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.

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, socio-economic status, 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 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
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: The Student Success Centre should include the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and/or executive members of the Women Gender and Equity Network (WGEN) in preliminary discussions of event planning to ensure all events such as those during Welcome Week, Homecoming, and Light Up The Night are safe and promote a healthy campus culture.

Recommendation: Every year each residence as well as the Society of Off-Campus Students (SOCS) should host consent workshops, 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 events by the Student Success Centre, 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. Past events such as Cookies and Consent have received positive feedback and engaged students in talking about sexual violence related issues, and should thus be held annually.

**Campus Infrastructure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: All students should feel safe on and around campus, regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Poor lighting on McMaster campuses and surrounding neighbourhoods such as Westdale and Ainslie Wood make walking conditions less safe for students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern: There are not enough emergency polls (Red Assistance Phones) on campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The City of Hamilton should implement brighter and increased street lighting in surrounding student housing areas to improve accessibility and safety.</td>
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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. 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. Moreover, racial and sexual minorities feel less safe than their white, heterosexual peers. In order to alleviate these concerns, the MSU advises the City of Hamilton to upgrade street lighting to brighter, LED lights, in order to

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3. Ibid.
increase safety and comfort of students walking at night, whether actual or perceived. Additionally, increased lighting has benefits of improved accessibility.

**Women’s Campus Safety Grant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Programming geared toward women's safety should be allocated in a way that supports survivor-centric practices.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: It is unclear exactly how much money, and to what initiatives, the Women’s Campus Safety Grant is allocated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern: The Women’s Campus Safety Grant allocated to McMaster University goes directly to Security Services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern: Students, faculty, and staff do not have the opportunity to access the Women’s Campus Safety Grant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern: The Women’s Campus Safety Grant is primarily used to fund self-defence classes at McMaster University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation: McMaster University should allocate the Women’s Campus Safety Grant jointly to the Equity and Inclusion Office and the McMaster Students Union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Equity and Inclusion Office should allocated part of the Women’s Campus Safety Grant for campus groups to apply for funding for survivor-centric programming.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Government of Ontario should publish the amount of money available in the Grant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Government of Ontario should mandate that all institutional recipients of the Grant annually publish how much, and to whom the money is being allocated.</td>
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The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development allocates money to each post-secondary institution for women’s safety-related programming, in the form of the Women’s Campus Safety Grant. This funding is allocated differently by each institution, as they have autonomy over it; however, it is unclear how much money is allocated to each institution and where the money is going. This presents a barrier to accountability, as students cannot request for funding nor find out how much money is available. Most students do not even know this grant exists, as it is not publicly available on the Government of Ontario websites.

Through consultations, it is understood that McMaster University receives approximately $77,000 in the form of this grant. McMaster then allocates all this money to Security Services.\(^4\) Given students’ concerns regarding Security Services’

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\(^4\) Consultation with Meaghan Ross, McMaster Sexual Violence Response Coordinator.
survivor-centricity, students do not believe this money should be allocated there. In addition, this money is allocated by Security Services toward self-defence classes. With this funding, Security Services hosts Krav Maga self-defence classes, which are primarily advertised to residence students. Krav Maga is not the preferred self-defence class. The Equity and Inclusion Office also accessed some of this funding to host Wen Do self-defence classes. Students applaud the use of Wen Do, which incorporates feminist principles into its teachings and acknowledges rape culture.

At other institutions such as Brock University, campus groups are permitted to apply for funding from the Grant, and there are committees of content experts who allocate the funding as needed. This provides a more transparent process and ensures the funding can go to effective methods of preventing sexual violence, rather than just self-defence classes, which often do not acknowledge rape culture and the myth of stranger danger.

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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: Universities’ concerns for reputation limit public 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 Government of Ontario should conduct and publish the Student Voices on Sexual Violence survey at least every 3 years.

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

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

Recommendation: The Office of Equity and Inclusion (EIO) should make accessible yearly 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.

