Changing the culture of acceptance:

Recommendations
to address sexual violence
on university campuses

NOVA SCOTIA

CONSUP
COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

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LETTER FROM THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

As Co-chairs of the Province's Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC), we are pleased to present this report of ten recommendations to advance sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses. This report, which fulfills the mandate of the SVPC, is respectfully submitted to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education and the University Partnership Committee.

The SVPC was formed as a commitment of the 2015-19 *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities*. In the context of the Province's efforts to address the issue of sexual violence through its strategy, *Breaking the Silence: A Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence in Nova Scotia*, the parties to the MOU committed to working together to address this issue on university campuses. The SVPC was composed of government representatives, student representatives, first responders on campuses, faculty, administration, and representatives from community-based organizations with expertise in sexual violence prevention.

The SVPC's breadth of knowledge and expertise, along with seven months of research and dialogue on best or promising practices in sexual violence primary prevention, as well as input from community stakeholders, led to the ten recommendations presented in this report. The recommendations were developed with a focus on primary prevention strategies. Such strategies prevent the initial occurrence of sexual violence and include raising awareness about the issue and providing education. This report acknowledges the gendered nature of sexual violence and that marginalized populations are at a greater risk of experiencing sexual violence. Overall, the recommendations are intended to provide a framework to address the culture in which sexual violence exists in order to prevent its occurrence.

We would like to acknowledge the Committee's dedication to working towards sexual violence prevention. Through the expertise and guidance of the members, the recommendations of this report will help to make Nova Scotia's university campuses safer places for all students.

The Committee's work and resulting recommendations complement efforts under the Province's *Breaking the Silence* strategy, helping us move toward our shared vision of a Nova Scotia free from sexual violence.

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President   Senior Executive Director
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a result of the work of the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC) which consisted of representatives from the Nova Scotia Government, student groups, Nova Scotia universities and community agencies working in the area of sexual violence prevention and response [see Appendix B for the list of committee members]. The SVPC was established as an outcome of the 2015-19 *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities* and in response to a heightened awareness of sexual violence on Nova Scotia university campuses. Nova Scotia universities agreed to a partnership with the Province to provide leadership in the implementation of the MOU. The Partnership Committee includes all university presidents and several deputy ministers (Province of Nova Scotia, 2015b, p. 2).

The mandate of the SVPC was to develop a report with recommendations for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) and the Partnership Committee to consider. The recommendations are intended to ensure that Nova Scotia universities are advanced in their efforts to end sexual violence on Nova Scotia university campuses [see Appendix C for the SVPC *Terms of Reference*].

The SVPC was established in September, 2016 and met monthly to receive presentations on, and to discuss, best or promising practices in sexual violence prevention with a focus on primary prevention strategies. Each recommendation in this report represents the SVPC's adherence to feminist, Black feminist and anti-oppression frameworks in understanding and preventing sexual violence. For more information about these frameworks, see the Introduction section on page 15, and the Recommendations section on page 46. Each recommendation represents careful consideration on what is needed to change the culture in which sexual violence exists by placing responsibility on the campus community to change attitudes and beliefs which perpetuate sexual violence. Together, the ten recommendations in this report aim to holistically address sexual violence prevention on all three of the issue's personal, cultural and systemic levels.

In order to enhance awareness about the impacts of culture and social structures on the issue of sexual violence, this report includes an analysis of power, privilege and oppression in our society. Privilege and oppression create the gendered nature of sexual violence. In addition, marginalized populations experience intersecting (i.e. multiple) oppressions based on gender, race, ability, sexual orientation, class, age, and religion, which are all aspects of social identity. As such, marginalized populations experience sexual violence at a disproportionately high rate. The aim of this report is to bring attention to the fact that all individuals in society, regardless of social identity, are responsible for changing the culture in which sexual violence exists.

As noted, all recommendations in this report are based on feminist, Black feminist and anti-oppressive frameworks for understanding sexual violence. It is suggested that when implementing these recommendations, Nova Scotia universities continue to use these frameworks, for example, in the development of sexual violence prevention education programs. This will ensure Nova Scotia and its universities are advanced in their efforts to:

- reduce victim blaming;
- take an intersectional approach to understanding and preventing sexual violence; and
- change the culture in which sexual violence exists to prevent its occurrence in our society.

The SVPC recommends that the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) and the Partnership Committee work to ensure that Nova Scotia universities advance the following ten recommendations. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Minister and the Partnership Committee:

1) **Work with the universities to ensure they communicate and demonstrate commitments to action in sexual violence prevention on campus to students, faculty, staff, and administration. This communication should acknowledge the gendered nature of sexual violence and its disproportionate impacts on marginalized groups.**

It is important for both new and returning students, faculty, staff, and administration to be aware of the university's commitment to ending sexual violence on campus. To communicate the importance of such a message, and to ensure the message is received by the majority of the campus population, it is suggested that the commitments to action be communicated prior to the start of the school semester and throughout the academic year. This message should also be communicated during on-campus training for Residence Assistants and student leaders. To demonstrate the university's commitments to action, the communication should include a progress report at the end of each academic year.

2) **Work with the universities to develop a standard of behaviours specific to sexual violence prevention which encompasses the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration. These standards should outline values, beliefs, and behaviours, and provide links to the university's code of conduct and/or policies related to sexual violence and discrimination and harassment.**

It is important for each university to outline standards of behaviours specific to sexual violence prevention to create an environment in which sexual violence is not tolerated. The purpose of providing links to the university's code of conduct and/or policies related to sexual violence, and discrimination and harassment, is to ensure that the campus community is aware of the consequences of their actions if they do not adhere to the university's standards of behaviours. Providing a link to the university's discrimination and harassment policy will help to ensure that the campus community is aware of the importance of showing respect for diversity and equity across all populations.

3) **Encourage the universities to collaborate in developing a Nova Scotia specific bystander education program. Once developed and evaluated, this program should be recognized as a best practice for use at Nova Scotia university campuses.**

The Executive Director of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre provided information on a successful Department of Justice Canada grant titled *Increasing Awareness of the Criminal Justice System through Bystander Education.* It will involve the development of a Nova Scotia specific bystander education program to be implemented on Nova Scotia university campuses. The goal is to create a pool of "master trainers" to provide continuity and maintain motivation. The grant will fund research and development over a 2-year period, the salary of the program developer, and costs associated with an advisory committee.

4) **Work with the universities to reframe their communication about the risks associated with alcohol consumption. This communication should acknowledge the link between the consumption of alcohol and the perpetration of sexual violence.**

The purpose of this recommendation is to reduce harms associated with high-risk drinking on university campuses. The SVPC acknowledges that alcohol consumption does not cause sexual violence. However, a reduction in high-risk drinking will decrease situations in which sexual

violence is more likely to occur. Instead of alcohol harm reduction programs focusing solely on the risks associated with alcohol consumption for a potential victim/survivor, these programs should focus on how alcohol may be used to facilitate or excuse sexual violence perpetration for individuals who already have oppressive attitudes, values, and beliefs. Programming should also educate about the myths and stereotypes about alcohol consumption and sexual assault and the laws pertaining to administering a noxious substance, sexual assault, and consent. In addition, programming should include communication about the deliberate use of alcohol to commit sexual offences.

A number of Nova Scotia universities are already working in partnership with the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse to implement their *Framework to address High-Risk Drinking and Alcohol Harms Reduction on Canadian Campuses*. This framework would guide the implementation of this recommendation. In particular, the implementation of Strategic Area 1 of the framework titled, 'Health promotion, prevention and education', could incorporate new messaging that emphasizes the link between the consumption of alcohol and sexual violence perpetration. This recommendation will only be effective at preventing sexual violence if combined with the other recommendations to change the culture in which sexual violence exists.

5) **Work with the universities to ensure the delivery of consent education for the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration – with an aim to identify key elements that can be used to inform development and consistent delivery.**

The SVPC agreed that the entire campus community including students, faculty, staff, and administration, should be included wherever possible as participants in sexual violence prevention education.

This recommendation highlights the importance of delivering education which is consistent amongst Nova Scotia universities. Therefore, it is suggested that universities identify key elements of their consent education to inform development and consistent delivery. It is important to acknowledge the range of victim's/survivor's experiences by highlighting the difficulties and complexities of consent in incidents of sexual violence. In addition, the SVPC agrees that consent education should be developed based on feminist, Black feminist and anti-oppression frameworks. [For more information on how to incorporate a feminist lens into practice see Avalon Sexual Assault Centre's report *The Avalon Model*, page 14].

6) **Work with the universities to ensure the development and delivery of anti-oppression education for leaders on campus.**

The SVPC agreed that anti-oppression education is a critical component of sexual violence prevention. The purpose of anti-oppression education is to change oppressive attitudes and behaviours which contribute to inequities in society. Sexual violence, as an act of gendered oppression, will not end until all forms of social inequities are addressed because all social inequities are rooted in the same systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

According to best practices, anti-oppression education should be offered as two modules. The first module would provide baseline education on power, privilege, and oppression in society and encourage participants to reflect on their roles in perpetuating social inequities. The second module would encourage participants to take action against oppressive barriers and would contain examples specific to the participant population. For example, education for faculty could include examples and exercises related to classroom scenarios by highlighting the responsibility

of individuals in positions of power (i.e. professional power) to educate on power and privilege and to intervene in situations of oppression. Education for students should be provided separately from faculty, staff, and administration to address the potential for uncomfortable power dynamics. As well, education should be offered in-person and in small groups to allow for discussion.

7) **Work with the universities to ensure the development and delivery of training on how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence for the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration – who are most likely to receive disclosures.**

The implementation of sexual violence primary prevention strategies, such as bystander training, creates an environment in which sexual violence is discussed more openly. Victims/survivors may, therefore, feel more comfortable disclosing the harm that was done to them. Consequently, it is critical for universities to ensure that their campus community is appropriately trained to receive such disclosures without causing further harm to victims/survivors. In addition, as previously noted, when individuals who are likely to receive a disclosure of sexual violence on campus (e.g. faculty, counsellors, athletic coaches) are given training on how to respond, they are learning to dispel rape myths and support victims/survivors. This contributes to cultural change by creating an environment in which the values, beliefs, and behaviours which perpetrate sexual violence are no longer tolerated.

Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: A Nova Scotia Resource was created as part of the province's sexual violence strategy, *Breaking the Silence*, to help Nova Scotians learn more about sexual violence and how to support victims/survivors. The training can be accessed through LearnRidge (2017) at https://nscs.learnridge.com/. The training is for service providers, friends, family members, neighbours, teachers, first responders, counsellors, and anyone who is acting as a support person or is concerned about sexual violence.

The course is free of charge and open to anyone. A certificate is provided to individuals who have registered and completed the course. The training is made up of six separate modules, which include a mix of text and interactive elements such as videos, graphics, timelines, and quizzes.

The modules are as follows:
- Sexual Violence: An Introduction;
- Responding to a Disclosure;
- Choices following Sexual Violence;
- Exploring Sexual Consent;
- Enhancing the Well-being of Support People; and
- Indigenous Perspectives.

8) **Share this report with the following Provincial Government departments and agency – Community Services, Education and Early Childhood Development, Health and Wellness, Justice, and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women – to assist these departments and the Advisory Council with their work on sexual violence prevention.**

9) **Convene a provincial sexual violence prevention committee to support the development of new, or the revision of existing, stand-alone sexual violence policies. Common guidelines and reporting structures should be developed with input from each Nova Scotia University (including elected student representatives and faculty),**

the Nova Scotia Community College, and community leaders with expertise in sexual violence prevention.

