



POLICY PAPER

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

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Introduction

In recent years, discussions of sexual violence have been brought to the forefront of politics, mainstream media, and everyday conversation. The MSU intends to further the dialogue at McMaster University and strives to end sexual violence on campus. Such a feat is not possible without efforts from all members of the McMaster community, including students, staff, and faculty, as well as broader institutions within society. Addressing sexual violence calls for both grassroots initiatives and structural action, to ensure meaningful reforms target systemic and micro-level forms of oppression against women and minority groups.

The Ontario government has been instrumental in laying the groundwork for policy change on college and university campuses through the enactment of the It's Never Okay Action Plan, Bill 132, and the Campus Climate Survey. Various student groups across the country have also shown dedication to ending sexual violence on campus through the development of Our Turn, a student-led movement addressing prevention, support, and provincial/national advocacy. As a prevalent public health issue impacting students, the MSU asserts that the university should follow suit in prioritizing the eradication of sexual violence. While there have been strides with the hiring of a Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and the implementation of a formal policy, remaining gaps must be addressed.

As a multicultural nation which celebrates diversity, the concept of intersectionality is important to consider when developing policy, as it refers to the ways in which salient aspects of an individual's identity such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and more shape one's experiences across the life-course. An intersectional approach to ensuring adequate support for survivors of sexual violence, which recognizes how inequalities influence survivors' receptiveness to treatment, paves the way for nuanced solutions derived from evidence-based recommendations which target society's most vulnerable individuals.

The overarching goals of this paper are to advocate for substantial and intersectional supports for survivors of sexual violence that are accessible and reflective of diverse needs. Preventative initiatives which endeavour to build a culture of consent, dismantle rape culture and educate students on bystander intervention will greatly reduce the prevalence of sexual violence on campus. Current policies and procedures should be re-examined to ensure all responses to sexual violence are survivor-centric, and adequate compensation should be provided to content experts who lead education and training seminars as well as to peer support programs who are often the first line of response located in safe(r) spaces on campus where survivors can freely access care without fear of judgement.

Policy informed by intersectional research on sexual violence recognizing systems of oppression and the ways in which survivors' experience victimization will be effective

in enhancing the quality and availability of resources for survivors as well as reducing incidents of assault. Through collective efforts between the student body, healthcare professionals, and government backing for survivor support, the MSU hopes to invoke remedial strategies that work to protect those who need it most.

Prevention Training for Student Leaders

Principle: Education on topics associated with sexual violence is paramount to successful leadership among students in positions of power at McMaster University.

Concern: Student leaders may lack adequate knowledge on issues of sexual violence, which could negatively impact campus culture and lead to harm for students seeking support.

Recommendation: In addition to Residence Orientation Representatives (RORs), Community Advisors (CAs) and Welcome Week Representatives, varsity athletes, the Student Representative Assembly (SRA), the Student Walk-Home Attendant Team (SWHAT) and the Emergency First Response Team (EFRT) should receive survivor-centric sexual violence training.

At McMaster University, student leaders play a pivotal role in the lives of individual students, as well as the general atmosphere of the campus. These students are the faces representing the university, and as such they are afforded a large amount of responsibility in relation to conducting and overseeing McMaster's various clubs and organizations. Due to their positions of leadership and their frequent interactions with students on campus, it is important that all student leaders are well versed on topics associated with sexual violence. This in part stems from the concern that student leaders may be ill equipped to handle instances or disclosure of sexual violence.

Instances of sexual violence are not rare. In Canada, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men will experience sexual violence.¹ With only 5% of these instances being formally reported, the importance of equipping student leaders on the McMaster campus with knowledge that aids both them and any survivor of sexual assault in a time of disclosure cannot be overlooked.² The MSU recommends that student leaders receive training on the topic of sexual assault. Specifically, in addition to Residence Orientation Representatives (RORs), Community Advisors (CAs) and Welcome Week Representatives; Varsity athletes, the Student Representative Assembly (SRA), the Student Walk-Home Attendant Team (SWHAT) and the Emergency First Response Team (EFRT) should receive survivor-centric sexual violence training. This training should include, but should not be limited to, discussions about consent and bystander intervention - framed in a survivor centric way. The term 'survivor centric' is defined as the emphasis and prioritization of the rights and needs of a survivor when dealing with the topic of sexual violence.³ Further training should also acknowledge the existence and importance of intersectionality. Intersectionality can be defined as the intersecting identities of an

¹ "Prevalence and severity of violence against women." Statistics Canada. October 02, 2006.

² Ibid.

³ Brieva et. al, *OUSA Sexual Violence Prevention and Response*, 2016.

individual and their accompanying inequalities that affect a person's experiences throughout their life.⁴ This is important as different groups in society experience sexual violence at different rates. Visible minorities, members of the LGBTQ+ community and people living with disabilities are targeted at higher rates than other groups in society.⁵ The hope is that this education will lead to a campus culture that is more aware of the topic of sexual violence, through strong leadership with members dedicated to ending sexual violence

Building a Culture of Consent

Principle: No event held on campus should foster rape culture.

Principle: Events and programming held on campus should promote healthy behaviours and lifestyle choices.

Principle: Programming to raise awareness about sexual violence should recognize both situational and day-to-day occurrences of sexual violence.

Concern: Hosting events at McMaster with guests that contribute to rape culture or actively hinder the fostering of a culture of consent on campus could endanger the safety of individuals in attendance.

Recommendation: Welcome Week organizers should include the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and/or executive members of the Women Gender and Equity Network (WGEN) in preliminary discussions to ensure safe, suitable planning of events.

Recommendation: Every year each residence should have consent workshops open to everyone, administered by the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and members of SACHA.

Events on campus are not only an enjoyable way to bring students together, they also represent a larger culture that McMaster students and organizations are attempting to cultivate. Keeping this in mind, it's important that these events showcase positive and healthy behaviours that allow for the safety of all students attending, while promoting values of respect on campus moving forward.

Rape culture is the normalization of actions of sexual violence in society, and is the cause of many instances of sexual violence on university campuses. The MSU is concerned that allowing guests on campus that endorse rape culture or actively undermine the ability for the McMaster community to foster a culture of consent, could endanger the safety of the individuals attending such events. Understanding the existence of rape culture is of the utmost importance when speaking of sexual violence. In order to avoid this, the MSU recommends that during the planning of

⁴ Salvino, Caitlin, Kelsey Gilchrist, and Jade C. Pang, "Our Turn, A National Student-Led Action Plan to End Campus Sexual Violence."

⁵ Ibid.

events by Welcome Week organizers, the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and WGEN should be involved in any meetings or preliminary planning in order to establish the importance of protecting individuals from sexual violence and aiding organizers in making decisions that are wise in terms of student safety.

While it is important to be cognizant of event planning to ensure maximum safety during isolated events on campus in which the prevalence of binge drinking is high, a factor which contributes to heightened rates of sexual violence, the MSU recognizes that many incidences of sexual violence are not in fact situational but occur within the context of everyday life. To encourage healthy relationships and educate students living on campus about rape culture and the meaning of consent, each year all residences should partake in sexual violence workshops facilitated by the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and members of SACHA. Such events would be beneficial in fostering a healthy culture within residences, while also educating first year students about the McMaster Sexual Violence Policy and inform them of available resources.

Campus Infrastructure

Principle: All students should feel safe on and around campus, regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation.

Concern: Poor lighting on McMaster campuses and surrounding neighbourhoods such as Westdale and Ainslie Wood make walking conditions less safe for students.

Concern: Not all emergency polls on campus are in working order at all times.

Recommendation: Brighter and increased street lighting should be brought to surrounding student housing areas.

Recommendation: Regular maintenance should be conducted on campus emergency polls to ensure they are always functioning.

The safety of students should remain paramount both on and off the McMaster campus. Alongside education and the creation of a culture of consent on campus, the physical environment of the McMaster campus should be considered in order to support the initiative towards increasing student safety. Poor lighting both on and off the campus is a concern for all students, where poor visibility may inhibit the safety and comfort of students on campus, as well as students living in surrounding student housing neighbourhoods. While the MSU recognizes that “stranger danger” is not reflective of most instances of sexual violence, as most assaults occur between acquaintances, friends, or significant others, perception of safety on campus should be addressed. Campus climate should be welcoming and safe for all students; in addition to reducing the prevalence of harassment, unhealthy relationships, and

assault, feelings of safety deserve attention.⁶ A study conducted at Laurier University found that there are gender inequities in perceptions of safety on campus in which women are much more likely to avoid campus facilities and going out in the community after dark.⁷ Moreover, racial and sexual minorities feel less safe than their white, heterosexual peers.⁸ In order to alleviate these concerns, the MSU advises the City of Hamilton to upgrade street lighting to brighter, LED lights, in order to increase safety and comfort of students walking at night, whether actual or perceived.