While the MSU recognizes that sexual violence can impact everyone, rates of sexual violence perpetrated against women and folks who identify outside of a gender binary have a demonstrated impact on 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.8

Reliable data are needed to track progress in reducing sexual violence among members of our campus. McMaster University should ensure accountability for sexual violence by maintaining transparency with the public surrounding this data. Such transparency can be enforced with the implementation of yearly incident reports provided by the EIO to inform and update students, faculty and public to the on-campus misconduct that interferes with the safety and security of the McMaster community. By making data collected from the public accessible to the public, students will be able to view trends regarding rates of sexual violence on campus.

In addition to institution-specific data, sector-wide information is important to understand patterns of sexual violence across the province. The Government of Ontario is currently conducting the Student Voices on Sexual Violence survey for all full time students at colleges and universities.9 These results will be incredibly important for students and institutions to know where improvements in their services, resources, and education need to be made. This survey should be run at least every 3 years to ensure data remains up to date. This also allows for enough time for changes to be made and evaluated based on previous years’ survey results.

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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 Student Wellness Centre (SWC) do not always follow up with patients, even when survivors seem to be at high risk of harm.

Recommendation: When a survivor consents to being contacted after an appointment, the SWC should be following up with survivors after the initial contact.

Recommendation: The SWC 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 cultures). 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. 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. 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. Students who have experienced sexual violence may be especially likely to need

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13 Ibid.
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.\footnote{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.msuumcmaster.ca/posts/765.} Students may not understand how to navigate the Hamilton transit system, especially those who commute from a family home outside of Hamilton. Students in the latter category may also want referrals closer to their permanent address outside of Hamilton 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.\footnote{Nichol, Emily., Chalkowsky, Emma., SungWon Han, Elia., Dominguez Florean, Selene., Johnston, Alexandria., Lee, David., van der Vliet, Veronica (Ronnie)., Wilson, Alex. 2017. Health and Wellness Policy Paper. (Hamilton: McMaster Students Union, 2017).} Individuals may also face barriers when trying to access the SWC itself. As discussed in detail in the MSU’s Health Policy Paper, 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, depending on preference). 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Students should have access to healthcare professionals who are cognizant of cultural differences and trained in anti-oppressive practises.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principle: When dealing with sexual violence, students should have access to counselors that are specifically trained to deal with such incidents.</td>
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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 SWC are trained specifically to deal with cases of sexual violence.

Recommendation: The SWC should hire trauma counselors that are trained to deal with both student-specific and general incidents of sexual violence.

Recommendation: The SWC should hire social workers trained in counselling to provide a wider range of services and greater community outreach.

Recommendation: All SWC counselors should be trained and demonstrate understanding of sexual violence, including its relationship to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and other marginalized identities.

Recommendation: Hiring procedures should mandate that qualifications for counselors at the SWC require new staff to be knowledgeable of both student-specific and general incidents 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.\(^{16}\) Although these effects are significant, with the right support and help, they can be 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.\(^ {17}\) 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.\(^ {18}\)

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


\(^{18}\) Ibid.
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: Currently, many students are unaware of the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator's role on campus, as well as other available resources. |
| Concern: Resources including contact information and educational materials available to students can be difficult for many to find and access timely when in need. |
| Recommendation: The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator should be better promoted in areas such as the SWC, residences, and libraries through physical resources visible to students who enter. |
| Recommendation: In addition to physical resources, resources should be promoted online on McMaster’s official social media accounts regularly. |
| Recommendation: Promotion should be emphasized during high traffic times of the year including Welcome Week, Homecoming, and Light Up The Night. |
| Recommendation: Residence Life should provide promotional materials in residences in which information on consent, resources, and events are posted on available boards throughout the year, in a discrete yet accessible manner. |
| Recommendation: Promotional materials should be updated regularly and vetted by the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator before being administered to students. |
| Recommendation: Promotional material should also include student-based and community supports, such as the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton and the MSU Women & Gender Equity Network. |

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 or know of someone who has, despite the fact that McMaster currently does have a great deal of resources.