The overall purpose of the provincial sexual violence prevention committee will be to share expertise and resources in the area of sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses. The committee should make every effort to ensure that its membership is reflective of marginalized populations. In addition, in order to reduce duplication of efforts, a province-wide collaboration should be supported between this committee and any other committees focused on sexual violence prevention.

It is important for each university to have a stand-alone policy for responding to incidents of sexual violence. This is due to sensitive areas in sexual violence reporting, disciplinary procedures and the potential involvement of external resources for victim/survivor supports. As part of the 2015-19 MOU, each university in Nova Scotia is required to develop such a policy. The SVPC recommends the creation of a standard guideline for the development of these policies. Such a guideline should align with the guidelines for policy development as outlined in the MOU. It is suggested that a stand-alone sexual violence policy guideline be developed by the provincial sexual violence prevention committee to assist each university to develop and/or to revise their policies.

In the report titled, *Taking action to end violence against women and girls in Canada* (Standing Committee on the Status of Women, March, 2017), Recommendation 7 states that each university's stand-alone policy should be "informed by evidence-based research, include anonymous, confidential and secure reporting mechanisms for survivors of sexual violence on campuses, and provide sexual violence intervention and sensitivity training for all employees of post-secondary administrations, campus police, students, faculty and other staff during orientation times". Guidelines should also direct that stand-alone policies should include information about off-campus reporting and disclosure options. For example, policies should list the police as an alternate reporting option, and community support services as agencies to which victims/survivors could disclose.

10) **Encourage each university to establish a sexual violence prevention advisory committee or utilize a similar existing committee to support sexual violence prevention. The Committee's membership should include elected student representatives. The purpose of the sexual violence prevention advisory committee will be to:**
   - **develop an implementation plan for the recommendations contained within this report; and**
   - **share information on the institution's progress in preventing sexual violence on campus, including the effectiveness of its institutional strategies in preventing sexual violence.**

The committee should make every effort to ensure that its membership is reflective of marginalized populations. The SVPC recognizes that both financial and human resources are required to successfully implement the recommendations in this report. Collaborations and partnerships are strongly encouraged to leverage expertise and best practices available on some of the campuses and within communities that house universities and the NSCC.

When each university communicates their commitments to action, they will share information about their progress in preventing sexual violence. In addition, a member of each institution's committee will be responsible for sharing this information with the provincial sexual violence

prevention committee. This will ensure that the university sector and other key stakeholders are well informed about Nova Scotia's initiatives to address sexual violence prevention.

This report has referenced feminist, Black feminist and anti-oppression frameworks as accepted best practices for understanding and preventing sexual violence. Resources have been cited in the report that may assist advisory committees in better understanding these frameworks.

Members of the sexual violence prevention advisory committee (or the similar existing committee) should be aware of the Association of Atlantic Universities' (AAU) work on developing common reporting guidelines. This work is expected to be complete in 2017 and should be helpful in assisting the universities and the NSCC in adopting similar approaches to reporting sexual violence.

ADVANCING THE 2015-19 *MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA AND THE NOVA SCOTIA UNIVERSITIES*

The 2015-19 *MOU between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities* solidifies a collaborative commitment between the parties to address sexual violence on Nova Scotia university campuses. Clause 17 (3) of the MOU states: "In the context of the Province's efforts to address the issue of sexual violence through its strategy, *Breaking the Silence: A Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence in Nova Scotia*, the parties commit to working together to address this issue on university campuses." The first measurable step in this direction was the creation of the Province's Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC) in September, 2016. As noted, the mandate of the SVPC was to work towards sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia campuses, with a key task to prepare a report and recommendations on sexual violence prevention for the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education and the Partnership Committee to consider. The following outlines how the Committee's recommendations help to advance the 2015-19 MOU.

There are several clauses in the MOU that are intended to guide the Province and the universities in their efforts to address sexual violence. These clauses outline that:

- the parties to the MOU will work collaboratively to address the issue of sexual violence prevention;
- universities will work with partners to develop policies and initiatives to enhance awareness and understanding of sexual violence;
- universities will adopt stand-alone policies to address sexual violence;
- universities will engage with elected student representatives to ensure student involvement;
- the Partnership Committee will convene a working committee to develop a report and recommendations to address sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia campuses;
- universities will ensure that all students have access to information about preventing sexual violence, beginning in their first week of orientation and continuing throughout the year;
- universities will ensure the inclusion of sexual violence first-response education, consent education, and an equity and inclusion framework in all orientation and training; and
- universities will promote sexual violence prevention resources and supports, both on campus and in the community.

In essence these clauses reflect a commitment to:

- work collaboratively;
- ensure initiatives enhance an awareness about, and an understanding of, sexual violence;
- engage with elected student representatives;
- ensure students have access to information about preventing sexual violence; and
- ensure relevant education is delivered from an equity and inclusion framework.

The SVPC's recommendations are substantive in their efforts to address sexual violence from a collaborative approach with an overall goal to shift the culture in which sexual violence exists from one of tolerance, to intolerance. Together the 10 recommendations advance the essence of what the MOU aims to achieve in relation to sexual violence prevention: collaboration, engagement with elected student representatives, and the provision of sexual violence prevention education.

NOVA SCOTIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) recognizes that sexual violence is a serious issue in our society and it is critical that post-secondary institutions take steps to addressing it on our campuses. As a provincial college system with thirteen campuses across Nova Scotia, NSCC has a presence in both metro and rural communities across the province. As part of those communities, issues related to sexual misconduct and assault have an impact on NSCC students. NSCC has been actively engaged in researching and developing policies, services and resources to bring positive change to our campus communities. NSCC has learned from local and national university strategies and policies, as well as provincial and community agency efforts focusing on Nova Scotia based research, emerging trends and best practice.

NSCC aligns itself with the approach of the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee's report and recommendations. Accordingly, NSCC is committed to advancing this shared vision and build opportunities for collaboration with universities to bring about a positive cultural change on Nova Scotia's university and college campuses.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is a serious and pervasive health, social and public safety issue in Nova Scotia. An incident of sexual violence, whether a sexist joke, derogatory comment about one's gender, or an act of sexual assault, results in short and long-term negative consequences for individuals, communities and society. The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC) composed of Government, Nova Scotia universities, and community agencies was developed to examine the issue of sexual violence and provide recommendations to address this issue on Nova Scotia university campuses. This report contextualizes sexual violence as a social issue that requires action from all aspects of society in order to produce longstanding results.

Since sexual violence mostly affects individuals between the ages of 15-24 with high rates of reporting from university students (Benoit, Shumka, Philips, Kennedy & Belle-Isle, 2015), this report is focused on sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses. Specifically, the mandate of the SVPC was to:

- work collaboratively to examine the issue of sexual violence on campuses in the Nova Scotia context; and
- develop a report with recommendations to advance sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses.

This report acknowledges the complexity of sexual violence as an issue that is prevalent on all three levels: personal, cultural and systemic. Further research is required to increase our understanding of how sexual violence is experienced and perpetuated on these three levels. Based on what we currently know is effective in preventing sexual violence, as well as recognized gaps in these efforts, this report outlines recommendations for Nova Scotia universities to further enhance each of their efforts in addressing the issue.

The SVPC has chosen to use 'victim/survivor' in this report to refer to individuals who have experienced sexual violence. This term is meant to provide individuals with a choice of label, and to reflect the language used by both the legal system and community organizations working in the area of sexual violence. Solely referring to individuals as 'victims' can perpetuate the idea that individuals are powerless. The Avalon Sexual Assault Centre defines a victim as "someone who has experienced some form of trauma, be it emotional, sexual, psychological or physical. Someone who is immobilized or prevented from living a life similar to his/her/[their] life prior to the trauma. This person is in a victimized state." A survivor is defined as "someone who has been victimized but is healing and beginning to cope with the trauma and is working towards getting beyond the traumatic event" (Avalon Sexual Assault Center, 2017). The term 'survivor' also acknowledges the bravery and strength required to resist gendered violence in a society that tolerates such oppression.

As an act of gendered violence, the highest occurrence of sexual violence exists as man-identified perpetrated toward woman-identified and transgender victims/survivors. It is important to note that because sexual violence occurs disproportionately against marginalized populations in society, analyses and intervention strategies must also address the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, two-spirit (and others) from now on referred to as LGBTQIA2S+. It is also important to note that this report often refers to gender as a binary of men and women; however, gender exists on a continuum. Individuals who identify as non-binary are marginalized in society and therefore are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence.

Each recommendation in this report was developed from anti-oppression, feminist and Black feminist frameworks on sexual violence.

- An anti-oppressive perspective acknowledges the impacts of power, privilege and oppression in society with a focus on empowering marginalized individuals and groups. The aim is to make systems more equitable to decrease experiences of inequality.
- A feminist perspective considers the impacts of gender inequality on a woman-identified individual's personal, social and political experiences. Women-identified individuals are constrained by gender expectations as well as male privilege and power in our patriarchal society. Feminism encourages gender equality through the changing of social norms and legislation and by celebrating the similarities and differences amongst genders. The focus of feminism is to empower women-identified individuals (Payne, 2005). In addition,
  > "Feminist analysis asserts that sexualized violence exists because of power imbalances rooted in patriarchy and gender inequality as well as other forms of oppression and systemic inequalities based on gender/sex, age, race/ethnicity, class, ability, and religion, etc." (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d.)
- "Womanist/Black feminist theory 'reveal(s) hierarchies of powers within categories of race, class, gender, patriarchal relations, sexuality and sexual orientation'" (Barriteau, n.d., p.15 as cited in Parris, 2010). Black feminism acknowledges the diversity of women-identified individuals and validates first person voice. Therefore, Black feminism incorporated an intersectional analysis into traditional feminist theory and practice. It maintains that experiences (e.g. racism, sexism, classism) are interconnected, and so the move toward gender equality must address all social inequalities (Academic Room, 2013; Taylor, 1998). "Black feminist thought supports broad principles of social justice that transcend U.S. Black women's particular needs" (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 22).

Black feminism is highlighted because it added an intersectional lens to traditional feminist perspectives of understanding gender inequality. Based on these three frameworks, special consideration was taken to reduce victim blaming by focusing on intervention strategies which target change at the broader cultural and systemic levels and do not assume hierarchical rankings of oppressions.

Changing the culture in which sexual violence exists requires action from potential victims/survivors of sexual violence, potential perpetrators, peers who are responsible for intervening in incidents of sexual violence, and institutions and campus communities to create an environment where sexual violence is not tolerated and victims/survivors are treated with dignity and respect. The recommendations in this report combine to address all of the above factors while increasing everyone's responsibility to take action against the issue. In doing so, this report complements the Standing Committee of the Status of Women Canada's recent report, *Taking action to end violence against women and girls in Canada* (March, 2017), and its recommendations for ending sexual violence on post-secondary campuses.