Further, emergency polls on campus are a tool used to increase the safety of students on campus. In order for them to be effective, however, it's important to ensure that all emergency polls are working properly at all times. Regular maintenance of emergency polls should be conducted in order to allow all students the opportunity to get in contact with emergency services if an incident were to occur. All of this should be done with the mindset of increasing safety of students, however these conditions do not justify or excuse any instance of sexual violence that may happen on campus.

Reporting and Disclosure

Principle: All survivors of sexual violence who choose to disclose should feel safe in doing so.

Principle: No survivors of sexual violence should be forced to relive trauma.

Concern: The Residence Life policy for sexual violence disclosures does not protect a survivor's confidentiality and may make them feel unsafe and unwilling to seek support.

Concern: Students may not be aware of Residence Life's policy regarding sexual violence before they make a disclosure.

Recommendation: Residence Life must make their policy on disclosures transparent and known to all students.

Recommendation: In the case of Residence Reps and CAs who are forced to break confidentiality, Residence Life should give them the option of reporting to the Residence Manager without disclosing the identity of the student.

Recommendation: Residence Life should aim to give all employees (including CAs) the same training as Residence Managers so they are no longer obligated to contact the Residence Manager on Call for every disclosure.

⁶ Kelly, Bridget Turner, and Alina Torres. "Campus safety: Perceptions and experiences of women students." *Journal of College Student Development* 47, no. 1 (2006): 20-36.

⁷ Harrison, Jay, & Lafrenière, Ginette. (2015). *The Change Project: University Campuses Ending Gendered Violence - Final Report and Recommendations to Wilfrid Laurier University*. Waterloo, ON: Social Innovation Research Group.

⁸ Ibid.

In dealing with disclosures of sexual violence, it is imperative that the survivor has complete autonomy over their choices and actions. As many survivors never choose to report, it is necessary to keep a disclosure confidential as per a survivor's wishes.⁹ However, Residence Life maintains a policy wherein RORs and CAs must call the Residence Manager on Call (RMOC) whenever a student discloses an incidence of sexual violence. The student has the option for the ROR or CA to contact the RMOC before or after they disclose, and it is permitted for the ROR or CA to retell their story to the RMOC while they are not in the room. However, they have no choice but for their disclosure to be shared with a stranger after they have confided in someone they trust. This policy is problematic for numerous reasons. First, it is important to acknowledge the many reasons survivors may choose not to report or disclose sexual violence. Many women of colour (WOC) face additional barriers to reporting, such as fears of perpetrating or being invalidated by racist and misogynistic stereotypes.¹⁰ Racism and misogyny combined often means that WOC are dehumanized, and crimes against them may have their legitimacy questioned.¹¹ In addition, many institutions, such as the police, that may be involved in a formal reporting procedure are known for perpetuating institutional racism, which can further dissuade people of colour from reporting.¹² Survivors may have been threatened against disclosing, and consequently without a promise of confidentiality they may choose not to.¹³ Lindsay (2014) found that the top reason listed by survivors as to why they chose not to disclose was "shame and embarrassment," which would only be furthered by a stranger being called to witness your disclosure.¹⁴ Many survivors find it difficult to build trust, and it is therefore even more important that the person to which they disclose acts according to their wishes whenever necessary.¹⁵ A negative experience with disclosure can make a survivor reticent to seek help again.¹⁶ Consequently, it is evident that the current Residence Life policy not only neglects to adequately support survivors, but may also cause them harm.

There are several steps available to Residence Life to allow their policy to better support survivors. First, they should make the current policy publicly available, ensuring that all students are aware that the RMOC will be called in cases of sexual

⁹ Victoria C Olive, "Sexual Assault against Women of Color," *Journal of Student Research* 1 (2012): 1-9; Melissa Lindsay, "A Survey of Survivors of Sexual Violence in Three Canadian Cities," 2014.

¹⁰ Olive, "Sexual Assault against Women of Color."

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Lindsay, "A Survey of Survivors of Sexual Violence in Three Canadian Cities."

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Laura L. Starzynski et al., "What Factors Predict Women's Disclosure of Sexual Assault to Mental Health Professionals?," *Journal of Community Psychology* 35, no. 5 (2007): 619-38, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20168>.

violence before they make a disclosure. This could take the form of posters in a central location of residences, or be posted online, similar to the Sexual Violence Response website, which clearly states the limits of confidentiality of the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator. This gives survivors more autonomy by allowing them to make an informed decision. Second, Residence Life should allow CAs or RORs to report to RMOC anonymously if requested by the survivor. Similar to how the student does not need to be in the room when the RMOC is told, this policy would go a step further in allowing the CA or ROR to disclose without telling any identifying details. If the RMOC deems it necessary that confidentiality must be broken, the CA or ROR is still able to contact the student. If not, the RMOC never needs to know the identity of the student. While these steps would both be great improvements, it is ideal that the RMOC is not contacted unless absolutely necessary or requested. To remedy this, Residence Life should work towards providing CAs (or RORs) with the same training with regards to sexual violence that Residence Managers currently receive.

Data Collection and Dissemination

Principle: Data collection should be survivor-centric.

Principle: Proper data collection leads to better prevention, intervention, and response strategies related to sexual violence.

Concern: Data collection often lacks important parameters, such as demographic information.

Concern: Data collection can raise concerns of confidentiality and autonomy.

Concern: Incomplete data causes a misunderstanding of the scope of sexual violence at post-secondary institutions.

Concern: Concerns for reputation limit access to post-secondary institution data.

Concern: Lack of data surrounding the use of resources on campus inhibits the foresight required to plan for sufficient and adequate future resources.

Recommendation: McMaster University, in partnership with services and resources on campus, should collect demographic information including year of study, faculty/program, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity.

Recommendation: The collection of demographic information must maintain confidentiality and autonomy of the survivor.

Recommendation: McMaster University should use the information collected and work with campus partners to design and implement targeted programming.

Recommendation: McMaster University should track the use of services and resources on campus and subsequently cater to the needs quantified by that data.

Recommendation: McMaster University should provide regular campus misconduct report releases, in which incidents of sexual violence disclosed to the university are to be included.

As attention to the issue of sexual violence prevention and response continues to increase on campus, so too does the demand for more comprehensive and detailed data to inform and address it. Incomplete data results in a misunderstanding of the scope and severity of sexual violence on campus. Concerns over reputation further limit the extent to which data is available to the public.

Accurately tracking data over time and monitoring trends in information can support McMaster University working alongside campus partners in designing and implementing programmatic changes to more effectively cater to the needs of the student body and address gaps in services across sectors. In doing so, a survivor-centred approach must be utilized so as to prioritize the rights, needs, and wishes of the survivor in the decision-making processes related to records documenting the violence against them, and uphold their rights to confidentiality and autonomy.

McMaster University should understand that sexual violence is deeply linked to gender inequality experienced by women and by individuals who identify as trans, genderqueer or non-binary people who are female-identified. Sexual violence is both a function of inequality and a means of further subjugating and silencing women, and rates of sexual violence have a demonstrated impact on women's social, economic and political status. The services provided by McMaster University should be informed by a recognition of the intersectional nature of sexual violence, in which individuals' race, ability, indigeneity and socio-economic status, among other factors, can render them vulnerable on multiple fronts.

The University lacks other important parameters, such as demographic information including year of study, faculty/program, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity. McMaster University needs to measure sexual and intimate partner violence among students, staff and faculty annually, noting that it's hard to address issues of respect, equality and sexual violence without a clear idea of what is actually happening on campus. Moreover, since sexual violence is located within the larger frame of gender inequality, it is crucial that the student body understands how women (and other equality-seeking groups) are represented numerically and in terms of status on campus as students, employees, professors and administrators.¹⁷ Further, there is limited data available surrounding the use of various resources on campus. To better plan for future resources, McMaster University should track the use of services and subsequently cater to the needs of the trends identified in the data.

¹⁷ Directorate, Ontario Women's. "Developing a response to sexual violence: A resource guide for Ontario's colleges and universities." *Toronto: Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities* (2013).

Results should be shared broadly and in an accessible manner to assist in better prevention, intervention, and response strategies related to sexual violence. Reliable data are needed to track progress in reducing sexual violence among members of our campus. McMaster University should ensure accountability for sexual violence on campus by maintaining transparency with the public surrounding this data. Such transparency can be enforced with the re-implementation of weekly incident reports, such as those created in the past by McMaster Security Services, to inform and update students, faculty and public to the on-campus misconduct that interferes with the safety and security of the McMaster community. In a related vein, York University has consistently implemented the Weekly Security Incident Log since 2012, in an attempt to promote awareness and provide pro-active crime prevention information to reduce the opportunity of crime.¹⁸

Health Services

Continuity of Care

Principle: Students should have quick and easy access to health services when required.

Principle: Concern for a survivor's mental and physical health should extend beyond the immediate care after an incident regarding sexual violence.

Principle: The steps needed to access required resources should be minimized to avoid placing additional burdens on the survivor.

