what to do when you’re thinking of sanctions.”

(Interim Measures and Remedies, Listening and Learning Participant, Deborah Eekes - University of Alberta)



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** The ATIXA 2018 Whitepaper, The ATIXA Guide to Sanctioning Student Sexual Misconduct Violations offers promising practices in terms of sanctioning as it relates to behaviour covered by Title IX in the US. The guide provides guidelines and sanctioning ranges to help schools to benchmark their sanctions and help ensure that consistency and proportionality guide decision-making.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** A second US-based resource on sanctioning comes from Texas Tech University and their Sexual Misconduct Sanctioning Matrix. This matrix is a useful tool for us to draw upon and adapt for a Canadian context.

A Sanctioning Guide would help standardize decisions to reflect the seriousness of GBV, create a sense of fairness across similar cases and incorporate progressive discipline. In determining an appropriate sanction for each incident, decision-makers would consider a respondent’s disciplinary history, the severity of the incident, and the impact of the incident.

“It’s common that we seek and consider mitigating and aggravating factors... it’s not in our policy but we often rely on a document from Texas Tech University.”

(Interim Measures and Remedies, Listening and Learning Participant, Darryl Veld - Brock University)

## 6. Appeals

Appeals are available to both parties involved in a complaint if:

- There was a substantial procedural error in the application of the policy or,
- There is new evidence that could not have reasonably been presented earlier.

Under these circumstances both the complainant and the respondent are able to access the appeal process. However, similar to the adjudication process, there has been confusion on what the appeal process should look like and as a result processes vary. With no oversight, currently the community members are the ones holding PSIs accountable for harmful practices.

Appeal processes should be clear and unequivocal for staff, faculty, and students. Policies should address whether a student, staff, or faculty member has the right to appeal the findings in an investigation report, an adjudicative decision, or both.

PSI policies and procedures should outline what the appeal process is, who hears the appeal, role of legal counsel, and whether the appeal procedure will amount to a hearing de novo. A de novo hearing is a second hearing of the evidence in which there is the potential for the respondent to cross-examine the complainant. Participants from our Listening and Learning session as well as student-led groups like SFCC and SiV have found both the involvement of legal representation - that is, lawyers speaking on behalf of respondents - and de novo hearings to be harmful in the appeal process.

**“We’re seeing cases where people are doing full on cross-examinations and other kinds of things in the absence of saying ‘no that’s not actually needed for fairness.’”**

(Decision Making and Appeals, Listening and Learning Participant, Chris Hackett - University of Alberta)

**“University Appeals Board procedures should be standardized to prevent de novo hearings, limit the involvement of criminal defense lawyers, and ensure adequate support for everyone involved in cases involving sexual assault.”**

(Online Submission, Anonymous)

Clarity in appeal procedures offer an opportunity to create limits on the grounds for appeal. This helps avoid practices which may re-traumatize complainants and permit inexperienced student appeal committees or administrators from re-hearing a matter they are not equipped or properly trained to adjudicate.



### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**

#### **CROSS-EXAMINATION.**

Policies at PSIs take vastly different approaches when it comes to allowing cross-examinations. While it is clear that cross-examinations run the risk of re-traumatizing the complainant, it must be recognized that failure to ensure procedural fairness (such as ensuring that the respondent can ask the investigator to make relevant inquiries of the complainant) can lead to challenges of the policy and potentially lead to findings being questioned. That said, allowing cross-examination within the PSI context would mirror approaches taken within the criminal court. The onus should be on PSIs to demonstrate why this investigative procedure is necessary within an administrative fact-finding proceeding which is subject to a lower evidentiary threshold. With this in mind, it is not possible to make a clear recommendation of a promising practice without conducting further research.

## 7. Policy and Practices Considerations for Investigators and Adjudicators

The keys to a fair RIA process are the investigators and adjudicators who are implementing the policies. PSIs should put in place policies and practices that support investigators and adjudicators, and provide fair processes that do not create further harm. This was highlighted in the feedback that was received from Listening and Learning sessions with folks who are filling these roles.

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### POLICY:

#### Role Clarification

Not having clearly defined policies about the roles and responsibilities of investigators and adjudicators leaves space for inconsistencies. Due to the nature of GBV, these inconsistencies can have devastating consequences for parties on either side of an investigation. Based on the principle of transparency, PSIs' GBV policies need to make clear the roles and responsibilities of all staff involved in the RIA process.

This provides community members with a clear understanding of what to expect from the RIA process and provides staff, particularly those who are new to their roles on GBV cases, with clear expectations for how they should conduct their work.