The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator 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; during times of heightened stress, these resources should be easily accessible to provide the most effective care possible. While many pamphlets are already available in the SWC and the SWELL, Residence Life should ensure physical resources are accessible during all times of the year, situated among other resources so that a survivor can view information while remaining confidential.
During high traffic times of the year in which many students come to events on campus, the SWC and SWELL should heavily promote their physical resources as well engage in social media promotion. Though, because instances of sexual violence are not restricted to high-risk times of the year but occur on an ordinary, day-to-day basis, resources should be administered regularly throughout the year. Providing links with resources and contact information to McMaster's main social media pages or website with all the pertinent information would be beneficial to all students. Due diligence should be exercised to ensure all resources are survivor centric, and should thus be examined and approved by the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator before being made publicly available to students.

In order to provide a wide range of resources to students, community and student based supports should also be advertised to students. Many students might not feel comfortable seeking institutional support, or are just looking for a peer to talk to. It is important that resources are comprehensive and include all necessary parties.
### Survivor Centric Responses
#### Amendments to McMaster Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Survivors should be able to report incidences of sexual violence without fear of the lengthy investigative process.</th>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle: The importance of intersectionality must be emphasized to acknowledge the ways in which one’s background influences experiences of sexual violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle: Online sexual harassment is an act of sexual violence that needs to be acknowledged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Currently, McMaster’s policy only includes the right to appeal for the perpetrator of sexual violence (referred to as Respondents).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Social media plays a large component in potentially propagating sexual violence and/or harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: The McMaster Sexual Violence Policy contains a gag order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: McMaster should expand the definition of sexual violence in its Sexual Violence Policy to incorporate acts of online sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The gag order should be removed from the McMaster Sexual Violence Policy.</td>
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</table>
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.\textsuperscript{19} 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.\textsuperscript{20} 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.\textsuperscript{21,22} 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.”\textsuperscript{23,24}

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.\textsuperscript{25} Under the policy, survivors also typically have the option to determine whether to pursue criminal reporting options or non-criminal alternatives.\textsuperscript{26} 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.\textsuperscript{27} 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 \textit{Our Turn}, “An anonymous and third-party complaint system could address the needs of survivors who wish to relay incidents to university authorities.

\textsuperscript{24} “Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,” \textit{McMaster University}, 2016, \url{http://www.mcmaster.ca/vpacademic/Sexual_Violence_Docs/Sexual_Violence_Policy__effec-Jan_1_2017.pdf}
\textsuperscript{27} “Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,” \textit{McMaster University}.
for the purpose of record keeping, but who do not want to disclose their identities.”

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. 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 decision; and c) a summary outlining the findings.” 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. 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.” 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

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29 “Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,” McMaster University.
30 Ibid.
consent, and cyber harassment or cyber stalking of a sexual nature” in its definition. 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.” 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-in-hand with different systems of power and oppression. 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.

Further, according to Our Turn, sexual violence policies should not include a gag order, though one is present in the McMaster Sexual Violence Policy. Gag orders reduce a survivor’s autonomy by restricting their ability to discuss incidents publicly, and can be viewed as a restriction on democratic rights and a form of silencing. Our Turn has given higher ratings to universities which do not include gag orders, and those policies should set examples for McMaster.

33 “Sexual Violence Policy,” Ryerson University.
34 “Policies, Procedures and Guidelines,” McMaster University.
36 Ibid.
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: 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. |
| Recommendation: Security Services should include a complaints procedure on their website so that students have an accessible way to report an incident of officer misconduct. |

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. 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. However, not many actions have been taken in pursuit of these ideals; In keeping with the goals of the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action

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38 Ibid.
Plan Act, existing strategies must be renewed to address currently unmet needs facing survivors.39

Sexual violence disclosure has been cited by many to create opportunities for increased understanding and support regarding an experience of sexual violence.40 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.41 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.42

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 training does not focus on issues of survivor-centric approaches or intersectionality.43,44 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.45 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.46 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. 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. In cases where an officer acts inappropriately or ineffectively, Security Services should include a complaints procedure on their website so that incidents of officer misconduct can be addressed.