Concern: Survivors may have difficulty navigating various avenues for support when attempting to access resources.

Concern: Healthcare professionals at the SWC do not always follow up with patients, even when survivors seem to be at high risk of harm.

Recommendation: Given that a survivor consents to being contacted after an appointment, healthcare services should be following up with survivors after the initial contact.

Recommendation: The SWC and other healthcare providers on campus should be cognizant of accessibility and suggest external resources that are easy to access (both geographically and financially) by students and community members.

Good healthcare should be safe (minimizing risks and harm to service users), effective (uses evidence-based guidelines), timely (minimal delays), efficient (healthcare is delivered in a manner that maximizes resource use), equitable (does not discriminate based on personal characteristics), and person-centred (care that takes into account the preferences and goals of individual service users and their

¹⁸ "Weekly Security Incident Log (WSIL) | Security". 2018. Security.Info.Yorku.Ca. <http://security.info.yorku.ca/wsil-reports/>.

cultures).¹⁹ According to the recent Health Services Report conducted by the MSU, students are not receiving care that is on par with this ideology.

For example, blood tests are currently not offered by the SWC, and 48% of surveyed students who were given recommendation to do so elsewhere did not actually go.²⁰ Blood tests are often used to test for STIs such as Herpes, HIV, and Syphilis, and the lack of testing for this on campus poses a barrier to many community members, especially those who have been victims of sexual violence.²¹ Additionally, 13% of students who were given referrals (such as trauma counselling or blood testing) to off-campus resources had trouble navigating the system, with common concerns being that the location was too hard to find or too far to access without a car.²² Students who have experienced sexual violence may be especially likely to need referrals for things such as trauma counselling or blood testing. Currently, many students at McMaster use the unlimited Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) bus pass to travel around Hamilton, as they automatically pay an ancillary fee to use it.²³ Students may not understand how to navigate the Hamilton transit system, especially those who commute from a family home. Students in the latter category may also want referrals closer to their home and may not benefit from Hamilton-based resources altogether. Students who have access to a car are also not sheltered from these issues, as they may have issues finding routes to referral locations, or adequate parking spaces once they get there. Students who want to keep their situation private may encounter the additional issue of having no one else to contact outside of the SWC for help. Healthcare providers and staff of the SWC should be cognizant of constraints that campus members may face when accessing external resources and should be suggesting alternatives accordingly. As mentioned in the MSU's Health and Wellness Policy Paper, the SWC should also reduce the steps necessary for individuals to access care, by providing ample resources, in various forms, to ensure minimal stress. This can include maps, directions, parking instructions, recommended bus routes, and hours of operation, in either a printed format, or electronically by email.²⁴ Individuals may also face barriers when trying to

¹⁹ World Health Organization. "What is Quality of Care and Why Is It Important?" (n.d.). Accessed February 3, 2018. http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/quality-of-care/definition/en/

²⁰ Lee, David., Nichol, Emily. University Affairs Report: Health Services Review. (Hamilton: McMaster Students Union, 2017).

²¹ American Sexual Health Association. "Get tested." (n.d.) Accessed February 3, 2018. <http://www.ashasexualhealth.org/stdsstis/get-tested/>

²² Ibid.

²³ McMaster Students Union. "The HSR U-Pass PRESTO Card Is Available For Pick-Up August 19 Inside The Campus Store." 2017. Accessed February 9, 2018. <https://www.msumcmaster.ca/posts/765>.

²⁴ Nichol, Emily., Chaikowsky, Emma., SungWon Han, Ella., Dominguez Florean, Selene., Johnston, Alexandra., Lee, David., van der Vliet, Veronica (Ronnie)., Wilson, Alex. 2017. Health and Wellness Policy Paper. (Hamilton: McMaster Students Union, 2017).

access the SWC itself, as seen in some worrisome data brought forth in the MSU's health policy. As discussed in detail there, the SWC's hours may be inaccessible to students who require timely or immediate access to care.

Care for survivors of sexual violence should extend beyond the initial appointment at the SWC. When counselors and medical staff encounter individuals who have been through traumatizing experiences especially, common practice should be to ask the individual if they can be followed up with at a later date (through email, phone, or in-person). This initiative on behalf of the SWC shows the recipient that the SWC is a constant resource for support that the student can always return to. This continuity of care can be applied to referrals as well; following up with individuals to ask how their external appointment went can help the SWC better understand the comments, concerns, and questions of the McMaster population, while ensuring that the needs of the patient are being fulfilled.

Counselors

Principle: Students should have access to competent healthcare professionals who are cognizant of cultural differences and trained in anti-oppressive practises.

Principle: When dealing with sexual violence, students should have access to counselors that are specifically trained to deal with such incidents.

Concern: Many counselors are not cognizant of cultural differences that affect a survivor's healing and may unknowingly obstruct them.

Concern: Not all counselors in the Student Wellness Centre are trained specifically to deal with cases of sexual violence.

Recommendation: The Student Wellness Centre should hire trauma counselors that are trained to deal with crises of this nature.

Recommendation: All counselors should be trained to understand issues surrounding sexual violence, while being made aware of its relationship to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, etc.

Recommendation: Hiring procedures should mandate that qualifications for counselors at the SWC require new staff to be knowledgeable on issues of sexual violence

Sexual violence has effects on not only physical wellbeing, but mental health as well. Survivors can be affected in various ways by sexual violence, potentially resulting in depression, self-harm, substance abuse, dissociation, flashbacks, eating disorders, sleep disorders, and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), amongst others.²⁵ Although these effects are significant, with the right support and help, they can be

²⁵ "Effects of Sexual Violence" (n.d.) Accessed February 22, 2018. <https://www.rainn.org/effects-sexual-violence>

managed. Trauma counselors are a great resource for individuals who may be at risk for developing any of these mental health problems.

Worrisome numbers from the Health Services Review point out that counselling services are unsatisfactory: 54% of individuals who sought counseling services expressed dissatisfaction, with primary complaints revolving around long wait times and a lack of sensitivity amongst staff when expressing personal struggles.²⁶ This is a major problem for survivors of sexual assault, who may already face additional biases and judgement, and who may be depending on the SWC as a primary source of support. Furthermore, 21% of surveyed students indicated that the SWC staff were below or well below their expectations for issues concerning mental health.²⁷

It should go without saying that community members should feel comfortable reaching out to the SWC for support, without the fear of judgement that is a result of inadequate training. Students should have access to counselors trained in anti-oppressive practises, who are well educated on the complex nature of sexual violence and its ties to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, etc. The MSU recommends that specific trauma counselors are hired by the SWC, all current staff are trained in cultural sensitivity, and that all future hires are well versed in issues of this nature.

Promotion of Resources

Principle: Students should have easy access to all available resources regarding support for instances of sexual violence.

Principle: All resources regarding sexual violence should be survivor-centric.

Concern: Hosting events at McMaster with guests that contribute to rape culture or actively hinder the fostering of a culture of consent on campus could endanger the safety of individuals in attendance.

Concern: Currently, many students are unaware of the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and her role.

Concern: Resources available to students can be difficult for many to find and access timely when in need.

Concern: Some resources on campus sexualize sexual assault.

Recommendation: The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and her resources should be better promoted in areas such as the SWC through physical resources such as pamphlets and posters.

Recommendation: In addition to physical resources, resources should be promoted online on McMaster's official social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) regularly.

²⁶ Lee David, Nichol Emily. University Affairs Report: Health Services Review. (Hamilton: McMaster Students Union, 2017).

²⁷ Ibid.

Recommendation: Promotion should be emphasized during Welcome Week so first years can become familiar with resources early.

Recommendation: Promotional materials should be provided in residences in which information on consent, resources, and events are posted on available boards throughout the year.

Recommendation: Resources should be updated regularly to reflect progressive depictions of sexual assault as acts of violence.

While work is done to prevent sexual violence on campus through training and education working towards building a culture of consent, many students are unaware of the resources available to them if they do experience sexual violence. There are many resources available at McMaster to survivors and the knowledge of the existence of these resources as well as how to access them should be well known to all students.

Meaghan Ross is McMaster's current Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and specializes in disclosures and helping survivors access resources and navigate their options. However, many students are unaware of this position's existence. Often, accessing these essential resources can be difficult, and at a time when life is overwhelming enough, these resources should be easily accessible in a quick fashion to provide the most effective care possible. Currently, many students are unaware of how to access resources and long wait times for health-related services make reaching out for help difficult.

Many pamphlets are already available in the SWC, so adding a more visible section about sexual violence response and available resources would be an asset. Through providing a visible, labeled and differentially coloured wall space in the SWC dedicated to sexual violence, it may be more easily accessible to students. These pamphlets could include overall perspectives, resources for friends of survivors, as well as McMaster specific ones about available resources.

Because instances sexual violence are not restricted to high-risk times of the year (like frosh week) but occur on an ordinary, day-to-day basis, resources should be administered regularly throughout the year. Providing a link with resources and contact information to a McMaster's main social media pages or website with all the pertinent information would be extremely helpful and easily accessible.