BACKGROUND

Nova Scotia's first strategy for addressing sexual violence was released in June, 2015 and titled *Breaking the Silence: A Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence Prevention in Nova Scotia*. The purpose of this strategic framework was to shed light on the issue of sexual violence as well as to outline Government's actions to developing prevention strategies and increasing supports. The principles guiding the strategy were to ensure the interests of victims/survivors and others impacted by sexual violence were at the core of the work, include the needs and experiences of marginalized and vulnerable groups, cooperate with citizens, communities and governments to make the best use of resources and expertise, and prevent sexual violence from occurring by breaking the silence and stigma (Province of Nova Scotia, 2015a, p. 3). The strategy outlines several plans of action to increase education, awareness, prevention, and accountability.

Breaking the Silence was an important step in addressing sexual violence as a serious issue in Nova Scotia.

The 2015-19 *Memorandum of Understanding between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities* (from now on referred to as the MOU), commits to laying the groundwork for a sustainable, accessible, quality sector that fosters entrepreneurship, produces job-ready graduates and drives innovation (Province of Nova Scotia, 2015b, p. 1). The Improved Supports for Student Success section of the MOU details the ways in which "the Parties agree to specifically identify ways to improve student assistance and supports through collaborative and other initiatives aimed to address healthy minds, improve disability services, and a collective commitment to sexual violence prevention" (Province of Nova Scotia, 2015b, p. 10).

The inclusion of sexual violence prevention in the MOU was in response to a heightened awareness of sexual violence on Nova Scotia university campuses, and reflects a commitment by the Parties to address this critical issue to help ensure campuses are safe places for students. The MOU complements the Province's strategy, *Breaking the Silence,* to help us move toward our shared vision of a Nova Scotia free from sexual violence*.*

Sexual violence specific actions in the MOU include a commitment by the universities to develop stand-alone sexual violence policies and ensure access to, and the promotion of, sexual violence prevention resources and supports. The Parties also agreed to form a working committee to support sexual violence prevention on campuses; consequently, the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC) was formed in September, 2016.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC) was formed as a result of the 2015-19 MOU commitment to address sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia campuses. The SVPC was composed of Government representatives, student representatives, first responders on campuses, faculty, administration, and representatives from community-based organizations with expertise in sexual violence prevention [see Appendix B for a list of committee members]. This committee was tasked with working collaboratively to examine the issue of sexual violence on Nova Scotia university campuses and developing a report, with recommendations, for the Minister of LAE and the Partnership Committee to advance sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia campuses [see Appendix C for the SVPC *Terms of Reference*].

Sexual violence prevention is a complex issue that requires a commitment to primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies [see Appendix D for the definitions of each prevention strategy]. The SVPC acknowledges the importance of all levels of prevention strategies while maintaining a focus on primary prevention. Primary prevention is defined as "approaches that take place *before* sexual violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimization" (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004).

During the course of its work, the SVPC strived to uphold the following principles: respect, diversity, equity, integrity, and innovation. Each recommendation, therefore, reflects the principles of social justice and equity in addressing sexual violence prevention on university campuses.

The SVPC invited guest speakers to present on best or promising practices in sexual violence prevention on university campuses. These presentations included:

- Dr. Esther Enns, Acting VP Academic and Research, Saint Mary's University (SMU), and team lead of the Action Team following the President's Council 2013 report, *Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect and Consent at Saint Mary's University and Beyond,* presented

on the **work of the Saint Mary's University Action Team to prevent sexual violence on campus.**

- Professor A. Wayne Mackay, Chair, SMU President's Council (2013) and Professor of Law, Dalhousie University, presented on **sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses.**
- Dr. Charlene Y. Senn, PhD., Professor, Department of Psychology / Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Windsor, presented on the **Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAA) sexual assault resistance education program for women.**
- James Sanford, Executive Director, Student Services, Acadia University, presented on **alcohol harm reduction on campuses.**
- Charlotte Kiddell, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students – Nova Scotia, Kathleen Reid, President of the Dalhousie Student Union, and Collette Robert, Chair of Students Nova Scotia, presented on the **context of sexual and gendered violence on campus and recommendations for prevention.**
- Steve Machat, Director, Personal Development and Wellness, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), and Joanne Syms, Anti-bullying & NS Youth Advisory Council Coordinator, EECD, presented on **P-9 curricula related to sexual violence prevention and P-12 efforts toward a healthy school environment.**

Following these presentations, the SVPC members participated in discussion groups focused on three questions: Current Context: What do we know?; Best or Promising Practices: What do we know works well?; and What are the gaps? What more can we do?

Information from the resulting discussion was transcribed and coded for themes which, along with research, committee members' feedback and feedback from community stakeholders, were used to develop this report's recommendations for sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses.

POWER, PRIVILEGE AND OPPRESSION

We live in a society in which inequality is assumed and accepted as a natural product of human behaviour. We are taught early in life that competition is natural and healthy and that "only the strong survive". It is easy for individuals who benefit from these beliefs to adhere to and perpetuate them because doing so increases feelings of self-worth and maintains their position of privilege. Individuals who benefit from these belief systems have certain privileges and therefore, power. As Pease (2010) explains, these privileges are unearned because their associated benefits are a result of social constructions of power rather than individual successes. Examples of unearned privilege include being of Western European ancestry, identifying as heterosexual, belonging to the middle or upper income earning class, or being able-bodied. Privilege manifests itself in a variety of ways, such as taking for granted that you will be in the company of your own race most of the time, and that you can venture out in public without the concern of being sexually harassed or assaulted (McIntosh, 1992, as cited in Pease, 2010).

In order for individuals and groups to have certain privileges in society, the opposite must also be true. This manifests itself as experiences of oppression. Those who do not fit our society's standards of being, for example, White, male, cis-gender, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle or upper income earning class will experience barriers to success in their life. These barriers, although a product of social construction, are often viewed as individual failures because of the belief in society that competition is natural, and success is possible if you are talented, skilled or try hard enough to succeed.

An individualistic assumption about social inequalities ignores the social construction of such inequalities. This decreases the opportunity for marginalized groups to resist social hierarchies and allows privileged groups to maintain their positions of power. If groups who experience oppression are aware of the social influences on their experiences, there is a risk of these groups taking action against oppressive social systems. A lack of awareness about the social construction of hierarchies also restricts opportunities for marginalized individuals and groups to voice their experiences of oppression. This silence is another method of maintaining inequalities.

Although certain individuals experience more privilege than others, all individuals are impacted by social hierarchies of power. Social inequality creates a culture of fear in which individuals must compete for survival rather than work together for the greater good. All individuals, no matter how much privilege one has, are likely to experience oppression at some point in their lifetime. For example, an individual can lose able-bodied privilege after being in a car accident. Also, every individual has at least one person who is close to them who experiences a form of oppression (e.g. a mother who experiences gender oppression, a friend who is gay and experiences oppression due to their sexual orientation). Therefore, there is benefit for everyone to challenge hierarchies of power in our society and work towards a system of diversity and equity [see Pease, 2010, for a more detailed explanation of privilege and oppression in our society]. It is important to note that regardless of any perceived benefits to oneself, it is the responsibility of everyone to challenge oppression to achieve a more just and equitable society.

The following sections are meant to provide examples of the ways in which imbalances of power exist in our society, and specifically in Nova Scotia. The purpose is to provide the context in which sexual violence occurs due to these imbalances of power. An explanation of how power and privilege contribute to sexual violence is outlined in the next section, Understanding Sexual Violence.

Gender Inequality

In society, certain genders are privileged over others. Individuals born with a gender assigned at birth that matches their gender identity (also referred to as cisgender) are privileged. Individuals who identify as cisgender men or women have cisgender privilege. Extreme versions of gender inequality manifest as transphobia, a fear, dislike or prejudice of transgender individuals; misogyny, the hatred of women; and transmisogyny, the hatred of trans-women.

Men and women are assumed to be different and therefore, are assigned different roles. Gender roles are social constructs which dictate specific values, beliefs, assumptions, and behaviours about men and women. Rigid gender roles and stereotypes cause harm and produce inequalities. For example, men are praised for being strong and aggressive while women are expected to be passive and nurturing. As a result, men are honoured for their ability to fight and dominate others who show weakness (Gilligan, 2009). These expectations of gendered behaviour consequently play out as men's violence against women. This is evident in more gender segregated cultures where women have less power, and rates of violence against women are higher (Sanday, 1981, as cited in Murnen, Wright & Kaluzny, 2002, p. 360). As such, gendered violence is one of the most detrimental aspects of living in a gender unequal society.

Women are expected to be nice, to put the needs of others before their own, to fear that their actions might hurt others, fear rejection, fear angering men and being physically injured as a result, and fear embarrassing a man by drawing attention to his violent behaviours. All of these expectations impact a woman's ability to resist men's acts of violence, especially sexual violence (Norris, Nurius, & Dimeff, 1996, as cited in Rozee & Koss, 2001, p. 299).

An important factor in understanding gender inequality is the influence of patriarchy on culture and social norms. We live in a patriarchal society where men have authority and power. This authority plays out in a variety of ways. For example, men are generally seen as the head of family systems and hold the majority of senior positions in workplaces. In patriarchal systems, women are devalued and seen as inferior, thus enabling the exploitation and disrespect of women. This is evident in the sexualization of women in the media (Johnson, 1997, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015).

Hyper-masculinity

Hyper-masculinity is a product of rigid gender norms in society. It promotes the notion that men should be strong and aggressive. These expectations to be strong and aggressive present themselves as extreme behaviours in a proportion of the male population. Hyper-masculinity encourages dominance and power and control over others, leading to situations of violence (Murnen, Wright & Kaluzny, 2010). Hyper-masculinity has detrimental effects on individuals who are targeted for violence, especially women, but also on men who are pressured to embody hyper-masculine standards (Fabiano et al., 2013). The pressure to be hyper-masculine restricts men's ability to express themselves in other ways, including respect and care for others.

Racism

Nova Scotia has a long history of racism. Racial discrimination toward African Nova Scotian populations spans several centuries of our history from events such as the Shelbourne riots in 1784, the destruction of Africville in the 1960s (ANSA, 2016; Tattrie, 2014), and the recent settlement of the former residents of the Home for Colored Children (CBCnews Nova Scotia, June 3, 2014). In 1994, the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) released the *BLAC Report on Education: Redressing Inequity – Empowering Black Learners.* This report outlined 46 recommendations to address the systemic racism within the education system and support the needs of Black learners in Nova Scotia. Racial discrimination is still present today, for example, in situations of consumer racial profiling [see Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, 2013, *A report on consumer racial profiling in Nova* Scotia].

Due to imbalances of racial power, and the tendency for marginalized groups to be less valued in society, men-identified perpetrated acts of gendered violence against White women-identified individuals are more likely to create public outrage than acts of violence toward women of colour (Bannerji, 1999). This is an example of the intersecting identities of race and gender.

Colonialism

Nova Scotia has a long history of interactions between its original inhabitants, the Mi'kmaq people, and European settlers. Starting in the 18th century, Peace and Friendship Treaties were signed with the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy First Nations on the East Coast with the intent to end hostilities and encourage cooperation between the British Crown and First Nations.