**Residence Life’s Sexual Assault Disclosure Guidelines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: All survivors of sexual violence who choose to disclose should feel safe in doing so.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle: No survivors of sexual violence should be forced to relive trauma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Students may not be aware of Residence Life’s policy regarding sexual violence before they make a disclosure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Residence Life should no longer oblige its student staff to break confidentiality when they have received a disclosure of sexual violence, unless the survivor explicitly requests it or the survivor is at risk of harm to themselves or others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: In the interim, Residence Life must make their policy on disclosures transparent and known to all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: In the interim, Residence Life should give student staff the option of reporting to the Residence Manager without disclosing the identity of the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: In the interim, Residence Life should give student staff the option of reporting the incident to the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator directly.</td>
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</table>

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. However, Residence Life maintains a policy wherein Residence Orientation Representatives (RORs) and Community Advisors (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

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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.\textsuperscript{49} Racism and misogyny combined often means that WOC are dehumanized, and crimes against them may have their legitimacy questioned.\textsuperscript{50} 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.\textsuperscript{51} Survivors may have been threatened against disclosing, and consequently without a promise of confidentiality they may choose not to.\textsuperscript{52} 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.\textsuperscript{53} 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.\textsuperscript{54} A negative experience with disclosure can make a survivor reticent to seek help again.\textsuperscript{55} Consequently, it is evident that the current Residence Life policy not only neglects to adequately support survivors, but may also cause them harm. This policy should be changed to no longer oblige Community Advisors and Residence Orientation Representatives to report a disclosure. Instead, these student staff should operate in the same parameters as other peer support and student volunteers, and should report the incident if the student staff does not feel comfortable suggesting resources. Similar to all other members of campus, Residence Life student staff should only be obliged to break confidentiality in the event that the student is at risk of harm to themselves or others.

There are also several steps available to Residence Life to allow their policy to better support survivors in the interim. 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 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

\textsuperscript{49} Olive, “Sexual Assault against Women of Color.”
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Lindsay, “A Survey of Survivors of Sexual Violence in Three Canadian Cities.”
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
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. In addition, many incidents of sexual violence disclosed to Residence Life staff are not residence-specific. It would be appropriate, then, for the policy to be amended to allow student staff to break confidentiality only to the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator.

**Student Leader Conduct (CAAs, RORs, and Faculty Representatives)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: As per the mandates of Residence Life, CAAs and RORs should foster an environment of support, respect, and personal dignity among first year students, leading by example.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle: Student leaders should be held accountable for instances of misconduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Without a formalized complaint form, CAAs are less likely to be held accountable for instances of misconduct towards first-year students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: The ROR contract is poorly defined insofar as responding to misconduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Residence Life and Faculty Coordinators should employ a more stringent screening process by including a case study or situational question pertaining to sexual violence during interviews for more informed decision-making with regards to hiring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and members of SACHA who provide sexual violence training should administer a quiz following training sessions to increase levels of engagement among students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Residence Life should publicize a complaint procedure for reporting situations of student staff misconduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: To be proactive, a central policy regarding Welcome Week representative behaviour should be developed for situations of misconduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: Welcome Week representative groups should communicate so as not to hire an individual who has been blacklisted from another group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 various groups on campus. Due to their positions of leadership and their frequent interactions with students on campus, it is important that all student leaders engage in appropriate behaviour and receive consequences for 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 which includes a situational question during interviews related to an issue associated with sexual violence or harassment should be mandated for more well-informed hiring processes. Such questions provide insight into quick-thinking strategies employed by the potential candidate, with the ability to raise red flags prior to hiring an individual who will be in student leader position. Once individuals have been hired, the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and members of SACHA who provide training should provide a quiz to ensure all students receiving the training have been engaged during the session and are well versed on issues pertaining to sexual violence.