During welcome week, when announcements and promotions about consent are made, announcements and promotions about resources should be made as well. Through including these on the lawn signs throughout campus, during events, and through pamphlets the information can be accessible and known right from the

beginning. For example, Rutgers University in New Brunswick performed a skit during their orientation week which addressed the issue of sexual assault and violence on campus. Integrating programming like this as well as what happens afterwards, where and how to access resources, could contribute to helping students know about sexual violence response resources before they need to access them. Additional promotion of resources in residence buildings are important, since students may experience sexual assault from someone living in the same building on campus. For those who don't need access to resources in first year, knowledge of contact information may serve to benefit them in the future should an incident occur to them or someone they know.

Alongside this, the MSU recommends that resources provided on campus remain survivor centric and up-to-date. While it is important that all residence rooms have emergency phone numbers, an illustration of lips depicted beside contact information for sexual violence resources problematically contributes to the sexualization of sexual violence - a facet of rape culture. Any resource provided by the university should be approved by content experts who know the dangers of confounding sex with sexual violence.

Survivor Centric Responses Amendments to McMaster Policy

Principle: Survivors should be able to report incidences of sexual violence without fear of the lengthy investigative process.

Principle: Survivors of sexual violence should be able to appeal the decisions of university investigations in which the perpetrators are not found criminally responsible or guilty.

Principle: The importance of intersectionality must be emphasized to acknowledge the ways in which one's background influences experiences of sexual violence.

Principle: Acts of sexual violence as defined in the McMaster Sexual Violence Policy should acknowledge online sexual harassment.

Concern: The process for filing a complaint or criminal report is extensive and may require survivors to attend or participate in a hearing (e.g. internal to the university or external through arbitration or criminal court), which has the potential to deter survivors from choosing to report in the first place.

Concern: Currently, McMaster's policy only includes the right to appeal for the perpetrator of sexual violence, (referred to as Respondents).

Concern: The McMaster Sexual Violence Policy does not fully acknowledge and incorporate intersectionality into its language, which can be perceived as being ignorant of how social characteristics may influence incidences of sexual violence against certain marginalized populations.

Concern: Social media plays a large component in potentially propagating sexual violence and/or harassment.

Concern: There is a gag order present.

Recommendation: An investigative system such as a third-party complaint system should be put in place that minimizes any harm to the health (i.e. emotional/mental) of the survivor in regards to re-traumatization or risk of retaliation.

Recommendation: The McMaster Sexual Violence Policy should incorporate a section that provides survivors with the right to appeal decisions made in any investigation of sexual violence.

Recommendation: The McMaster Sexual Violence Policy should alter its language to recognize that certain marginalized groups of people, especially men of colour, are more likely to be convicted based on race than others.

Recommendation: McMaster should expand the definition of sexual violence in its Sexual Violence Policy to incorporate acts of online sexual harassment.

Recommendation: The gag order should be removed from the McMaster policy.

In 2016, the governments of Ontario and British Columbia passed legislation that mandated all public post-secondary institutions to develop and instate a stand-alone sexual assault policy.²⁸ Previously, the protocol for addressing sexual violence was typically embedded within other policies, such as a student code of conduct, thereby acting almost as a matter of supplementary consideration rather than having greater value on its own.²⁹ According to Bill 132, *Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act*, all post-secondary institutions in Ontario were required to put these policies in place by January 2017.^{30,31} In response, McMaster University's Board of Governors and Senate approved a new Sexual Violence Policy in December 2016, applicable to all members of the community, including students, faculty, and other staff. This policy provides survivors of sexual violence with a "complaint and investigative process that is trauma-informed, timely and fair to all."^{32,33}

²⁸ Lori Ward, "New Post-Secondary Sexual Assault Policies a Start but Fall Short, Experts Say," *CBC News*, April 23, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-post-secondary-sexual-assault-policies-a-start-but-fall-short-experts-say-1.4078365>.

²⁹ Anqi Shen, "Universities across Canada implement sexual violence policies," *University Affairs*, August 4, 2017, <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/universities-across-canada-implement-sexual-violence-policies/>

³⁰ "Bill 132, Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), 2016," *Government of Ontario*, 2016, http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=3535.

³¹ "Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan – Questions and answers," *Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development*, 2016, http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/audiences/pcc/factsheet12_qa.html

³² "McMaster Approves New Sexual Violence Policy – Daily News," *Daily News McMaster*, December 15, 2016, <https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/article/mcmaster-approves-new-sexual-violence-policy/>.

³³ "Policies, Procedures and Guidelines," *McMaster University*, 2016, http://www.mcmaster.ca/vpacademic/Sexual_Violence_Docs/Sexual_Violence_Policy_effec-Jan_1,2017.pdf

McMaster has further expressed a commitment to sexual violence prevention through educational supports and resources to help raise awareness about sexual violence in the community.³⁴ Under the policy, survivors also typically have the option to determine whether to pursue criminal reporting options or non-criminal alternatives.³⁵ Those choosing to file a complaint may be required to attend an internal hearing by the university or an external hearing through criminal court or arbitration.³⁶ In other circumstances, even when the survivor chooses not to pursue criminal action, the university might take action against the survivor's wishes in order to protect both the individual and the larger community from potential danger.

While McMaster has made a commitment to ensuring the survivor's comfort and input in either case, there is still great pressure placed on the survivor through potentially lengthy investigative processes that could lead to considerable stress and fear of recourse or retaliation, as well as cause possible re-traumatization. According to a report by *Our Turn*, "An anonymous and third-party complaint system could address the needs of survivors who wish to relay incidents to university authorities for the purpose of record keeping, but who do not want to disclose their identities."³⁷ For instance, online anonymous reporting tools might encourage survivors to come forth and report incidences of sexual violence. This is currently the case with several universities across Canada, including Brock University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Toronto, all of whom have included such processes within their policies in order to encourage anonymous and third-party disclosures for survivors.

There are also other shortcomings in the process of investigations should a survivor choose to pursue further action. When the University decides not to pursue an investigation, the Complainant—the survivor of sexual violence—can make a written request to the university to review the decision.³⁸ However, that is currently not the case when, following the completion of an investigation, the university decides not to lay charges or pursue further action against the Respondent, the term used to describe the individual against whom allegations have been made. In cases where sanctions or charges have been laid against the Respondent, they have the right to appeal the decision. Conversely, if the Respondent is found to be innocent, both the Complainant and Respondent receive a written decision that includes: "a) the decision that there is No Finding of Violation of the Policy; b) reasons for the

³⁴ "McMaster Approves New Sexual Violence Policy – Daily News," *Daily News McMaster*.

³⁵ "Sexual Violence Response Protocol: Responding to Disclosures of Sexual, Intimate, and Family Violence," *McMaster University*, 2016, https://svrp.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/documents/responseprotocol_final_december.14.2016.pdf

³⁶ "Policies, Procedures and Guidelines," *McMaster University*.

³⁷ "Our Turn: A National, Student-Led Action Plan to End Campus Sexual Violence," *Students' Society of McGill University*, 2017, <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/4106721/Our-Turn-Action-Plan-Final-English-2.pdf>

³⁸ "Policies, Procedures and Guidelines," *McMaster University*.

decision; and c) a summary outlining the findings.”³⁹ Beyond this, there is no opportunity in the policy for the Complainant to appeal this decision. Unlike McMaster’s policy, the Ryerson University Sexual Violence Policy does allow for appeals to be filed by either party and make a written submission for consideration.⁴⁰ This is, thus, a great limitation in the McMaster policy, especially as it may convey to the survivor that the university does not believe them, potentially causing re-traumatization and leading to feelings of invalidation.

Another shortcoming when comparing McMaster’s and Ryerson’s policy is in their respective definitions of sexual violence. Currently, the McMaster policy defines it as: “any sexual act or act targeting a person’s sexuality, gender identity or gender expression whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without a person’s consent, and includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation.”⁴¹ It is interesting to note that while the language used by both McMaster and Ryerson University in their policies is almost identical, in addition to all the terms mentioned by McMaster, Ryerson further includes “degrading sexual imagery, distribution of sexual images or video of a community member without their consent, and cyber harassment or cyber stalking of a sexual nature” in its definition.⁴² With the rise of technology and social media, cyber communication—and, by extension, cyberbullying—is also increasing. One form of cyberbullying is online sexual harassment, which often includes sending inappropriate or threatening messages, extorting inappropriate and often sexual pictures from the survivor, or even threatening the survivor with harm if they do not post intimate sexual photos and videos of themselves. For this reason, McMaster needs to include cyber sexual harassment in its definition to make sure that any cases of such a nature do not go unnoticed and unaddressed.