While the nature of the treaty relationship in Nova Scotia is different than in other parts of Canada, the Mi'kmaq have shared common experiences of colonialism with other Indigenous people across the country, including the impacts of residential schools on loss of culture, identity and family structures, centralization policies, the "sixties scoop", and the *Indian Act*. The impacts of these policies and actions are reflected in Indigenous people's experiences of intergenerational trauma [see the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015 for more details on the history and impacts of colonialization], and can be linked to increased vulnerability to violence and victimization, as is apparent in the many cases of missing and

murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people [see Native Women's Association of Canada (n.d.) *Fact Sheet: Root Causes of Violence Against Aboriginal Women And The Impact of Colonialization*]. These underlying factors have also been connected to higher incidences of violence, incarceration rates, and the number of Indigenous children in care (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

Heterosexism

Heterosexism is the assumption that all individuals in society are heterosexual which in turn discriminates against those who are not. An extreme outcome of this assumption is the presence of homophobia, the fear, dislike or prejudice of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals. An example of the harmful effects of homophobia in Nova Scotia is the murder of gay rights activist Raymond Taavel in 2012 [see Herald News, February 22, 2016, for more information on this story].

Ableism

Research on the human body provides information on what it means to be healthy. Society widely promotes this information with the intent to improve individual's levels of daily functioning. These messages are individualistic (focused on what the individual needs to do differently) and based on what is considered to be a 'normal' body and mind. Many individuals do not have bodies that fit these standards and are therefore deemed to be deficient and unequal.

Society's idea of 'normal' is a social construction based on hierarchies of power. Often, those in positions of power are able-bodied and make decisions without consideration for the additional supports necessary for others to survive and thrive. For example, when a building is constructed without a wheelchair ramp or an employer does not provide mental health accommodations, this reflects systemic barriers to access and supports. If we think about our society as lacking in its effort to accommodate all individuals, regardless of ability, then the fault is taken away from the individual for not being able-bodied.

Human physical and mental capabilities exist on a continuum. All individuals have qualities which enable them to survive and thrive. As well, everyone requires medical and social supports at times in their life to assist with functioning. Based on this continuum, individuals should be acknowledged for their strengths rather than their disabilities. Focus should be placed on increasing social supports to assist with difficulties when they arise [see Rothman, 2010 for an analysis of disability frameworks, and the NS LEO (2015) report for the context of disability in Nova Scotia and recommendations for making communities more inclusive].

On April 28, 2017, Nova Scotia's Bill 59 *An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia* was passed [see Province of Nova Scotia, 2017, Bill 59 *An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova*, for more details]. The Act will ensure that significant steps are taken toward making Nova Scotia a more accessible place to live and work.

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Context

Sexual violence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting" (as cited in Province of Nova Scotia, 2015a, p. 3). It involves the use of power and control through physical force and/or verbal manipulation, coercion and pressure. It is most often committed by an individual known to the victim/survivor (e.g. friend, family member, acquaintance, intimate partner, professor, or

coach) and takes place within a private place. However, sexual violence occurs in a variety of situations, such as residence halls, parties, the work place, and public areas. Sexual violence is a complex issue influenced by a multitude of factors including cultural norms, media, the perpetrator's psychological and sociological influences, and the immediate interpersonal context (Weitz, 2002, as cited in Burnett et al., 2009, p. 468).

The term sexual violence encompasses values and behaviours which exist on a continuum, ranging from talking about women as sexual objects to an act of sexual assault (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). All values and behaviours on the continuum of sexual violence are harmful, not only for the victim/survivor and the victim's/survivor's circle of support, but also for society as a whole. As noted previously, social inequalities affect every individual at some time in their life to a varying degree (Pease, 2010).

Sexual violence is a product of social inequality and an example of the negative effects that systemic oppression can have on an individual, their community and society. For example, calling a woman a 'slut' may be a seemingly low risk action, but this sends a message that it is acceptable to verbally degrade and dehumanize women. This action, coupled with many more seemingly low risk actions, combine to create an environment where women are sexually objectified and viewed as lesser. When an individual, group, or culture is considered lesser, it is more socially acceptable to treat them as such. Using derogatory terms to describe women, and objectifying them, creates a culture in which violence toward women is normalized and accepted.

Sexual violence is such a deeply entrenched social norm that it can be difficult for victims/survivors to process what happened to them without internalizing victim-blaming attitudes. Victim-blaming attitudes can make it difficult for victims/survivors to resist because they blame themselves, and to disclose, because they think that others will blame them for the assault, or that they will not be believed or supported. Resistance is even more difficult for historically marginalized individuals such as women, women of colour, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, trans-women, and non-binary individuals who experience multiple forms of oppression.

Verbal harassment is just one example of how each value and behaviour on the continuum of sexual violence impacts the larger society. Important aspects of sexual violence that are a result of social inequalities will be described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Gender inequality cannot fully explain the issue of sexual violence because, although most incidents are men-identified perpetrated toward women-identified victims/survivors, sexual violence is also perpetrated against men-identified individuals, non-binary individuals within LGBTQIA2S+ communities, and occurs as female perpetrated (Glass et al., 2004, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015; Sinha, 2013). Also, rates of sexual violence are significantly higher amongst women of colour, trans-women, non-binary individuals, and individuals with disabilities (Bauer, Pyne, Francino & Hammond, 2013; Perreault, 2009). It must be recognized that systems of power and oppression such as racism, heterosexism, and ableism are important factors in understanding the issue of sexual violence.

In the context of this report on sexual violence, it is important to highlight the influence of colonialism on the high rates of sexual violence perpetrated against Indigenous women (Perreault, 2011). The University of Victoria's Anti-Violence Project writes about the relationship between colonialism in their *Consent Workshop Facilitation Guide*. The effects of colonialism not only impact the occurrence of sexual violence in Indigenous populations, but also contributes to its existence in all populations across Canada. They explain:

"We cannot understand how gender-based violence functions in Canada without also understanding how it is related to colonialism. The colonial system which makes up and informs our social culture is rooted in a lack of consent and oppressive exploitive relationships to lands and its peoples. This creates a deep seated sense of entitlement to take, use, dominate and intimidate anything we covet. Similarly, patriarchy's relationship to others is also one of domination and control, and those who hold power feel entitlement to use and exploit other's bodies" (Anti-Violence Project, n.d., p. 21).

Individuals and groups who are marginalized in society will continue to suffer at disproportionate rates from social issues such as sexual violence until hierarchies of power are addressed and replaced with more equitable systems.

Impacts of Social Inequalities

Gender Inequality

There are many negative impacts of hierarchies of power in our society, one of which is sexual violence. As previously discussed, a major factor in the issue of man-identified perpetrated sexual violence toward woman-identified victims/survivors is gender inequality. Gender inequality influences social norms, which affect individual's values, beliefs, assumptions, and behaviours. This has a direct impact on women's and men's expectations for sexual behaviour.

A dominant assumption in our society is that men are expected to initiate sex and are praised for engaging in sexual acts. Women are expected to be sexually chaste and are deemed 'sluts' for engaging in the same sexual acts which men are praised for. Rigid expectations of gender roles have a powerful effect on the issue of sexual violence because, in the case of heterosexual sexual assault, the blame is focused on the woman for not protecting her chastity. At the same time, the man is excused for his aggressive sexual behaviour because this behaviour is accepted as a social norm (Armstrong, Hamilton & Sweeney, 2006). We see this gender script play out in the way women 'slut shame' each other and are slut shamed by others, instead of targeting society for the construction of this oppressive double standard. Murnen, Wright and Kaluzny (2002) explain how women's policing of each other as 'sluts' is a product of women internalizing their own oppression. This internalization contributes to the establishment and persistence of gender inequality.

Rape culture

"Feminist analysis views sexualized violence as the predictable outcome of societal beliefs about power, the use of force, and gender roles" (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, 2012). Dominant attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions about men's and women's sexual behaviours have created what is referred to as a 'rape culture' in which rape is an accepted consequence of society's oppressive gender norms. Rape culture creates an environment where "male violence is legitimated and normalized in society, through victim blaming, denial of sexual violence, stigmatization, and the sexual objectification of women" (Attenborough, 2014, as cited in Walsh, 2015, p. 135). It is "a complex social phenomenon that is not limited to discrete criminal acts perpetrated by a few violent individuals but is the product of gendered, raced and classed social relations that are central to patriarchal and heterosexist culture" (Ferreday, 2015, p. 22).

Rape culture influences the issue of sexual violence in a variety of ways, such as the high prevalence of sexual violence, creating ambiguity around the term 'rape', silencing victims/survivors, and consequently decreasing the likelihood of reporting an assault (Burnett et al., 2009). It is the opposite of a 'consent culture' "in which giving and receiving consent is normalized and practiced universally. Consent culture is one in which the prevailing narratives

of sexual activity, interpersonal relationships, and bodily autonomy are centred around mutual consent" (Canadian Federation of Students – Nova Scotia, 2016, p. 3).

<u>Rape Myths</u>

Rape myths and statements about sexual violence which influence society's understanding of the issue are a major factor in the existence of rape culture. They contribute to a culture in which rape is accepted by outlining how men and women should and do act (Burnett et al., 2009). Joseph, Gray and Mayer (2013) state "rape myths serve to trivialize most sexual assaults, preventing society from acknowledging the reality of the problem" (p. 494).

Another negative impact of rape myths is their influence on police investigations, arrests, and convictions of sexual assault in Canada (Sheehy, 2012, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015, p. 7). If police officers, lawyers, and/or judges believe myths about rape, they are, for example, less likely to believe the victim/survivor and less likely to display sensitivity during the legal process.

Rape myths are called 'myths' for a reason: they are not based in facts, but rather socially constructed and reflect imbalances of power. By silencing victim's/survivor's experiences, these myths maintain men as privileged within social hierarchies of power. "Women are muted in a multitude of ways, including the methods in which women tell stories, through male-controlled media, in ways women's bodies are portrayed and analyzed, and through censorship of women's stories" (Houston & Kamarae, 1991, as cited in Burnett et al., 2009, p. 469). Trans-women and gender fluid individual's experiences are also silenced in these ways.

Unfortunately, many individuals adhere to rape myths as statements of truth about sex and sexual violence. Saint Mary's University, in their *Campus Safety Survey* (2013), found that one-quarter of students surveyed believed that sexual assault was a trivial event and that victims enjoy the act of sexual assault. They also found that students held misguided beliefs about what constitutes sexual violence, the behaviours of sexual assault victims, and the intentions of perpetrators. These beliefs reflect that society believes rape myths to be true.

Reporting

Rape myths also create ambiguity in the definition of rape. The rape myth that most sexual assaults are perpetrated by a stranger generates an image of sexual violence that contradicts experiences of date rape, acquaintance rape, and intimate partner sexual assault. According to a Statistics Canada 2010 report, in over half of sexual assault incidents the perpetrator was a friend, acquaintance, or neighbour of the victim (as cited in *Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect and Consent at Saint Mary's University and Beyond,* Saint Mary's University, 2013). Victims/survivors are less likely to report if their experience does not fit within the standards of a stereotypical stranger assault (Joseph, Gray & Mayer, 2013).

Based on a review of Canadian court documents, the hesitation to report is valid. "Courts are less likely to convict and, when they do, they give lighter sentences if the victim and the perpetrator are known to each other (including in the case of sexual assaults within intimate relationships), if there were no physical injuries and if the offender is not considered otherwise dangerous." (Renner, 2000, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015, p. 9).

It is important to bring awareness to the influence of rape myths on our understanding of sexual violence because of their negative effects. Rape myths, such as "if the victim doesn't physically fight back or resist it can't be considered sexual assault", put the blame on the victim/survivor for not resisting the act of sexual violence. This ignores the real problem, which is that the perpetrator has committed an act of violence, and that rape culture is systemic.