Additionally, regarding the behaviour of Welcome Week representatives, including RORs, a policy of misbehaviour has not yet been realized; this is problematic because it lessens the chance of the representative's dismissal in spite of inappropriate actions. A policy for ROAs and residence managers to consult is important to ensure that they feel justified in their decision-making on this topic. Overall, this will help to maintain the integrity of student leaders abiding by community-oriented values and principles.
Training for Staff
Smart Serve Occupations

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

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 Provincial Government should mandate that Bystander Intervention training, which includes bar-specific training, is incorporated into the Smart Serve curriculum.

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. The Smart Serve curriculum aims to promote responsible alcohol consumption, sales, and service but fails to incorporate Bystander Intervention Training. 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.

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. 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

57 Ibid.
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**

**Health Insurance Plans**

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

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

Concern: UHIP does not cover care costs related to incidents of sexual violence.

Concern: The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) covers healthcare for all in-province students at Ontario’s post-secondary institutions.

Recommendation: In the interim, the Province of Ontario and McMaster University should lobby Sun Life Financial to cover all care costs related to incidents of sexual violence, without an increase in premium, to UHIP.

Recommendation: International students should be given access to OHIP during their study period.

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

OHIP is the health insurance for Ontario residents, while UHIP is the health insurance provided to university students in Ontario who are not eligible for OHIP, run through Sun Life Financial. In many regards, their coverage is very similar. Both only cover procedures that are deemed “medically necessary,” which are mostly in hospital and conducted by medical professionals. 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. International students deserve the same quality of health care as local students, and consequently the province should aim to give them full access to OHIP, rather than being required to pay for UHIP. However, OHIP is also not exhaustive in its coverage. While it does cover access to services related to sexual violence, including abortions, psychiatry, and medications prescribed in a hospital, this is not an exhaustive list of healthcare requirements for survivors. For instance, it does not cover therapy not conducted by a doctor or within a medical facility. 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

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60 “Your Coverage.”
61 “What OHIP Covers”; “Your Coverage.”
62 “Your Coverage.”
63 “What OHIP Covers”; “Your Coverage.”
wait lists, or both. For instance, Women's College Hospital offers trauma therapy for survivors of sexual violence covered under OHIP, but there are numerous restrictions, including a 12-month limit for access. 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 members the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres and to Ontario Network of Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence Treatment Centres. Increased funding should aim to allow more survivors to access their services, both by expansion of the capacities of current facilities, and by opening up new facilities, especially in areas without an existing rape crisis or sexual assault / domestic violence treatment centres.

**Ontario Public School System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>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.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concern: The K-12 school system has insufficient programs related to sexual health and the meanings of consent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern: Many students enter post-secondary largely unaware of the meaning and importance of consent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Ontario Ministry of Education should incorporate the importance and meaning of consent and issues of sexual and gender-based violence in the sex education curriculum, through to grade 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation: The Ontario Ministry of Education should provide teachers further training and resources with regard to teaching consent through an anti-oppressive lens.</td>
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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. However, there are still improvements to be made. First, while discussions of consent are furthered after Grade Nine, it is important to note that

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65 Ibid.
68 Alexandra Kelly, “Consent in Sex Education: Teacher Perspectives on Teaching Consent in the Updated Health and Physical Education Curriculum” (University of Toronto, 2017).
Health and Physical Education (HPE) is not 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.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰ The Ontario Government should provide educators with a definition of consent, as well as more reaching resources. In 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.⁷¹ 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.⁷² While the curriculum tells teachers to be ‘sensitive’ to the needs of their trans* students, how to do so is not made explicit.⁷³ 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. 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. Consequently, there remain gaps in the recently updated curriculum that would allow it to provide students with a better understanding of gender, sex, and consent.

**Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle: Best practice sharing is an important communication strategy among Ontario post-secondary institutions.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principle: Communication among Ontario post-secondary institutions is a positive strategy for the prevention and response to sexual violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern: Prevention and response strategies in place may not be the most effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁶⁹ Ibid.
⁷⁰ Ibid.
⁷² Ibid.
⁷³ Ibid.