Through the language used, the McMaster Sexual Violence Policy also acknowledges that survivors of sexual violence “may have different degrees of confidence in institutional services and remedies... because of their associations of such institutions with sexism, colonialism, racism, and other forms of systemic oppression.”⁴³ It recognizes, for example, the hesitation that women of colour and those from Indigenous communities might experience due to concerns that racism may factor into how the institution responds to their complaint. This is in accordance with the notion of intersectionality in general, which emphasizes that one’s lived experiences—whether of racism, classism, or other forms of discrimination—go hand-

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “Sexual Violence Policy,” *Ryerson University*, 2015, <https://www.ryerson.ca/policies/policy-list/sexual-violence-policy/>

⁴¹ “Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,” *McMaster University*.

⁴² “Sexual Violence Policy,” *Ryerson University*.

⁴³ “Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,” *McMaster University*.

in-hand with different systems of power and oppression.⁴⁴ While McMaster's policy has taken a step forward by the consideration and inclusion of intersectionality in its language, the university needs to go beyond to include how the policy can potentially be used against racialized men as compared to their white counterparts. Men of colour have historically faced disadvantages in the judicial system due to racial discrimination. As quoted in *Rape, Racism and the Myth of the Black Rapist* by Angela Davis, "The myth of the black rapist of white women is the twin of the myth of the black bad woman - both designed to apologize for and facilitate the continued exploitation of black men and women." Traditional narratives of racism, and their role in propagating inequities in criminal convictions, must be acknowledged in the language used within the McMaster policy, and McMaster must further make an effort to propose strategies to address and prevent biased rulings.

Ryerson University, one of the first to pass a stand-alone sexual violence policy (approved in June 2015) and the recipient of the highest grade from Our Turn in meeting their proposed criteria for sexual violence policies, sets a great example. Ultimately, while the establishment of the McMaster Sexual Violence Policy is a great step towards raising awareness of sexual violence and working towards prevention with increased transparency, McMaster would do well to look towards the Ryerson policy and make the changes necessary to ensure that its policy does not inadvertently harm survivors who may choose or decline to report.

Security Services

Principle: Security Services should understand student-facing issues as they relate to racism, transphobia, sexism, etc.

Principle: Knowledge of sexual violence issues and understanding how to effectively respond to disclosures results in better support for survivors.

Concern: McMaster Security Services do not receive thorough formal training on sexual violence or anti-oppressive practices.

Concern: Due to a lack of awareness, Security Services may unknowingly and unintentionally cause further harm to students seeking support.

Concern: Private security hired for additional support for large campus events may not be adequately trained on survivor-centric responses.

Recommendation: Security Services should receive training on issues pertaining to sexual violence and anti-oppressive practices to raise the caliber of their job expectations and thus performance.

Recommendation: Security that has been contracted out should receive training regarding McMaster's Sexual Violence Policy.

⁴⁴ "Our Turn: A National, Student-Led Action Plan to End Campus Sexual Violence," *Students' Society of McGill University*.

Survivor-centric approaches to legal action (or inaction) are critical to survivors' recovery and sense of control. According to McMaster's Sexual Violence and Response Policy, the University seeks to address sexual violence and sexual violence disclosure through a trauma-informed approach.⁴⁵ On this topic, the University has also acknowledged the varying roles and/or risks of intersectionality – with some factors including race, disability, Indigeneity, and sexual orientation – on the wellbeing of survivors.⁴⁶ However, not many actions have been taken in pursuit of these ideals; In keeping with the goals of the *Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act*, existing strategies must be renewed to address currently unmet needs facing survivors.⁴⁷

Sexual violence disclosure has been cited by many to create opportunities for increased understanding and support regarding an experience of sexual violence.⁴⁸ Notoriously, disclosures to legal authorities have been historically challenged by survivors' opinions of judgement by the legal system; typical behaviours of trauma from sexual violence including delayed reporting and inaccuracies in recall have traditionally resulted in an overestimated incidence of false reports.⁴⁹ An awareness of the survivor-centered approach among law enforcement officers is thus important to survivor outcomes; this opinion has been echoed by several authorities as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which consider the attitudes of law enforcement officers as being extremely important to survivor cooperation in preliminary interviews and investigations as well as to survivors' coping.⁵⁰

Considering varying degrees of confidence in law enforcement officers, advancing current sexual violence education for McMaster's special constables is one imperative to improving our sexual violence response strategy. Currently, the standard of sexual violence training for special constables is limited to one-time mandatory training, despite the ever-shifting dynamics of sexual violence response. Moreover, this

⁴⁵ Policies, Procedures and Guidelines - Sexual Violence Policy." 2016. McMaster University Secretariat.
http://www.mcmaster.ca/vpacademic/Sexual_Violence_Docs/Sexual_Violence_Policy_effec-Jan_1,2017.pdf.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), 2016, S.O. 2016, c. 2 - Bill 132. 2016.
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/S16002>.

⁴⁸ Smith, Sharon. 2005. "The Process and Meaning of Sexual Assault Disclosure." Psychology, Georgia State University.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=psych_diss.

⁴⁹ Dewan, Shaila. 2017. "She Didn't Fight Back: 5 (Misguided) Reasons People Doubt Sexual Misconduct Victims." The New York Times, November 30, 2017, sec. U.S.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/30/us/sexual-harassment-weinstein-women.html>.

⁵⁰ "Improving Police Response to Sexual Assault." 2003. Human Rights Watch.
https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/improvingSAInvest_0.pdf.

training does not focus on issues of survivor-centric approaches or intersectionality.^{51, 52} At a time where McMaster has dedicated itself to hiring Diversity Constables, a greater emphasis on such approaches to sexual violence disclosure is warranted in training.⁵³ Overall, the intent of this training would be to lessen associations with sexism, colonialism, racism, and other forms of systemic oppression among survivors of assault.⁵⁴ Using the University of Toronto as a comparator, McMaster also has a similar capacity to engage special constables in advisory committees on sexual violence, thereby facilitating a more updated and informed view of sexual violence response, that has not yet been envisioned on our campus.⁵⁵ Overall, campus security must become a more engaged component of McMaster's sexual violence response strategy, being that the service enforces and polices the University's ideals and reforms to bring about real change for overall safety at McMaster.

Rep Culture

Principle: As per the mandates of Residence Life, CAs should foster an environment of support, respect, and personal dignity among first year students, leading by example.

Concern: Without a formalized complaint form, CAs are less likely to be held accountable for instances of misbehaviour toward first-year students

Recommendation: Residence Life should employ a more stringent screening process (e.g., Vulnerable Sector Checks) for more informed decision-making with regards to CAs.

⁵¹ "Policies, Procedures and Guidelines - Sexual Violence Policy." 2016. McMaster University Secretariat. http://www.mcmaster.ca/vpacademic/Sexual_Violence_Docs/Sexual_Violence_Policy_effec-Jan_1,2017.pdf.

⁵² "Sexual Violence Gap Analysis Recommendations." 2014. The Division of Student Life. https://president.uoregon.edu/sites/president2.uoregon.edu/files/sexual_violence_gap_analysis_recommendations.pdf.

⁵³ "McMaster's Diversity Constables." n.d. Accessed February 10, 2018. https://security.mcmaster.ca/community_relations_diversity.html.

⁵⁴ "Policies, Procedures and Guidelines - Sexual Violence Policy." 2016. McMaster University Secretariat. http://www.mcmaster.ca/vpacademic/Sexual_Violence_Docs/Sexual_Violence_Policy_effec-Jan_1,2017.pdf.

⁵⁵ "2016 Special Constable Annual Report University of Toronto - Scarborough Campus." n.d. Accessed February 11, 2018. <http://www.tpsb.ca/items-of-interest/send/29-items-of-interest/559-2016-annual-report-university-of-toronto-special-constables>.

Recommendation: Residence Life should publicize a complaint procedure for reporting situations of CA misconduct.

As facilitators of the first-year experience, CAs have the important responsibility of ensuring that first-year students feel supported in residence during their university transition; On an individual level, this ideal must also be reflected in CAs' relationships with first-year students. However, in the case where a CA does not fulfill such duties, there exists no publicized feedback or complaint form to which first-year students can direct their issues. Realizing the importance of the first-year voice to their integration on campus and within the McMaster community, one such form should exist for review by the relevant residence manager when issues arise. Additionally, there should be a formalized process upon the submission of a complaint form, made known to students, to further avoid power imbalances between CAs and first-year students.

Pre-emptive reform can further help to address this issue. An improved screening process including formalities such as Criminal Record Checks should be made standard within Residence Life; other interview elements such as survivor-centric or anti-oppressive questions should also be mandated for more well-informed hiring processes.

Training for Staff High-Risk Occupations

Principle: Sexual and gender-based violence are preventable through education and prevention strategies.

Principle: Restaurant, bar, and club staff are in unique situations to prevent and reduce sexual violence in their workplaces.

Concern: Bar employees often lack the prevention and intervention training necessary to foster a safe, violence-free environment.

Recommendation: The Province of Ontario should mandate that Bystander Intervention training is incorporated into the Smart Serve curriculum.