Victim blaming reduces the likelihood of a victim/survivor reporting an act of sexual violence because of the high risk of re-victimization. Re-victimization occurs, for example, when victims/survivors are interrogated only to have their report dismissed by authorities, and when there is a lack of punishment for the perpetrator. This makes it difficult for victims/survivors to be in the company of the perpetrator and the perpetrator's supporters.

It is difficult for victims/survivors to justify a lengthy legal process, which can be traumatic and can impact their personal and academic/work life, especially when the perpetrator is unlikely to be convicted. "Statistics Canada determined that 16 percent of all sexual offenses reported to police were deemed to be 'unfounded', while other types of violent offenses were 'unfounded' at a rate of 7 percent" (Dubois, 2012, p. 196) [see Doolittle, 2017 for the Globe and Mail Report, *Unfounded: Why Police Dismiss 1 in 5 Sexual Assault Claims as Baseless*]. In 2011, police reported data showed a national sexual assault rate of 63 per 100,000; however, a report from 2009 also showed that 88% of sexual assaults were not reported to police (Benoit et al., 2015; Perreault & Brennan, 2010).

Individuals who experience marginalization in society by race, class and/or sexual orientation may be less likely to report an incident of sexual violence due to fear of racial, class and/or homophobic stigmatization from law enforcement and other institutions (Kanuha,1990, as cited in Cramer & Plummer, 2009). A lack of access to, awareness of, or availability of culturally appropriate services is also a barrier to reporting. As a result, marginalized populations experience additional systemic barriers to disclosing and reporting an incident of sexual violence.

It can also be unsafe to report/disclose sexual violence that does not reflect a stereotypical assault. For example, a disclosure that the victim/survivor consented to some, but not all, of the sexual experience means that the victim/survivor, often women-identifying individuals, must admit to having sexual desires (Hlavka, 2014). This contradicts the gender norm that women should be sexually chaste, which puts victims/survivors at risk of being questioned about resisting the violence, and consequently to be blamed for the incident.

Victims/survivors may also blame themselves for the incident because of the lack of clarity in what constitutes sexual violence. They may try to repress these feelings of guilt by convincing themselves that violence did not take place (Burnett et al., 2009), which creates a culture where sexual violence is not talked about, and therefore is easily ignored. As Joseph, Gray and Mayer (2013) state, "failure to report such an event impedes legal efforts to bring the offender to justice, encouraging perpetrators to view their violent behaviour as perhaps morally wrong, but essentially socially acceptable and free of censure" (p. 497).

A fear of re-victimization means that victims/survivors are unlikely to disclose to anyone, including friends, family, or other supports (Burnett et al., 2009). Hlavka (2014) found that young women were reluctant to report their experiences of "non-classic rape" because they questioned whether anyone would care about the incident and believed it was not a serious enough situation to warrant others' involvement.

Consent

Consent plays a major role in understanding sexual violence. There is much confusion and debate about what constitutes consensual sexual behaviour. We see this complexity in the lack of sexual assault cases that result in a conviction (Dubois, 2012) [see Ryan, March 1, 2017, for details of a high profile sexual assault case in Nova Scotia where the accused was acquitted based on lack of clarity around consent].

Consent is based on four factors: clear, coherent, willing, and ongoing (New Zealand Family Planning, 2014). This means:

- an individual who is intoxicated is not able to give consent;
- if an individual previously consents to a sexual act, this does not imply future consent;
- the absence of the word 'no' does not imply 'yes'; and
- an individual cannot be perceived to have consented if pressured to comply based on an imbalance of power (e.g. professional power).

Individuals who experience marginalization in society may also feel pressure to comply in situations of unequal social power (e.g. if the perpetrator is a White, heterosexual man-identified). This reflects the role of power and control in sexual violence. A victim/survivor is not able to give consent when a perpetrator exerts their power and control to commit acts of sexual violence. The notion of consent in sexual relationships, therefore, does not encompass all experiences of sexual violence (e.g. a victim/survivor of childhood sexual abuse may never have the opportunity to consider consent because they were never given a choice).

In a survey of college students' understanding of sexual violence, consent was considered an important aspect of sexual experiences; however, neither male nor female students could clearly define what it meant to give or receive consent (Burnett et al., 2009). Similarly, Saint Mary's University's (2013) report *Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect and Consent at Saint Mary's University and Beyond,* found that students did not understand it is illegal to have sex with someone who is intoxicated because they cannot give consent. Students also expressed much confusion about what it means to give and receive consent. Findings such as these have led to the increased promotion of consent education campaigns and programs on university and college campuses. The idea is that increasing awareness of the definition of consent will increase potential victim's/survivor's ability to give consent and increase potential perpetrator's understanding of the importance of receiving consent.

However, as Kitzinger and Frith (1999) argue, sexual violence prevention is more complicated than 'just saying "no"'. Expecting victims/survivors to show assertiveness by saying "no" will not eliminate the issue of sexual violence because this strategy ignores culturally normative patterns of communication. It is normal to refuse someone's offer by politely and indirectly saying "no", which reduces the risk of offending or hurting the other's feelings. The same rules of conversation apply in situations of sexual violence. It is argued that victims/survivors are already using culturally normative ways of communicating "no" and therefore, situations of sexual violence are much more complicated than a lack of consent; they are, as discussed, deeply rooted in social inequalities.

As stated previously, experiences of sexual violence are viewed as ambiguous if they do not match the notion of 'stranger rape'. In the context of acquaintance or intimate partner sexual relationships, each individual, when engaging in a sexual act, may feel conflicted about their own sexual desires versus adhering to the social expectations of male and female sexual behaviours. Therefore, an act of sexual violence may occur because victims/survivors are unclear as to whether they wish to consent to the sexual experience, and are not given the opportunity to communicate and clarify. Equally as relevant, a perpetrator is unwilling to acknowledge the victim's/survivor's refusal. Clearly there remains a large gap in our understanding of the complexity of sexual violence and further research is needed.

Alcohol

Alcohol plays an important role in understanding the issue of sexual violence and the complexity of consent, especially because a large number of sexual assaults involve the use of alcohol (Heatly, 2013, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015). It is important to note that alcohol does not cause sexual violence but rather can be considered a contributing factor. This section highlights research which attempts to explain the link between sexual violence and alcohol consumption.

Gervais, DiLillo and McChargue (2014) surveyed a group of university men to understand this relationship. They found that more frequent drinking was associated with more objectification of women's bodies. Frequent drinking was also associated with more unwanted sexual advances and sexual violence. They concluded that drinking alcohol may make a man more likely to objectify a woman while reducing his focus on her thoughts, feelings, and desires. Reducing a woman to her body parts makes it more likely for men, who are already willing to commit sexual assault, to actually commit such violence.

Alcohol can also influence victims/survivors of sexual violence regarding their inability to provide consent in situations leading up to and involving sexual assault. Perpetrators of sexual violence may purposefully intoxicate an individual so that he/she/they is unable to fight off sexual advances. Additionally, perpetrators may be aware of society's biases with respect to intoxicated victims/survivors and believe they are likely to get away with sexual assault, which may further embolden prospective perpetrators to focus on intoxicating individuals. Perpetrators may also target individuals who are already intoxicated for this same reason. Armstrong, Sweeney and Hamilton (2006) refer to these scenarios as 'party rape' in which sexual violence "is carried out through the combination of low level forms of coercion-a lot of liquor and persuasion, manipulation of situations so that women cannot leave, and sometimes force (e.g., by blocking a door, or using body weight to make it difficult for a woman to get up)" (p. 492). All genders feel pressure to drink alcohol as a result of our society's 'alcohol culture'. This will be explained in more detail in a later section of this report.

The use of alcohol allows perpetrators to excuse their behaviour as a product of intoxication and for society to blame victims/survivors for putting themselves at risk of sexual violence by being intoxicated. As a result, the presence of alcohol makes victims less likely to report because of the fear that the assault will be viewed as their fault (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003, as cited in Burnett et al, 2009 p. 467) [see Ryan, March 30, 2017 for the story of a Nova Scotia sexual assault case in which the victim/survivor's credibility was questioned because she was intoxicated at the time of the incident].

It is important to acknowledge that alcohol is not the only drug used by perpetrators of sexual violence to intoxicate their victims/survivors. Drugs such as rohypnol, also known as 'date rape drugs' are also used by perpetrators. Alcohol is a more commonly used substance in sexual violence compared to 'date rape drugs' (Pope & Shouldice, 2001); therefore, this report highlights the links between alcohol consumption and sexual violence.

Sexual Cyber-bullying

Sexual violence does not have to occur in person to have an impact on victims/survivors. Due to our society's increasing use of and dependence on social media, sexual violence has made its way into the cyber world, known as sexualized cyber-bullying. The sharing of a sexually explicit image without the individual's consent is an example of this type of sexual violence. Rehtaeh Parsons' story is an example of the effects of linking sexual violence with cyber-bullying [see CBCnews, Nova Scotia, April 9, 2013, for more information].

Perpetrators

An analysis of perpetrators of sexual violence is important in understanding the issue and working toward its prevention. In recognition of the social context in which sexual violence exists, this analysis acknowledges the role of the perpetrator in committing sexual violence rather than focusing on the victim/survivor, which leads to victim blaming. Understanding the role of perpetrators is especially important as research shows that approximately one third of college men have perpetrated sexual assault and 9% of these men are reoffenders. College men who committed more than one act of sexual assault were more likely to report hostility towards women (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004).

Sexual violence is a complex issue, and therefore, there are many factors which contribute to the behaviours of perpetrators. As noted previously, hyper-masculinity refers to the rigid expectations of men to be physically aggressive (Armstrong, Hamilton & Sweeney, 2006). Alcohol consumption can increase men's objectification of women's bodies, leading to increased sexually violent behaviours in men who are already likely to commit sexual assault (Gervais, DiLillo & McChargue, 2014). Male perceptions of others' willingness to engage in sexual violence can also increase one's feelings of pressure to engage in these acts (Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach & Stark, 2003). Clearly, a simple explanation of sexual violence perpetration does not exist. Therefore, it is important to enhance our understanding of the role of perpetrators.

Effects on Victims/Survivors

Experiencing sexual violence can have devastating short and long-term consequences for the victim/survivor, the victim's/survivor's circle of support, and individuals who receive the disclosure. The effects of sexual violence may be intensified for victims/survivors and others who are marginalized in society. Therefore, it is important to take an intersectional approach in understanding the impacts of sexual violence, which acknowledges past trauma and current experiences of oppression on one's ability to cope and feel supported in society (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003; Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2006; Turner & Schieman, 2008, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015, p. 11).

The negative impacts of sexual violence include physical symptoms of assault related injuries, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancy, pelvic pain, vaginal bleeding or infection, urinary tract infections, gynecological problems, gastrointestinal disorders, a range of chronic pain disorders, and short-term and long-term sexual health problems (The Source, 2013; WHO, 2002, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015, p. 26).

Emotional and psychological impacts include depression, anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, barriers to developing relationships, academic interruptions, employment barriers/interruptions, substance abuse, and suicide (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d., as cited in Saint Mary's University, 2013, p. 56-57). These effects represent the body's way of coping with a traumatic event and have a greater impact when the victim/survivor accepts rape myths as fact and internalizes the blame for the sexual assault (Ahrens, Stansell, & Jennings, 2010; Starzynski, Ullman, Filipas, & Townsend, 2005, as cited in Joseph, Gray & Mayer, 2013). Therefore, it is very important for individuals to show support for a victim/survivor by believing his/her/their story, and for institutions to show support by developing policies and practices that are centred on believing. A decision to believe the victim/survivor is not intended to contradict the Canadian justice system's stance on "innocent until proven guilty". It is important for legal professionals to maintain an unbiased stance.