Recommendation: Upon the revision of each post-secondary institutions' sexual violence policies, the Government of Ontario should mandate the inclusion of the best practices and minimum standards 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\(^\text{74}\). The development and implementation of 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. It is also important that minimum standards for sexual violence support and response protocols should include. 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: Students should have easy access to formal and informal avenues of support.

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

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

Recommendation: The Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) should hire a second Sexual Violence Response Coordinator.

Recommendation: Student Support and Case Management (SSCM) should hire a Residence Case Manager to offer “low-level” support for students living on campus.

Recommendation: The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator should define the limitations of peer support volunteers.

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.\textsuperscript{75} 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.\textsuperscript{76} MSU services are essential in ensuring student needs are addressed, and because these services offer unparalleled support, they are heavily used by students. The MSU recommends that the EIO 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. Similarly, SSCM should hire a Residence Case


Manager to specifically handle residence-related conflicts, so that first years living on campus have a dedicated staff member they can contact when in need. While SSCM does offer support for more severe cases, having an individual who is available for students seeking support for “low-level” cases (those which do not require immediate attention) would provide students with an additional resource. Additional staff member would help reduce overuse of MSU services, who are often limited in resources and 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 provide direction for peer support services and work in collaboration with WGEN to develop guidelines which clearly state 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 peer support relationship remains within the boundaries of the qualifications of service members, to maintain effective, quality care.77

**Community Connections**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Concern: Students are often unaware of the services provided Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton (SACHA).</td>
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Organizations such as SACHA provide critical services to local communities. As students integrate more with their community, they might look to off-campus supports in the event of an incident of sexual violence. SACHA provides a 24 hour support line, counselling, and advocacy, which students can use if they are unsatisfied with or simply do not want to access campus supports.78 These services

78 Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton. http://sacha.ca
are proven to be effective and survivor centric. However, SACHA, and other community support organizations, often do not have the necessary funding to expand and thrive. SACHA runs community fundraises annually, and the MSU’s own Student Walk Home Attendant Team hosts an annual fundraiser for SACHA through their Walk-A-Thon. Increased committed government funding can allow SACHA to expand and provide more necessary resources to the community.

Just as important is students awareness of these resources. As McMaster continues to improve its advertisement of resources for survivors, SACHA should be included in those resources so students are aware of the multiple options available to them.
Policy Statement:

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

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

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

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

And Whereas: Programming geared toward women’s safety should be allocated in a way that supports survivor-centric practices.

And Whereas: Data collection should be survivor-centric.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And Whereas: Online sexual harassment is an act of sexual violence that needs to be acknowledged.

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

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

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

And Whereas: No survivor should be forced to relive trauma.

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

And Whereas: Student leaders should be held accountable for instances of misconduct.

And Whereas: Sexual and gender-based violence are preventable through education, prevention strategies, and cultural change.

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

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

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

And 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.

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

And Whereas: Communication among Ontario post-secondary institutions is a positive strategy for the prevention and response to sexual violence.
And Whereas: Students should have easy access to formal and informal avenues of support.

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

And Whereas: Off-campus supports provide an essential service to students, and allow for multiple resource options.

Be It Resolved That: The Student Success Centre should include the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and/or executive members of the Women Gender and Equity Network (WGEN) in preliminary discussions of event planning to ensure all events such as those during Welcome Week, Homecoming, and Light Up The Night are safe and promote a healthy campus culture.

Be It Further Resolved That (BIFRT): Every year each residence as well as the Society of Off-Campus Students (SOCS) should host consent workshops, administered by the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and members of SACHA.

BIFRT: The City of Hamilton should implement brighter and increased street lighting in surrounding student housing areas to improve accessibility and safety.

BIFRT: McMaster University should allocate the Women’s Campus Safety Grant jointly to the Equity and Inclusion Office and the McMaster Students Union.

BIFRT: The Equity and Inclusion Office should allocate part of the Women’s Campus Safety Grant for campus groups to apply for funding for survivor-centric programming.

BIFRT: The Government of Ontario should publish the amount of money available in the Grant.

BIFRT: The Government of Ontario should mandate that all institutional recipients of the Grant annually publish how much, and to whom the money is being allocated.