Recommendation: The Bystander Intervention training should incorporate bar-specific training.

Recommendation: The Provincial Government should mandate all current Smart Serve holders to recertify to include Bystander Intervention training free of charge.

The McMaster campus is home to several opportunities for socializing that can, unfortunately, be high-risk situations for sexual violence. The staff of the Phoenix Bar

& Grill and TwelvEighty Bar & Grill are uniquely situated to prevent and intervene cases of sexual or gender-based violence. To serve alcohol in an establishment in Ontario, employees must be certified by Smart Serve Ontario (cite SS). The Smart Serve curriculum aims to promote responsible alcohol consumption, sales, and service but fails to incorporate Bystander Intervention Training (SS). Bystander intervention training is widely regarded as effective prevention programming against sexual violence and yet, it is not currently a mandatory aspect of the training that restaurant, bar, and club staff receive (banyard).

Summer 2017 saw Member of Provincial Parliament Peggy Satler introduce the “Safe Night Out Act” which would enforce bystander intervention training as a part of the Smart Serve curriculum; however, this bill was tabled and has yet to be passed (cbc?). Therefore, the McMaster Students Union highly recommends that bystander intervention training becomes a mandatory aspect of the Smart Serve curriculum to encourage a safer environment for all. The curriculum must incorporate bar-specific training and, once Smart Serve has been updated appropriately, the Provincial government must mandate that all bar, restaurant, and club staff be recertified free of charge.

Staff with Student-Facing Roles

Principle: Staff with student-facing roles are often at the forefront of disclosure, regardless of their position at the university.

Concern: The Occupation Health and Safety Act currently does not include training related to supportive survivor-centric practices surrounding disclosure.

Concern: Not all student-facing staff at McMaster University are trained to handle disclosure in a survivor-centric and supportive manner.

Concern: Currently, staff with student-facing roles may cause more harm than help in the event of disclosure.

Concern: Training regarding the McMaster Sexual Violence Policy is optional for staff members.

Recommendation: The Province of Ontario should change the mandate of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include supportive survivor-centric practices in the event of disclosure.

Recommendation: The Province of Ontario should mandate the recertification of all student-facing staff with the inclusion of the disclosure-related practices.

Recommendation: In the interim, McMaster University should train all student-facing staff to be survivor-centric and appropriate when faced with disclosure.

Recommendation: McMaster University should develop survivor-centric training in collaboration with the Equity and Inclusion Office, the McMaster Students Union, SACHA, and other relevant stakeholders.

The impacts of sexual violence can be found in any aspect of a survivor's life. This is especially true when survivors are also students, ... As a result, disclosures can arise to a wide variety of individuals, particularly staff with student-facing roles. Any staff from human resource employees, staff at the Student Wellness Centre, academic advisors, to faculty chairs, and so on, are in a position to receive disclosures. It is vital that, in these situations of disclosure, the staff who receive them are adequately prepared to respond in a supportive, survivor-centric manner. A major concern for students revolves around this preparation and the current inadequacies at McMaster University and beyond.

The Occupation Health and Safety Act, as it stands, does not include modules on survivor-centric responses to disclosure. To truly ensure that survivors are given the necessary supports, the Occupation Health and Safety Act must be revised by the Province of Ontario. With this updated curriculum, the Province must also mandate that all staff with student-facing roles are recertified to include the training on disclosure-related practices. Without this province-wide accountability, there is great opportunity for staff to cause harm to survivors in cases of disclosure.

In the interim, McMaster University should develop survivor-centric training with relevant stakeholders on campus and in the community, such as the Equity and Inclusion Office, SACHA, and the McMaster Students Union. This training must be mandatory for all student-facing staff to ensure that all are adequately prepared to provide support to survivors both at the time of disclosure and in follow-up, if applicable.

Provincial Legislation OHIP and UHIP

Principle: All survivors should have complete access to health services related to incidents of sexual violence.

Concern: University Health Insurance Plan is currently the only healthcare plan available to international students studying in Ontario.

Concern: University Health Insurance Plan does not cover care costs related to incidents of sexual violence.

Concern: Ontario Health Insurance Plan covers healthcare for all in-province students at Ontario's post-secondary institutions.

Recommendation: The Province of Ontario should lobby Sun Life Financial to cover all care costs related to incidents of sexual violence, without an increase in premium, to University Health Insurance Plan.

Recommendation: The Province of Ontario should ensure that all care costs related to incidents of sexual violence are covered through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan.

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) is the health insurance for Ontario residents, while the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) is the health insurance provided to university students in Ontario who are not eligible for OHIP, run through Sun Life Financial.⁵⁶ In many regards, their coverage is very similar.⁵⁷ Both only cover procedures that are deemed “medically necessary,” which are mostly in hospital and conducted by medical professionals.⁵⁸ UHIP is slightly more restrictive in that elective procedures must be approved for coverage by Sun Life, and that it is not accepted by all health care providers.⁵⁹ Both programs can cover access to services related to sexual violence, including abortions, psychiatry, and medications prescribed in a hospital.⁶⁰ However, this is not an exhaustive list of healthcare requirements for survivors. Neither cover therapy not conducted by a doctor or within a medical facility.⁶¹ When not covered by insurance, therapy is unaffordable for many people. In addition, high demand and low supply of free mental health services means that many are very limited in the supports they can offer, have long wait lists, or both.⁶² For instance, Women’s College Hospital offers trauma therapy for survivors of sexual assault covered under OHIP, but there are numerous restrictions, including a 12-month limit for access.⁶³ In addition, it is important to acknowledge systemic barriers faced by many marginalized people in accessing medical care. For example, disabled people are often less likely to seek help, or will wait longer to seek help, than neurotypical or able-bodied people in cases of sexual violence. This may be partly due to the oppressive history of Canadian medical services, specifically hospitals. Consequently, services related to sexual violence that are covered by OHIP or UHIP should not be exclusive to hospitals. The Ontario Government should also increase funding support to services which already provide supports to survivors, such as

⁵⁶ “What OHIP Covers,” Ontario.ca, n.d., February 2018; “Your Coverage,” University Health Insurance Plan, accessed August 20, 2002, <http://uhip.ca/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>.

⁵⁷ “Your Coverage.”

⁵⁸ “What OHIP Covers”; “Your Coverage.”

⁵⁹ “Your Coverage.”

⁶⁰ “What OHIP Covers”; “Your Coverage.”

⁶¹ “About Therapy,” Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, n.d., http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/visiting_camh/rights_and_policies/Pages/challenges_choices_abouttherapy.aspx.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ “Trauma Therapy Program,” Women’s College Hospital, n.d., <http://www.womenscollegehospital.ca/programs-and-services/mental-health/trauma-therapy-program/>.

members the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres and to Ontario Network of Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence Treatment Centres. This will allow more survivors to access their services, especially those living in areas which do not already have locations.

Ontario Public School System

Principle: The Province of Ontario has a responsibility to educate all students on the meanings of consent and issues of sexual and gender-based violence.

Concern: The public school system has insufficient programs related to sexual health and the meanings of consent.

Concern: Many students enter post-secondary largely unaware of the meaning and importance of consent.

Recommendation: The Ontario public school system should emphasize the importance and meaning of consent and issues of sexual and gender-based violence in the sex education curriculum, through to grade 12.

Recommendation: Teachers must be given further training and resources with regard to teaching consent through an anti-oppressive lens.

Recommendation: The consent, gender-based, and sexual violence curricula must include proper language use and discussions of how one can support survivors of sexual violence, especially women and nonbinary individuals.

The Ontario Government has made great strides in recent years in sex education, including with regards to consent. With the 2015 curriculum update, students are taught that it is okay to say no, and students are expected to understand consent by Grade Nine.⁶⁴ However, there are still improvements to be made. First, while discussions of consent are furthered after Grade Nine, it is important to note that Health and Physical Education (HPE) is no longer a mandatory course in higher grades. Consequently, the curriculum must ensure that students who only take HPE while it is required still leave with a complete understanding of consent. Second, while students are expected to understand consent, there is no definition provided.⁶⁵ As such, much of what a student learns is up to the discretion of the teacher, who may or may not have the resources or training to provide such education. Teachers without additional training may pass on incorrect or gendered interpretations of consent, which may further gender-based stereotypes or violence, and undermines the original goal of the new curriculum.⁶⁶ The Ontario Government should provide educators with a definition of consent, as well as more reaching resources. In

⁶⁴ Alexandra Kelly, "Consent in Sex Education: Teacher Perspectives on Teaching Consent in the Updated Health and Physical Education Curriculum" (University of Toronto, 2017).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

addition, language which implies a gender or sex binary, such as saying that there is either male or female anatomy, should be removed from the curriculum.⁶⁷ Disabled and LGBTQ+ people in the curriculum are often portrayed as a “cause:” survivors of bullying or harassment, or in the case of disability, something that happens as a consequence of poor choices, or something ideally avoidable.⁶⁸ While the curriculum tells teachers to be ‘sensitive’ to the needs of their trans* students, how to do so is not made explicit.⁶⁹ Ways to accommodate trans* students, specifically in sex education, is extremely important, especially considering that many HPE classes are currently split up according to a gender binary. Consequently, there remain gaps the recently updated curriculum that would allow it to provide students with a better understanding of gender, sex, and consent.