People Doing the Work Listening and Learning Participant, Lyndsay Anderson from Dalhousie University, noted during a Listening and Learning session that recent changes to their sexual violence policy has included clear expectations of the investigator's role; "As an investigator it was more clear on what my role as an investigator was... what I do with the information, how I make a finding, where does that information go."

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### PRACTICES:

#### Supports for Investigators and Adjudicators

Although this may not be outlined in an institution's GBV policy, it is important to consider what effects vicarious trauma has on investigators and adjudicators who are involved in the RIA process for cases of GBV. Second-hand exposure to experiences of violence can result in vicarious or secondary trauma. It is associated with employee burnout and high turnover, both common in sectors where staff are working directly with people who experience violence. During a Listening and Learning session Chris Hackett from the University of Alberta shared that PSIs tend to "rotate people in and out so quickly in decision making jobs. It's hard enough to do any conduct case but when you deal with sexual violence you are dealing with things that are usually out of people's scope completely."

As discussed, it is important to put training in place to support investigators and adjudicators in their roles. Throughout Listening and Learning sessions we frequently heard that PSIs should also ensure that there are appropriate supports and services available to investigators and adjudicators to mitigate the effects of vicarious trauma.

**"There needs to be a greater emphasis on training and self-care, especially when we bring people on to (adjudication) panels and then expose them to horrific information... [this is done] almost always with no kinds of supports."**

(People Doing the Work, Listening and Learning Participant, Chris Hackett - University of Alberta)



#### **FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:**

##### **SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS TRAUMA EXPOSURE IN THE WORKPLACE.**

Workplace wellness programs that are informed by the effects of trauma and vicarious trauma help staff find satisfaction and growth in their work, despite the challenges. PSIs should consider setting aside specific supports for those who are supporting, investigating, and adjudicating GBV or alternatively, allowing for additional benefits to support wellness, for example access to counselling, meditation, classes, massage therapy, etc. There needs to be more research and consultation to determine what types of supports investigators and adjudicators may want/need to support them in their roles.

### **Specialized Training**

Investigators and adjudicators involved in RIA processes need to receive specialized training to help understand the nuances of cases involving GBV within the setting of higher education.

These specialized trainings can include;

- **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:** Most investigators and adjudicators will not have an educational background in GBV. Because misconceptions about GBV are so prevalent in everyday attitudes, it is important that investigators and adjudicators are educated about how GBV can manifest and affect people. This will help them avoid collecting unnecessary information or making biased decisions due to a lack of understanding around the nuances of GBV.

- **TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES:** Adjudicators and investigations must adapt their practice to incorporate this approach, particularly if they are interested in building credibility and trust in their processes. A trauma-informed approach is not a soft skill utilized by social workers or support staff. It is a required competency for lawyers, investigators, administrators and all those involved in serving survivors, complainants, community members, and respondents.
- **UNDERSTANDING AND EVALUATING EVIDENCE:** Part of being trauma-informed is understanding that trauma as a result of GBV can affect memory encoding, recall and behaviour. Accordingly, the presence of trauma may prompt investigators or adjudicators to ask questions differently, and not to interpret words or behaviours using a “common sense” lens. Understanding trauma means an investigator or adjudicator can no longer simply interpret memory gaps, inconsistencies, or unusual behaviours as evidence that a complainant is lying, but rather, a reflection of trauma.
- **CULTURAL SAFETY:** Culturally safe practices include actions which recognize and respect the cultural identities of others, and safely meet their needs, expectations and rights. GBV disproportionately affects marginalized communities (i.e Indigenous women systematically targeted for violence as outlined in the MMIW report, *Reclaiming Power and Place* (2019)). It’s important for investigators and adjudicators to be conscious of how a person’s identity can influence their experience of GBV, how they respond to their experience and what supports they need. It’s also important to be aware of how an investigator or adjudicator’s own attitudes and behaviors influence their interactions with the parties involved in the complaint and the decisions that they make. It’s important to be knowledgeable about equity, community and inclusion and being able to apply this knowledge to support all campus community members, particularly those that are marginalized based on their distinct and intersecting social locations.



**PROMISING PRACTICES:** End Violence Against Women International offers free educational opportunities to criminal justice and community responders to violence against women on every level.

The Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children (CREVAWC) offers free webinars and resources regarding GBV.



**FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED:** TRAINING FOR INVESTIGATORS AND ADJUDICATORS.

There is an opportunity to ensure that our RIA processes are based in trauma-informed practices and those in investigator and adjudicator positions are aware of the complexities of GBV and who it affects most. Requiring, then providing, training that is based on best practices can ensure that the processes are fair and well-informed so that staff are confident in their abilities.

There can, however, be challenges in accessing these training resources;

“Canada has a need for our own specific training resources but our small population and low population density mean they are difficult to establish and support, particularly in areas as specific as student conduct and sexual violence. There needs to be more research done to develop standardized training programs but also how they will be implemented.”