There are also negative consequences for social systems which respond to sexual violence. For instance, health care providers are tasked with responding to the physiological and psychological impacts of sexual violence in an already under-resourced system. The judicial system must allocate resources for the victim/survivor to plead their case in a system that is biased to favour the perpetrator and blame the victim (Renner, 2000, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015). These court cases are often long and result in disruptions and expenses for all parties involved. In addition, all individuals exposed to the story of sexual violence are at risk of experiencing vicarious trauma, which impacts job performance and requires added health care supports (Knight, 2014).

SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Given its negative physiological and psychological effects and potential to cause academic and financial disruptions, sexual violence is a serious social issue (Miller, Taylor & Sheppard, 2010). It is especially serious in the university context because students are in close proximity to each other and are often engaged in multiple interactions, especially on smaller university campuses. This creates challenges for victims/survivors who may share a residence, attend the same classes, or be part of the same circle of peers as their perpetrator.

Prevalence

Although all genders experience violence in Canada (Sinha, 2013), sexual violence is disproportionately experienced by individuals who identify as women. This is evident in the 21,900 Canadian sexual assault police reports in 2012, in which over 90% of victims were female (Perreault, 2013). The Canadian General Social Survey in 2009 found that 81% of sexual assaults against women involved unwanted touching, grabbing, kissing or fondling. The remaining 19% were sexual attacks, in which the perpetrator used physical force or other forms of violence (Sinha, 2013, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015, p. 14). In nearly all (99%) reports of sexual violence against women, the perpetrator was male (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Sinha, 2013, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015). It should also be noted that heterosexual cis-gender women are more likely to report sexual violence (Perreault & Brennan, 2010).

Rates of sexual violence vary according to the age of both the victim/survivor and the perpetrator. Results from a Canadian study in 2004 and 2007 found that "rates of sexual offending were highest among persons aged 12 to 17 (90 per 100,000 population), followed by 18 to 34 year olds (55 per 100,000 population) and 35 to 44 year olds (42 per 100,000 population)" (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015, p. 15-16). Consequently, women aged 15-24 experience the highest rates of sexual violence (Benoit et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important to examine sexual violence among youth in order to understand the context in which it exists.

Universities are a relevant environment to explore this issue, especially given the high rates of sexual violence reported on campuses. Sexual assault is estimated to happen to 20-25% of university students, with most incidents occurring within the student's first two years of school (Senn et al., 2015). These statistics are consistent across the USA (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002); however, some reports reveal as many as 50% of college women have been a victim of some form of sexual assault (Sutton & Simons, 2014).

The University of New Brunswick Sexual Assault Climate Survey (2015-2016) revealed that 20% of students on their Fredericton campus experienced sexual assault in the presence of alcohol. Sexual assault was defined as unwanted sexual touching, oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex, or vaginal or anal penetration. A smaller proportion of students (1%) reported sexual assault because of physical threats and 6.5% reported sexual assault because of physical force.

Verbal pressure to engage in a sexual act was also examined among the university student population, with 10% reporting at least one form of this sexual violence. Students also reported experiencing sexual coercion from verbal aggression (11%).

The perpetrator was male in 78% of reported incidents, female in 16% of reported incidents, and trans-male in 0.6% of the sexual violence incidents reported in the survey. In 89% of these reports, the perpetrator was known to the student (University of New Brunswick, 2016). The survey did not ask about students' experiences of perpetrating sexual violence.

The same survey revealed that 21% of students had received a disclosure of sexual violence from a friend since the start of the academic year. Fifteen percent of students reported witnessing an incident of sexual assault, and 68% reported that they took some form of action to intervene. Male students were less likely to intervene than female and transgender students in reported incidents of sexual violence, although males were more likely to believe that peers would intervene in such situations (University of New Brunswick, 2016).

A gender analysis of the University of New Brunswick Sexual Assault Survey reveals that a higher proportion of female students (23.5%) than male (12%) experienced sexual assault in the presence of alcohol during their time as a university student. Female students were also more likely to experience sexual assault because of physical force compared to male students (9% and 2% respectively). More female (22%) than male (11%) students reported sexual assault as a result of verbal pressure, and more females than males reported sexual assault as a result of verbal aggression (15% and 4% respectively) (University of New Brunswick, 2016).

A small proportion of student participants identified as transgender (1%), and therefore, it is difficult to analyze the survey results based on the experiences of transgender individuals. However, the survey found that transgender individuals reported feeling less confident in the university's ability to respond effectively to a disclosure of sexual violence compared to their cis-gender counterparts (University of New Brunswick, 2016). This finding might reflect transgender individuals' experiences of discrimination, and institutional and community gaps in serving transgender students.

Individuals who identified as non-heterosexual reported having less positive attitudes toward feeling safe on campus than heterosexual students. They were also more likely to experience sexual assault with physical violence (12%) compared to heterosexual students (5%) and sexual coercion with verbal pressure (23% and 17% respectively) (University of New Brunswick, 2016). The survey did not provide an analysis of race, class, or ability.

Impacts of Social Inequalities

As noted previously, individuals who identify as women experience higher rates of sexual violence. An intersectional analysis of sexual violence reveals that as a result of social hierarchies of power, certain populations of women are affected at disproportionate rates. These populations include women of colour, Indigenous women, LGBTQIA2S+ women, trans-women, non-binary individuals, women who are newcomers to Canada, and women with disabilities.

Women of Colour

A study by Ruiz Gonzales (2009) found that gendered violence against women of colour, including sexual harassment, was normalized amongst high school populations in the American Southwest. She explains this phenomenon as a product of racism in society, with which there are many parallels in Canada.

Indigenous Women

A Canadian survey in 2009 found that Aboriginal women's reports of violent victimization were three times higher than for non-Aboriginal women. Sexual assault accounted for a third of these reports compared to 10% of violent victimization reports from non-Aboriginal women (Brennan, 2011). It is important to situate these findings in the context of colonialism, in which Indigenous people experience higher impacts of sexual violence as a result of inter-generational trauma from residential schools, patriarchal laws denying rights for women, and systemic racism (Benoit et al., 2003; Brownridge, 2008; Spiwak & Brownridge, 2005; Trainor & Mihorean, 2001, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015, p. 10).

Disability

Women with physical disabilities are twice as likely to experience violent victimization, including sexual assault (Perreault, 2009). Another study shows that women with disabilities are three to four times more likely to experience sexual violence (DisAbled Women's Network of Canada, 2014; Odette, 2012, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015). Women with disabilities also experience added barriers. For example, they might experience difficulty leaving their abuser, who they are often dependent on for support, for fear of losing this support. They might also be reluctant to report the incident to authorities due to fear of discrimination (DAWN, 2014, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015) and the assumption that individuals with disabilities are desexualized (Curry et al., 2009; Odette, 2012; Plummer & Findley, 2012, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015).

LGBTQIA2S+

An American adolescent survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) youth as well as non-LGBT youth found that peer victimization, unwanted sexual experiences and sexual harassment were more commonly reported in the survey by LGBT youth than non-LGBT youth (Ybarra, Mitchell, Palmer & Reisner, 2015). Data from the 2004 Canadian General Social Survey revealed that violent victimization, including sexual assault, is higher among lesbian and bisexual women compared to women who identify as heterosexual (Beauchamp, 2004, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015). A review of academic literature estimates that 11% of women who identify as lesbian or bisexual experience sexual violence in their lifetime. The authors suggest that rates of sexual violence may be linked to homophobia and heterosexism (Glass et al., 2004, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015).

Women who identify as non-heterosexual, but not as lesbian and bisexual, such as queer, asexual, pansexual, and individuals who identify as gender fluid are also at higher risk for sexual violence. However, data on these experiences of sexual violence are limited.

Trans-women are also at a higher risk for sexual violence. An American study on transgender discrimination found that 63% of transgender individuals surveyed reported an experience of discrimination, including sexual assault. Specifically, 12% of transgender youth reported being sexually assaulted, 13% of African-American transgender individuals were sexually assaulted in the workplace, and 22% of transgender youth experiencing homelessness were assaulted while staying in shelters (Grant et al., 2011). These findings are due to heterosexism, racism, transphobia and trans-misogyny in our society.

Newcomers to Canada

Women who are newcomers to Canada, including women-identified international students, experience unique challenges related to sexual violence. They may be more likely to experience violence, and less likely to report such violence, due to language barriers, religious beliefs, isolation from family and other supports, unpleasant experiences with authorities in their country of origin, and fear that a disclosure of violence may interfere with their legal status in Canada

(Brownridge & Halli, 2002; Hass, Dutton, & Orloff, 2000; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Raj & Silverman, 2003, as cited in Benoit et al., 2015, p. 19).

Immigrant and refugee women are often targets of discrimination in society, and therefore are particularly vulnerable to being targeted for sexual violence. This reflects the intersection of gender, race, religion, and culture, and demonstrates that men use power and control to dominate individuals in society who are viewed as lesser. For example, many Muslim women experience harassment when walking down the street (Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations, "MANSO Brief to House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women – Violence against Young Women and Girls in Canada," *Submitted Brief*, September 2016, as cited in Standing Committee on the Status of Women, March, 2017).

Experiences of Marginalized Individuals on University Campuses

A recent CBCnews article brought attention to Canadian universities' lack of data on racialized groups. This is a problem because race-based data enables universities to uncover inequalities and address the needs of racialized students (MacDonald & Ward, March 21, 2017). The Parties of the 2015-19 MOU agreed to "convene a Working Group to explore opportunities to create a common data collection process whereby each university will track students who self-identify as being a member of at least one of the following groups: Aboriginal, African Nova Scotian/Black, students with disabilities, low-income, students who reside in rural areas, racially visible, mature, Acadian/Francophone, and students in care" (Province of Nova Scotia, 2015b, p. 8). The development of a common data collection process would ensure that policy and program recommendations are appropriately targeted to under-represented groups based on their participation levels at Nova Scotia universities.

Due to minimal data on the sexual violence experiences of marginalized populations in a university setting, it is not possible to include such data in this report. However, one can assume that, because rates of sexual violence are higher among marginalized populations, rates of sexual violence will occur at a higher rate for these populations on university campuses.

It is possible that low rates of reporting sexual violence on campus from marginalized individuals are due to a fear of stigmatization and re-victimization, especially since marginalized individuals already experience stigmatization and oppression in society. Studies show that police are less likely to believe reports of sexual violence from individuals who belong to marginalized groups such as Aboriginal women, homeless women, women with a history of mental illness, and women who work in the sex industry (Denicke, 2002; DuBois, 2012; Renner, 2002, as cited in Benoit et al., p. 9). More research is needed on the sexual violence experiences of diverse groups on university campuses.

The following sections highlight important factors influencing the experiences of sexual violence on university campuses.