Communication

Principle: Best practice sharing is an important communication strategy among Ontario post-secondary institutions.

Principle: Communication among Ontario post-secondary institutions is a positive strategy for the prevention and response to sexual violence.

Concern: Prevention and response strategies in place may not be the most effective.

Recommendation: The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario should increase research into sexual violence prevention and response best practices.

Recommendation: The Council of Ontario Universities should work with the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Universities to implement sexual violence prevention and response best practices.

Recommendation: The Government of Ontario should support the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities to determine best practices.

Recommendation: The Government of Ontario should incorporate the best practices into the Sexual Violence and Harassment Plan Act.

Recommendation: Upon the revision of each post-secondary institutions’ sexual violence policies, the Government of Ontario should mandate the inclusion of the best practices into the policies.

Best practice sharing is an inherent and crucial aspect of the post-secondary education sector in Ontario. Since the introduction of the It’s Never Okay Action Plan, all publicly-assisted post-secondary institutions have formed and enforced sexual violence prevention and response policies. The development and implementation of

⁶⁷ TL McMinn, “Sex Education as Neoliberal Inclusion: Hetero-Cis- Ableism in Ontario’s 2015 Health and Physical Education Curriculum” (University of Toronto, 2017).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

these policies brings great opportunity for collaboration between experts and stakeholders from across the Province. This collaboration can ensure that the policies on campuses are survivor-centric and effective; however, there must be resources allocated to this collaboration. Through the Province of Ontario, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) should increase research into best practices regarding sexual violence prevention and response on campuses.

This research must incorporate a variety of stakeholders and in particular, the Council of Ontario Universities should collaborate with HEQCO to implement these best practices in a timely manner. These best practices should also be incorporated into the Sexual Violence and Harassment Plan Act by the Government of Ontario. Then, at the time of revision of the institutional policies, the Government of Ontario should mandate that the best practices, found in cooperation between HEQCO and the Council of Ontario Universities, are included in the revised editions of each institutional policy.

Integration with On-and-Off Campus Services McMaster Services

Principle: MSU services are pillars of support for students.

Principle: Students should have easy access to formal and informal avenues of support.

Principle: Part-time managers (PTMs) should be paid a higher wage for their contributions to the McMaster community.

Concern: The burden of addressing campus concerns often weighs heavily on student services.

Concern: Not enough compensation is provided to staff of MSU services who work hard to improve the McMaster community.

Concern: Staff and volunteers may not be equipped to provide safe, effective support in all situations.

Recommendation: The university should dedicate funding to adequately compensate PTMs, demonstrating recognition for their active engagement in student affairs and positive influence on student life.

Recommendation: The Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) should hire a second Sexual Violence Response Coordinator to alleviate some of the strain on MSU services.

Recommendation: With advisement from the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator, the responsibilities and limitations of peer support counselors should be clearly defined with set boundaries.

The MSU feels that students should have free and easy access to both formal and informal support for experiences of sexual violence. Currently, MSU services such as

WGEN provide invaluable peer-to-peer support to fill gaps where university resources are stretched. Catering to women and individuals identifying outside of the gender binary, WGEN is a vital service to McMaster students in providing group support for survivors of sexual violence, intimate partner violence, or gender-based violence in addition to hosting workshops and delivering educational campaigns. As a safe(r) space on campus, students can access WGEN to acquire resources, engage in feminist discussion, and share common experiences. Similarly, the Student Health Education Centre (SHEC) offers peer support, anonymous and confidential pregnancy testing, and various health resources.

According to the World Health Organization, the presence of supportive relationships is an important social determinant of health.⁷⁰ Progressive health care models move away from treatment of disease and place more emphasis on health promotion, in which peer-relationships act as an important intervention with the potential to greatly enhance health outcomes.⁷¹ MSU services are essential in ensuring student needs are addressed, and because these services offer unparalleled support, they are heavily used by students. Part-time managers who coordinate these services must balance additional obligations as students themselves, though work very hard to give back to the McMaster community. Given their function as a trusted source for students to turn to in times of need, the university should provide financial backing to MSU peer support services to show recognition for the work that is done to support the McMaster community. Without the dedication from MSU staff in these roles, students would not have access to necessary resources in times of crisis, worsening health outcomes and overall academic performance.

The MSU also recommends that the EIO should hire a second Sexual Violence Response Coordinator, to aid in handling disclosures, providing training, and working with the university on various initiatives to ensure campus is free of sexual violence. An additional staff member would help alleviate some of the strain on MSU services, who are often confronted with situations beyond their range of expertise.

In these cases where students require greater help than what services such as WGEN are able to provide, there is a concern that staff and volunteers may cross boundaries in attempts to offer support despite being ill-equipped to handle such situations. To avoid potential harm in which needs extend beyond the skillset of staff and volunteers, the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator should work in collaboration with WGEN and other relevant MSU services to develop a guideline which clearly states limits of peer support, and when to refer an individual to more formal avenues with trained professionals. It is important to ensure that the social dynamic of the

⁷⁰ World Health Organization. "Promoting mental health: Concepts, emerging evidence, practice: Summary report." (2004).

⁷¹ Dennis, Cindy-Lee. "Peer support within a health care context: a concept analysis." *International journal of nursing studies* 40, no. 3 (2003): 321-332.

peer support relationship remains within the boundaries of the qualifications of service members, to maintain effective, quality care.⁷²

Community Connections

Principle: Established networks of stakeholders are important for collaboration with McMaster on various sexual violence prevention and response initiatives.

Principle: Anti-oppression, cultural sensitivity, and sexual violence training given to individuals in leadership positions with student-facing roles are important for promoting a healthy culture of respect on campus.

Concern: Content experts from the community such as members of SACHA do not receive adequate compensation for the programming they do at McMaster.

Recommendation: Fair compensation should be provided to members of community organizations who deliver workshops to students and staff at McMaster.

Collaboration with community organizations is paramount in supporting McMaster students with supplementary training and education. As a multicultural university with diverse needs, anti-oppression and cultural sensitivity training in conjunction with sexual violence training is important for student leaders and staff in student-facing roles to understand the concept of intersectionality and its role in individuals' experiences with sexual violence. It is recognized within research that identities such as disability and sexual orientation have not been well integrated into traditional frameworks of anti-oppression,⁷³ and must therefore be addressed by content experts to support inclusive understandings of the continuum of experience with sexual violence, in which marginalized groups are at a higher risk of assault, and receive differential treatment in care.⁷⁴ Rainbow Health Canada conducted a *Systems Failure* report which found that existing services and resources are not reflective of multiple identities and neglect to address the complexities of various levels of oppression experienced by LGBTQ communities.⁷⁵ Cultural competence is a necessary incorporation in training given to student leaders and staff, to ensure that members of the McMaster community are using equitable practices.

⁷² Garringer, Michael. & MacRae, Patti: "Building effective peer mentoring programs in schools: An introductory guide." (2008).

⁷³ Alexander, Margaret., Odette, Fran: "Training for change: An integrated anti-oppression framework. A tool for trainers and community service organizations." *Rainbow Health Network*. (2009).

⁷⁴ Conroy, Shana., Cotter, Adam: "Self-reported sexual assault in Canada." *Statistics Canada*. (2014).

⁷⁵ Alexander, Margaret., Odette, Fran: "Training for change: An integrated anti-oppression framework. A tool for trainers and community service organizations." *Rainbow Health Network*. (2009).

Currently, McMaster looks to organizations such as SACHA to provide this training, as content experts with valuable resources. However, representatives from SACHA are not financially compensated for the work that they do. The university should recognize the value of this type of training and provide fair payment to external parties who provide training to McMaster students and staff; in this way, building a culture of consent requires commitment from the university to recognize the importance of equitable training by compensating those who provide it.

Policy Statement:

Whereas: Education on topics associated with sexual violence is paramount to successful leadership among students in positions of power at McMaster University.

Whereas: No event held on campus should foster rape culture.

Whereas: Events and programming held on campus should promote healthy behaviours and lifestyle choices

Whereas: Programming to raise awareness about sexual violence should recognize both situational and day-to-day occurrences of sexual violence.

Whereas: All students should feel safe on and around campus, regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation.

Whereas: All survivors of sexual violence who choose to disclose should feel safe in doing so.

Whereas: No survivors of sexual violence should be forced to relive trauma.

Whereas: Data collection should be survivor-centric.

Whereas: Proper data collection leads to better prevention, intervention, and response strategies related to sexual violence.

Whereas: Students should have quick and easy access to health services when required.

Whereas: Concern for a survivor's mental and physical health should extend beyond the immediate care after an incident regarding sexual violence.