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 Government of Ontario should conduct and publish the Student Voices on Sexual Violence survey at least every 3 years.

BIFRT: The collection of demographic information must maintain the confidentiality and autonomy of the survivor.
BIFRT: McMaster University should use the data collected and work with campus partners to design and implement targeted programming.

BIFRT: The Office of Equity and Inclusion (EIO) should make accessible yearly campus misconduct report releases, in which incidents of sexual violence disclosed to the university are to be included.

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

BIFRT: The SWC 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 both student specific and general incidents of sexual violence.

BIFRT: The SWC should hire social workers as professionals trained in counselling to provide a wider range of services and greater community outreach.

BIFRT: All SWC counselors should be trained and demonstrate understanding of sexual violence, including its relationship to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and other marginalized identities.

BIFRT: Hiring procedures should mandate that qualifications for counselors at the SWC require new staff to be knowledgeable of both student-specific and general incidents of sexual violence.

BIFRT: The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator should be better promoted in areas such as the SWC, residences, and libraries through physical resources visible to students who enter.

BIFRT: In addition to physical resources, resources should be promoted online on McMaster’s official social media accounts regularly.

BIFRT: Promotion should be emphasized during high traffic times of the year including Welcome Week, Homecoming, and Light Up the Night.

BIFRT: Residence Life should provide promotional materials in residences in which information on content, resources, and events are posted on available boards throughout the year, in a discrete yet accessible manner.

BIFRT: Promotion should be updated regularly and vetted by the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator before being administered to students.
BIFRT: Promotional materials should also include student-based and community supports, such as the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton (SACHA) and the MSU Women & Gender Equity Network.

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 Sexual Violence 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: Security Services should include a complaints procedure on their website so that students have an accessible way to report an incident of officer misconduct.

BIFRT: Residence Life should no longer oblige its student staff to break confidentiality when they have received a disclosure of sexual violence, unless the survivor explicitly requests it or the survivor is at risk of harm to themselves or others.

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

BIFRT: In the interim, Residence Life should give student staff the option of reporting to the Residence Manager without disclosing the identity of the student.

BIFRT: In the interim, Residence Life should give student staff the option of reporting the incident to the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator directly.

BIFRT: Residence Life and Faculty Coordinators should employ a more stringent screening process by including a case study or situational question pertaining to
sexual violence during interviews for more informed decision making with regards to hiring.

**BIFRT:** The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and members of SACHA who provide sexual violence training should administer a quiz following training sessions to increase levels of engagement among students.

**BIFRT:** Residence Life should publicize a complaint procedure for reporting situations of student-staff misconduct.

**BIFRT:** To be proactive, a central policy regarding ROR behaviour should be developed for situations of misconduct.

**BIFRT:** Welcome Week representative groups should communicate so as not to hire an individual who has been blacklisted from another group.

**BIFRT:** The Provincial Government should mandate that Bystander Intervention training, which includes bar-specific training, is incorporated into the Smart Serve curriculum.

**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:** In the interim, 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 UHIP.

**BIFRT:** International students should be given access to OHIP during their study period.

**BIFRT:** The Province of Ontario should ensure that all care costs related to incidents of sexual violence are covered through OHIP.
BIFRT: The Ontario Ministry of Education should incorporate the importance and meaning of consent and issues of sexual and gender-based violence in the sex education curriculum, through to grade 12.

BIFRT: The Ontario Ministry of Education should provide teachers further training and resources with regard to teaching consent through an anti-oppressive lens.

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


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

BIFRT: The Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) should hire a second Sexual Violence Response Coordinator.

BIFRT: Student Support and Case Management (SSCM) should hire a Residence Case Manager to offer “low-level” support for students living on campus.

BIFRT: The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator should define the limitations of peer support volunteers.

BIFRT: McMaster University should advertise SACHA’s 24 hour support line as part of their communication of student supports.

BIFRT: The provincial and municipal governments should increase the amount of funding they allocate to SACHA, and ensure this funding remains stable each year.