Alcohol

A discussion of sexual violence on campuses would not be complete without reference to society's 'alcohol culture'. This is important because a large majority of sexual assault cases involve the use of alcohol. For example, as many as 50-78% of reported sexual assaults on campus involve the use of alcohol by either the victim/survivor, the perpetrator, or both (Banyard et al., 2005; Benson, Grohm & Gross, 2007, as cited in Burnett et al., 2009). Heavier drinking by the perpetrator has been found to increase the physical severity of the sexual assault (Parkhill, Abbey, & Jacques-Tiura, 2009, as cited in Gervais, DiLillo & McChargue, 2014, p. 157).

It is important to reiterate that alcohol does not cause sexual violence but that certain behaviours and attitudes associated with drinking may increase the likelihood of committing sexual violence for individuals who are already prone to committing such an act.

An alcohol culture is defined as an environment where excessive drinking is assumed and accepted in our society. Students associate the university experience with binge drinking and partying in which one participates in a ritual of "getting ready, pre-drinking, getting to the party, getting drunk, flirtation or sexual interaction, getting home, and sharing stories". Conforming to these rituals is one way of fitting in with university peers (Armstrong, Sweeney & Hamilton, 2006; Russell & Arthur, 2016). This can be dangerous for university students as Armstrong, Sweeney and Hamilton (2006) explain: "cultural expectations that partygoers drink heavily and trust party-mates become problematic when combined with expectations that women should be nice and defer to men. Fulfilling the role of the partier produces vulnerability on the part of women, which some men exploit to extract non-consensual sex. The party scene also produces fun, generating student investment in it. Rather than criticizing the party scene or men's behavior, students blame victims" (p. 484). The pressure to engage in partying is especially high for students living in residence (Armstrong, Sweeney & Hamilton, 2006).

Hyper-sexuality

The issue of sexual violence is related to our hyper-sexualized society. Men and women are expected to engage in sexual behaviour as a part of their transition from youth to adulthood. This is despite contradictory social expectations of women as sexually chaste (Armstrong, Sweeney & Hamilton, 2006) and can be confusing for young women who feel pressure to both engage in sexual behaviours and maintain their sexual reputations (Hlavka, 2014).

We live in a society where the objectification of women is prevalent in the media and pornography is a major influence on youth's expectations of sexual behaviour (Levin & Kilbourne, 2009). Youth have easy and unsupervised access to sexually explicit images through social media, the internet, and through devices such as smartphones and tablets. When young people are also exposed to an alcohol culture on university campuses, the result may be that they participate in sexually explicit drinking games at residences, parties, and during orientation week.

A Saint Mary's University report found that students engage in a variety of sexually explicit activities during orientation week such as playing dirty bingo, engaging in sexist chants/cheers and going to a sexual hypnotist. Students identified media, peer influence/pressure, and expectations of university behaviour as influencing factors in these hypersexualized activities. The report also lists potential harms as a result of these sexually explicit activities, which include forcing students to be sexual to fit in, creating false norms of sexual behaviour, a lack of sensitivity to victims/survivors of sexual assault, and the promotion of a rape culture (*Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect and Consent at Saint Mary's University and Beyond*, Saint Mary's University, 2013). To understand the context of sexual violence on campuses, it is important to consider the ways in which university students are pressured to engage in harmful sexual activities.

Athletics and Fraternities

Research on campus sexual violence shows that athletes represent a high percentage of perpetrators with as many as five times more student athletes reported as perpetrators compared to non-athletes (Finn, 1995, as cited in Martell Counselling Services Ltd., 2014). "Men's athletics can foster a rape culture because they are sex-segregated, the nature of the sport is to be dominant, and students involved in a college sport, particularly men, gain prestige

from being physically dominating" (Crosset, Benedict & McDonald, 1995, as cited in Burnett et al., 2009, p. 466).

Fraternities are considered to be high risk for sexual violence (Finn, 1995, as cited in Martell Counselling Services Ltd., 2014). This is because of the hyper-masculine environment and the partying and heavy drinking that takes place in these settings. Men often provide the alcohol to women who feel pressure to please men in response to being invited to such parties. As noted previously, sexual activity is an assumed aspect of partying and is enacted as a way to fit in with one's peers (Armstrong, Sweeney & Hamilton, 2006).

Student/Faculty Interactions

The power dynamic between students and faculty/staff can create a situation in which students may feel vulnerable to the sexual advances of non-student members of the campus community. There are many examples of university faculty engaging in sexual relations with students in which consent is uncertain due to the difference of power and the possibility of sexual coercion.

University faculty may contribute to a classroom environment in which sexual violence is acceptable through their use of comments, jokes, and actions [see Dalhousie University (2015), *Report of the taskforce on misogyny, sexism and homophobia in Dalhousie University faculty of dentistry* for examples of sexually explicit behaviour in the classroom]. It is also important to note that faculty, staff, and administration are not immune as victims/survivors of sexual violence. Therefore, faculty, staff, and administration should be considered when developing campus policies and practices specific to the issue.

The next two sections provide information on the ways in which Government and universities can take action to prevent sexual violence.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The Provincial Government plays an important role in preventing sexual violence on university campuses. Nova Scotia has focused on key strategies in this area. In addition to the Province's strategy to address sexual violence, *Breaking the Silence*, the 2015-19 MOU and Outcome Agreements include explicit language around sexual violence prevention. The Department of Community Services also provided a Prevention Innovation Fund from 2015 to 2017.

The 2015-19 MOU

In the context of the Province's efforts to address the issue of sexual violence through its *Breaking the Silence* strategy, the MOU commits the Parties to working together to address the issue on university campuses.

In addition, the MOU commits the universities to:
- adopt specific policies that address sexual violence;
- renew the policies every three years through an inclusive process, which engages elected student representatives;
- focus on prevention by promoting greater awareness through education; and
- ensure that the policies clearly state complaint procedures and response protocols.

Under the MOU, Government and the universities are also required to create a Sexual Violence Prevention Committee to work towards sexual violence prevention on campuses, with a key task to prepare a report, with recommendations, on sexual violence prevention. This report is a product of the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee.

Outcome Agreements

Outcome Agreements will serve as a component of the funding relationship between Government and Nova Scotia universities. The agreements identify activities and goals that institutions will undertake to help strengthen Nova Scotia's post-secondary sector and advance the Province's social and economic priorities.

In response to concerns related to sexual violence on university campuses and building on the MOU's commitment to sexual violence prevention, the new Outcome Agreements between the Province and Nova Scotia's individual universities include a required outcome related to sexual violence awareness and prevention. All ten of Nova Scotia's universities will be required to include the following outcome in their Outcome Agreements with the Province: Nova Scotia's university campuses are actively working to provide places where students can study and learn in an environment that is free from sexual violence. The goal of this outcome is to improve the overall quality of experience for post-secondary education students studying at Nova Scotia's universities. Universities will be required to report annually about progress toward achieving their outcomes through a standard reporting template.

The Prevention Innovation Fund

The Department of Community Services' Prevention Innovation Fund was created as an action of the Provincial strategy, *Breaking the Silence*. The purpose of the fund is to invest in, and expand, community best practices, research, and evaluation of sexual violence prevention initiatives. The fund has a specific focus to assist groups that are not part of the network of sexual violence prevention organizations, such as student unions and youth groups. The Prevention Innovation Fund also aims to support marginalized populations, including African Nova Scotians, First Nations, and the LGBTQIA2S+ community (Province of Nova Scotia, 2013).

Recipients of the Prevention Innovation Fund in 2015-16, whose projects relate to the campus environment, include: the Acadia Student Union's Sexual Violence Prevention Project to develop a campus-wide strategy focused on consent and coercion; Saint Mary's University Centre for Housing and Residence Life's Consent Project to create student-made videos on topics such as alcohol, consent and bystander interventions; and Alex Coley and Cameron Ure's project to develop a training session 'by students for students' which will be delivered to Residence Assistants at Dalhousie University.

Legislation

Another method of sexual violence prevention is through legislation, which can help to address sexual violence by requiring universities and colleges to develop stand-alone policies on sexual violence that include clear reporting procedures and response protocols, and outline support initiatives. Currently, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario have legislation specific to sexual violence on post-secondary campuses and therefore require post-secondary institutions to develop such policies (Province of British Columbia, 2016; Province of Manitoba, 2016; Province of Ontario, 2015).

Four bills specific to sexual violence have been tabled in Nova Scotia; however, these bills have not been passed (Province of Nova Scotia, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; Province of Nova Scotia, 2015c). The main common elements of these bills are that they would require universities and colleges to: develop stand-alone policies on sexual violence; develop these policies with input from students; ensure the policies clearly state complaint procedures and response protocols; review and renew these polices every 3 years (Bill 164 and Bill 56) or every 4 years (Bill 114

and Bill 50); have supports available for students on a 24-hour basis; publicly report on incidences of sexual violence; and publicly report on their institution's initiatives to address sexual violence. Bill 50 indicates the information would not be publicly reported, but that such information would be provided to the Minister.

The Nova Scotia government has taken a strategic approach to preventing sexual violence through the MOU, including the formation of the Province's Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, Outcome Agreements, and the Department of Community Services' Prevention Innovation Fund. These initiatives are intended to facilitate collaboration between Government, the Nova Scotia universities and students and to identify best and promising practices that can be scaled up across the university sector.

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

University faculty, staff, and students play an important role in preventing sexual violence on campus. Campus environments set the tone for expectations of behaviour, including sexual behaviour. To prevent sexual violence, it is important that campus environments promote a culture of safety and respect. This can be accomplished in several ways, including:

- a sexual violence-specific policy;
- a campus code of conduct, which addresses sexual violence;
- a sexual violence advisory committee;
- a campus-wide climate survey on knowledge, experience and skills;
- respectful and inclusive orientation week events;
- education and awareness of sexual violence on campus;
- collaboration with student unions; and
- awareness of sexually explicit advertising.

Each of these methods promote a culture of safety and respect, free from sexual violence, which are described in more detail below.

Sexual Violence-specific Policy

A sexual violence-specific policy is essential to address the complexity of the issue, including outlining the option to report to the university and accompanying disciplinary procedures. Being a victim/survivor of sexual violence, receiving a disclosure of sexual violence, and/or witnessing an act of sexual violence is a highly sensitive and traumatic event. Therefore, special consideration is required to respect and support individuals who have experienced such events. It is recommended that a sexual violence-specific policy include a variety of confidential disclosure and reporting options for the victim/survivor, individuals who receive a disclosure, and/or individuals who witness an act of sexual violence.

An accommodation for student victims/survivors, such as postponing exams, is an important step to address the physiological and psychological impacts of sexual violence. Adjusting class schedules and changing residence locations may also be necessary for either the student victim/survivor or perpetrator, to address the fact that these individuals may otherwise be in close contact with each other. It is important to note that sexual violence takes place within staff and faculty relationships. In these instances, accommodations should be considered for staff and faculty victims/survivors.

All accommodations should center on the needs of victims/survivors. The availability of a sexual response team and choices for supports (e.g. culturally appropriate, peer-to-peer) are also recommended for victims/survivors who report an incident of sexual violence.

A sexual violence-specific policy sends a message to the university community that sexual violence is a serious issue that will be dealt with accordingly [see Cape Breton University, *Sexual Violence Policy, 2016,* for an example of a stand-alone sexual violence policy].

Code of Conduct

A campus code of conduct commits everyone in the university community to a level of ethical standards and outlines the disciplinary actions when these standards are breached. On some campuses, all students are required to sign a code of conduct before beginning their academic program.