Whereas: The steps needed to access required resources should be minimized to avoid placing additional burdens on the survivor.

Whereas: Students should have access to competent healthcare professionals who are cognizant of cultural differences and trained in anti-oppressive practises.

Whereas: When dealing with sexual violence, students should have access to counselors that are specifically trained to deal with such incidents.

Whereas: Students should have easy access to all available resources regarding support for instances of sexual violence.

Whereas: All resources regarding sexual violence should be survivor-centric.

Whereas: Survivors should be able to report incidences of sexual violence without fear of the lengthy investigative process.

Whereas: Survivors of sexual violence should be able to appeal the decisions of university investigations in which the perpetrators are not found criminally responsible or guilty.

Whereas: The importance of intersectionality must be emphasized to acknowledge the ways in which one's background influences experiences of sexual violence.

Whereas: Acts of sexual violence as defined in the McMaster Sexual Violence Policy should acknowledge online sexual harassment.

Whereas: Security Services should understand student-facing issues as they relate to racism, transphobia, sexism, etc.

Whereas: Knowledge of sexual violence issues and understanding how to effectively respond to disclosures results in better support for survivors.

Whereas: As per the mandates of Residence Life, CAs should foster an environment of support, respect, and personal dignity among first year students, leading by example.

Whereas: Sexual and gender-based violence are preventable through education and prevention strategies.

Whereas: Restaurant, bar, and club staff are in unique situations to prevent and reduce sexual violence in their workplaces.

Whereas: Staff with student-facing roles are often at the forefront of disclosure, regardless of their position at the university.

Whereas: All survivors should have complete access to health services related to incidents of sexual violence.

Whereas: The Province of Ontario has a responsibility to educate all students on the meanings of consent and issues of sexual and gender-based violence.

Whereas: Best practice sharing is an important communication strategy among Ontario post-secondary institutions.

Whereas: Communication among Ontario post-secondary institutions is a positive strategy for the prevention and response to sexual violence.

Whereas: MSU services are pillars of support for students.

Whereas: Students should have easy access to formal and informal avenues of support.

Whereas: Part-time managers (PTMs) should be paid a fair wage for their contributions to the McMaster community.

Whereas: Established networks of stakeholders are important for collaboration with McMaster on various sexual violence prevention and response initiatives.

Whereas: Anti-oppression, cultural sensitivity, and sexual violence training given to individuals in leadership positions with student-facing roles are important for promoting a healthy culture of respect on campus.

Be It Further Resolved That: In addition to Residence Orientation Representatives (RORs), Community Advisors (CAs) and Welcome Week Representatives, varsity athletes, the Student Representative Assembly (SRA), the Student Walk-Home Attendant Team (SWHAT) and the Emergency First Response Team (EFRT) should receive survivor-centric sexual violence training.

Be It Further Resolved That (BIFRT): Welcome Week organizers should include the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and/or executive members of the Women Gender and Equity Network (WGEN) in preliminary discussions to ensure safe, suitable planning of events.

BIFRT: Every year each residence should have consent workshops open to everyone, administered by the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and members of SACHA.

BIFRT: Brighter and increased street lighting should be brought to surrounding student housing areas.

BIFRT: Regular maintenance should be conducted on campus emergency polls to ensure they are always functioning.

BIFRT: Residence Life must make their policy on disclosures transparent and known to all students.

BIFRT: In the case of Residence Reps and CAs who are forced to break confidentiality, Residence Life should give them the option of reporting to the Residence Manager without disclosing the identity of the student.

BIFRT: Residence Life should aim to give all employees (including CAs) the same training as Residence Managers so they are no longer obligated to contact the Residence Manager on Call for every disclosure.

BIFRT: McMaster University, in partnership with services and resources on campus, should collect demographic information including year of study, faculty/program, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity.

BIFRT: The collection of demographic information must maintain confidentiality and autonomy of the survivor.

BIFRT: McMaster University should use the information collected and work with campus partners to design and implement targeted programming.

BIFRT: McMaster University should track the use of services and resources on campus and subsequently cater to the needs quantified by that data.

BIFRT: McMaster University should provide regular campus misconduct report releases, in which incidents of sexual violence disclosed to the university are to be included.

BIFRT: Given that a survivor consents to being contacted after an appointment, healthcare services should be following up with survivors after the initial contact.

BIFRT: The SWC and other healthcare providers on campus should be cognizant of accessibility and suggest external resources that are easy to access (both geographically and financially) by students and community members.

BIFRT: The Student Wellness Centre should hire trauma counselors that are trained to deal with crises of this nature.

BIFRT: All counselors should be trained to understand issues surrounding sexual violence, while being made aware of its relationship to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, etc.

BIFRT: Hiring procedures should mandate that qualifications for counselors at the SWC require new staff to be knowledgeable on issues of sexual violence

BIFRT: The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and her resources should be better promoted in areas such as the SWC through physical resources such as pamphlets and posters.

BIFRT: In addition to physical resources, resources should be promoted online on McMaster's official social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) regularly.

BIFRT: Promotion should be emphasized during Welcome Week so first years can become familiar with resources early.

BIFRT: Promotional materials should be provided in residences in which information on consent, resources, and events are posted on available boards throughout the year.

BIFRT: Resources should be updated regularly to reflect progressive depictions of sexual assault as acts of violence.

BIFRT: An investigative system such as a third-party complaint system should be put in place that minimizes any harm to the health (i.e. emotional/mental) of the survivor in regards to re-traumatization or risk of retaliation.

BIFRT: The McMaster Sexual Violence Policy should incorporate a section that provides survivors with the right to appeal decisions made in any investigation of sexual violence.

BIFRT: The McMaster Sexual Violence Policy should alter its language to recognize that certain marginalized groups of people, especially men of colour, are more likely to be convicted based on race than others.

BIFRT: McMaster should expand the definition of sexual violence in its Sexual Violence Policy to incorporate acts of online sexual harassment.

BIFRT: The gag order should be removed from the McMaster policy.

BIFRT: Security Services should receive training on issues pertaining to sexual violence and anti-oppressive practices to raise the caliber of their job expectations and thus performance.

BIFRT: Security that has been contracted out should receive training regarding McMaster's Sexual Violence Policy.

BIFRT: Residence Life should employ a more stringent screening process (e.g., Vulnerable Sector Checks) for more informed decision-making with regards to CAs.

BIFRT: Residence Life should publicize a complaint procedure for reporting situations of CA misconduct.

BIFRT: The Province of Ontario should mandate that Bystander Intervention training is incorporated into the Smart Serve curriculum.

BIFRT: The Bystander Intervention training should incorporate bar-specific training.

BIFRT: The Provincial Government should mandate all current Smart Serve holders to recertify to include Bystander Intervention training free of charge.

BIFRT: The Province of Ontario should change the mandate of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include supportive survivor-centric practices in the event of disclosure.

BIFRT: The Province of Ontario should mandate the recertification of all student-facing staff with the inclusion of the disclosure-related practices.

BIFRT: In the interim, McMaster University should train all student-facing staff to be survivor-centric and appropriate when faced with disclosure.

BIFRT: McMaster University should develop survivor-centric training in collaboration with the Equity and Inclusion Office, the McMaster Students Union, SACHA, and other relevant stakeholders.

BIFRT: The Province of Ontario should lobby Sun Life Financial to cover all care costs related to incidents of sexual violence, without an increase in premium, to University Health Insurance Plan.

BIFRT: The Province of Ontario should ensure that all care costs related to incidents of sexual violence are covered through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan.

BIFRT: The Ontario public school system should emphasize the importance and meaning of consent and issues of sexual and gender-based violence in the sex education curriculum, through to grade 12.

BIFRT: Teachers must be given further training and resources with regard to teaching consent through an anti-oppressive lens.

BIFRT: The consent, gender-based, and sexual violence curricula must include proper language use and discussions of how one can support survivors of sexual violence, especially women and nonbinary individuals.

BIFRT: The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario should increase research into sexual violence prevention and response best practices.

BIFRT: The Council of Ontario Universities should would work with the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Universities to implement sexual violence prevention and response best practices.

BIFRT: The Government of Ontario should support the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities to determine best practices.

BIFRT: The Government of Ontario should incorporate the best practices into the Sexual Violence and Harassment Plan Act.

BIFRT: Upon the revision of each post-secondary institutions' sexual violence policies, the Government of Ontario should mandate the inclusion of the best practices into the policies.

BIFRT: The university should dedicate funding to adequately compensate PTMs, demonstrating recognition for their active engagement in student affairs and positive influence on student life.

BIFRT: The Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) should hire a second Sexual Violence Response Coordinator to alleviate some of the strain on MSU services.

BIFRT: With advisement from the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator, the responsibilities and limitations of peer support counselors should be clearly defined with set boundaries.

BIFRT: Fair compensation should be provided to members of community organizations who deliver workshops to students and staff at McMaster.