(Decision Making and Appeals, Listening and Learning Participant, Chris Hackett - University of Alberta)

One opportunity to address this concern would be regional sessions to share best practices and building staff networks where local institutions could collaborate on specialized training programs.

“And the other question that has come up is concern around investigations - again, a small school - if the university is hiring a lawyer to be investigating there is some perception that the lawyer is there working for the university. So is there any possibility of it being through perhaps a government level service or tribunal of some kind that when a small campus has an issue that needs investigating that we can get an unbiased investigator possibly through government-level.”

(Rural & Northern Communities, Listening and Learning Participant)

## Conclusion

Clear and accessible RIA policies and procedures that are based in a trauma-informed approach and respect procedural fairness are integral for PSIs to ensure a safe learning environment, free from GBV. Many of the participants in the Listening and Learning sessions agreed that there is much more that needs to be done, but to move the conversation forward further research is needed to support the work, particularly within a Canadian context. There are many conflicting opinions from all sides of the RIA process about what policies and practices promote a fair process and protect all parties from harm. Moving forward, conversations should, in addition to ensuring that procedures are fair, look at whether they are effective in addressing GBV.

It is very clear from Listening and Learning sessions that these processes are not presently working for the majority of people who are engaged with them. Even the policies and practices presented in this section are considered promising practices as opposed to best practices, because there is a lack of formal data and research to support their effectiveness. There needs to be a focus on developing tools that can be used to measure the effectiveness of the RIA and the appeal processes. The use of an oversight mechanism could bring more clarity to PSIs on what practices are effective and which are not. Whether that is collecting aggregate data, case studies, or creating longitudinal studies, research to support what effects these policies and procedures are having on addressing and preventing GBV within PSIs is crucial.

“When it comes to addressing harm done, we can go back to the survivors (complainants) and say ‘has this effectively addressed your concerns in this situation? Are we in fact preventing future violence?’ We have no idea.”

(Interim Measures and Remedies, Listening and Learning Participant, Deborah Eerkes - University of Alberta)

# Going Forward

*Courage to Act: Developing the National draft Framework to Address and Prevent Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions* captures promising practices, key policy areas, and prevention plans. This report is a culmination of the work by Possibility Seeds Consulting along with an advisory team of over 30 individuals and organizations across Canada with the Department for Women and Gender Equality who led the creation of the draft Framework to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions. It represents Year One of the five year plan to address the urgent issue of gender-based violence (GBV) in post-secondary institutions (PSI) by the Government of Canada with community stakeholders. The hope is that the report reflects and builds on the crucial work already being done on campuses and in communities to address GBV.

Over a five-month period, *Courage to Act* was carried out in two key phases. The first phase, titled Listening and Learning engaged in activities that provided us with the opportunity to consult with key campus and community stakeholders from across the country. Through conversations with over 300 stakeholders, key challenges, opportunities and research needs were identified. The second phase, Building Together, built upon the research and the community engagement sessions to create a draft framework to address and prevent GBV through policies, protocols and promising practices. The draft Framework looked at three key areas 1) responding to disclosures of GBV and support for people affected by GBV, 2) GBV prevention education, and 3) reporting, investigations, and adjudication. Year Two will continue this important work with further analysis into the development of templates to address and respond to GBV.

Going forward *Courage to Act*, will be an opportunity to create protocol, procedures and policy templates that can be modified for use at PSIs across Canada. Communities of Practice on a variety of key areas will be formed with subject matter experts to collaborate together to create these tools. Key deliverables include drafting of a community risk assessment, trauma informed practice standards for investigations, and an education auditing toolkit. It will also build opportunities for knowledge development and skill sharing about GBV through monthly webinars led by community partners for the PSI community.

There will be the piloting of resources within PSIs, as well as the continued engagement of Communities of Practice to develop stronger networks for resource sharing and coalition building, particularly amongst those spearheading GBV prevention initiatives on campus(es). An in-person skill-share will be held for community partners to learn about resources created in order to pilot them in their institutions. An online information centre will be created and launched that will house the resources, tools, webinars, templates and research created.

In order to foster educational spaces that are generative, inspiring and affirming, PSIs must take action on GBV. Learning and working environments that are free from violence ensure that all community members are able to harness their potential and contribute fully to family, civic life and Canada's global competitiveness. It benefits everyone, including future workforce, employers and, most importantly, communities to have campuses that are healthy, trauma-informed, compassionate and supportive. Taking action on this issue cannot be done in isolation as it does not start or stop on campuses. It occurs throughout the country and it must be ongoing. Collaboration with community partners, governments, grassroots movements is key to plant, grow and flourish in a safe environment for all.



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