Many university codes of conduct refer to sexual violence as an intolerable behaviour. However, these behaviours are often lumped into a general category of violence, and therefore ignore the sensitivities surrounding sexual violence in regards to confidentiality, privacy, and respect for the victim/survivor. A sexual violence-specific section, or a separate sexual violence code of conduct, allows the university to outline disciplinary actions that take these factors into consideration [see St. Francis Xavier University, *Community Code of Conduct 2016-2017,* for an example of a sexual violence-specific section within their campus code of conduct for students].

Sexual Violence Advisory Committee

Each university in Nova Scotia may be at a different stage in the development of key sexual violence prevention policies. A sexual violence advisory committee at each institution could assist in the development of a sexual violence-specific policy, the development of a sexual violence-specific code of conduct, or the review of such policies if they are already in place. In addition, such a committee could assess the effectiveness of education, awareness campaigns and other prevention efforts to reduce sexual violence.

It is important for sexual violence prevention efforts to be evaluated to address the needs of the university community. A sexual violence advisory committee provides an opportunity for this evaluation and acknowledges sexual violence prevention as an institutional issue [see Saint Mary's University report from the President's Council, *Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect and Consent at Saint Mary's University and Beyond, 2013,* for an example of a Sexual Violence Advisory Committee].

In order to represent the needs of the university's student population, it is necessary for the advisory committee to have representation from elected student representatives. When developing policies and practices related to disclosures, reporting, disciplinary actions, and supports, it is also important to take into consideration the experiences and concerns of victims/survivors. Therefore, advisory committees should designate voluntary positions for victims/survivors.

Campus-wide Climate Survey on Knowledge, Experience and Skills

A campus-wide climate survey provides data on the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of the university community regarding safety on campus. This is important, not only to understand the prevalence of sexual violence on campus, but also to understand how social norms and peer pressure affect this issue. A campus-wide climate survey should collect information on students' actual acts of sexual violence but also perceived willingness to perpetrate sexual violence if there were no consequences for such actions. Students should also have space to leave comments or explain their answers since questions about sexual violence experiences often require more complex responses than a quantitative questionnaire can provide.

A campus-wide climate survey better informs the effectiveness of sexual violence prevention strategies as well as supports for victims/survivors [see Saint Mary's University report, *Campus Safety Survey, 2015*, for an example of a campus-wide safety survey]. Alberta will develop a joint campus survey to be distributed amongst all universities and colleges in the province. This will enable institutions to compare data with each other, better understand the context of sexual violence on campus, and better inform policies (Graney, 2017).

Orientation Week

Orientation week is often a student's first exposure to the university campus environment. Events in orientation week centered on alcohol consumption, misogynistic attitudes and actions, and hyper-sexuality send a message to students that these attitudes and behaviours are accepted and expected amongst the student population.

It is important for orientation week to promote a culture of safety and respect, free from sexual violence, to assist in the university's efforts of sexual violence prevention on campus. Events that are respectful and inclusive of diversity (e.g. gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, ability) send a positive message to student populations. Providing sexual violence education and awareness programs, such as consent workshops, during orientation week is one method of promoting a campus culture that is intolerant of sexual violence.

Education and Awareness

The development and delivery of sexual violence education and awareness campaigns on campus is essential to shift attitudes and beliefs from one of tolerance regarding sexual violence to a culture of safety and respect. Education consists of prevention programs such as consent education and bystander programs, and education on the university's sexual violence policies, protocols, and resources. It is important that education is made available to the entire campus community, including new administration, faculty, staff, and students on campus, as well as offered throughout the year to reach the broader university population [see Dalhousie University, Human Rights and Equity Services, *Get Consent,* for an example of a sexual violence awareness campaign].

It is important for all faculty to receive training on how to support victims/survivors of sexual violence because they may receive disclosures from students who require academic accommodations. Athletic coaches would also benefit from training because of their position of trust and potential need for accommodations from victims/survivors. Deans are often responsible for resolving harassment and sexual violence disputes, and therefore would benefit from training on how to receive a disclosure of sexual violence in a trauma-informed manner.

Student Unions

The involvement of student unions in sexual violence prevention on university campuses is important to both represent student perspectives of prevention strategies and to promote these strategies. As noted in *Student Safety in Nova Scotia: A review of student union policies and practices to prevent sexual violence* (Martell Counselling Services Ltd., 2014), examples of the ways in which Student Unions can promote sexual violence prevention include:

- advertising sexual violence policies, protocols and resources on their website;
- running sexual violence awareness campaigns;
- having elected student representatives take a pledge to end sexual violence on campus and encourage others to do the same; and
- assigning an elected student representative, specifically for sexual violence prevention.

Student Unions are also capable of creating student union by-laws specific to sexual violence and for utilizing campus media such as the student handbook, newspapers, radio, and guest speakers/events to promote intolerance of sexual violence.

Sexually Explicit Advertising

Individuals are influenced by images in the media. When a university campus promotes advertising with sexually explicit images and derogatory words towards a particular gender, this sends a message to the campus community that sexual violence is tolerated. It is important to educate the campus community on the harms associated with hyper-sexualized advertising and to promote best practices in advertising.

A useful resource regarding advertising policies is the Province's Guidelines on Government Advertising. Within this guideline, principle 2 notes that, "Advertising must be presented in a factual and respectful manner and designed to meet established objectives." Principle 2D notes that, "Advertising originating from the Nova Scotia Government will not perpetuate the objectification of people, or include hypersexualized images and messages" (Communications Nova Scotia, 2013, p. 6).

Involvement of University Administration

It is important for university administration to be involved in, and promote, efforts to prevent sexual violence and support victims/survivors. Without the involvement of administration, the university portrays to the campus community – faculty, staff, administration, and students – that sexual violence is not the institution's problem. This ignores the influence of the campus environment in the occurrence of sexual violence, which could imply that sexual violence is an individual problem. An individualistic understanding of sexual violence silences victims/survivors.

A collaboration among all members of the campus community in sexual violence prevention efforts allows for diverse representation and sets the tone for a campus culture of safety and respect, free from sexual violence.

RESEARCH ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Education and Training

Casey and Lindhorst (2009) conducted a review of prevention strategies and highlighted the best components for creating an ecological approach. An ecological approach encompasses individual as well as peer/social factors, which are both important for sexual violence prevention. The authors list six components of an ecological prevention strategy which are that it should be comprehensive, incorporate community engagement, contextualize the problem, be based in theory, focus on strengths and increasing health, and address structural factors. It is important for education and training on sexual violence to incorporate these components of an ecological approach.

Education and training on sexual violence is a key primary prevention strategy because of its potential to shift the culture of acceptance in which sexual violence exists. This cultural shift is accomplished by combining a variety of methods which include:

- increasing awareness of the issue;
- encouraging individuals to change their oppressive attitudes and beliefs; and
- suggesting ways in which individuals can resist acts of violence.

Research on the effectiveness of education and training to prevent sexual violence outlines several key aspects for development and delivery. These aspects are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

A meta-analysis of sexual violence prevention program evaluations revealed that longer and more detailed programs were more effective at altering attitudes toward sexual violence (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). Specifically, professionally facilitated programs were more effective than student or peer facilitated programs. As well, programs that focused on statistics, gender-socialization, rape myths, and risk reduction strategies had the most positive impact on students.

The Ending Violence Association of BC (2016) in their report, *Campus Sexual Violence: Guidelines for a Comprehensive Response*, outline important aspects of sexual violence prevention education and training. These are listed as understanding:

- the gendered nature of sexual violence and how sexual violence is unique from other issues that may arise on a university/college campus;
- the varying short-term and long-term trauma-based impacts sexual violence can have on victims/survivors (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, financial, and academic); and
- rape culture and myths perpetuated about sexual violence that continue to cause harm.

They add "prevention education should focus as much as possible on the actions and behaviours of people who commit or who may potentially commit sexual violence as opposed to the actions/behaviours of victims/survivors or potential victims/survivors" (p. 41). These are important aspects of sexual violence prevention education and training because they reduce victim blaming and help to increase empathy toward victims/survivors.

Attitudes and Behaviours

Peer attitudes and behaviours are an important aspect of sexual violence prevention education and training because individuals are strongly influenced by social norms. Students, like other groups in society, are unlikely to think or act against social norms, even if this means compromising their own emotional and/or physical safety.

Misperceptions

Fabiano et al. (2003) found that men perceive other men as unlikely to intervene in situations of sexual assault. This contrasts men's self-reported high willingness to intervene in such situations. The authors suggest that the misperception of male intervention behaviours creates the social pressure for males not to intervene, despite their understanding of its importance. Therefore, it is important for education and training to include misperceptions of peers' attitudes and behaviours regarding sexual violence and to replace these misperceptions with accurate data (Fabiano et al., 2003).

Several authors have commented on the importance of shifting the culture in which sexual violence exists through intentional education and training that focus on the processes of socialization. This requires highlighting misperceptions that create oppressive social norms, such as rape myths, as well as presenting an equally appealing social norm based on social justice principles of equity and respect (Joseph, Gray & Mayer, 2013). When alternate and positive social norms are presented that represent an individual's personal values, the individual is more likely to reject oppressive social norms. This point is noted by McQueen and Klein (2006, as cited in Joseph, Gray & Mayer, 2013) who found that individuals were more likely to accept change if the change was in line with their personal values.

<u>Readiness for Change</u>

Changing deeply rooted attitudes and beliefs is difficult work. Individuals are resistant to change, especially when change requires a commitment to challenging internal beliefs and social norms. When providing education and training, Moynihan et al. (2015) suggest assessing participants' readiness for change because research shows that individuals who are ready for change are more likely to accept and benefit from education and training. Ideally, sexual violence prevention education and training would have different modules to accommodate participants' readiness for change. Participants such as students, faculty staff, and administration would then progress through these modules. The most advanced modules would focus on, and encourage, active participation in shifting cultural norms from an acceptance of sexual violence to a culture of safety and respect.

In order to shift the culture of sexual violence, it is helpful to examine the ways in which certain norms become entrenched in our society. During education and training, participants should explore and understand the role of privileged groups and systems of power in creating and maintaining social norms. This brings awareness to the fact that alternative versions of attitudes and behaviours exist which may be more in line with the participant's values and beliefs. Meaningful values related to sexual violence prevention might include compassion, non-judgement, and understanding the role of privilege and oppression in one's life. Joseph, Gray and Mayer (2013) suggest that education and training include conversations about the benefits of adhering to respectful social norms and the harms of adhering to oppressive social norms in order to increase the long-term effectiveness.

Rich, Utley, Janke and Moldoveneau (2010) surveyed male college students' perceptions of attending a mandatory sexual violence prevention session. They found that individuals who are forced to take education and training are likely to present with resistance. Therefore, although voluntary education will reach a lower quantity of the campus population, it may be more effective at preventing sexual violence.

Best or Promising Practices: Education and Training

Sexual violence is a complex issue. It requires an understanding of individual experiences, inter-personal relationships, social environments, structural and political influences, and cultural norms in order to understand the context in which it occurs. The following education and training for sexual violence prevention are based on research and best or promising practices in sexual violence prevention. Current prevention efforts can only address the context and factors of sexual violence, which we currently understand. However, there is still much to learn. Therefore, it is important to continue researching the issue of sexual violence in new and innovative ways to deepen our understanding and to use this knowledge for developing and evaluating new strategies.

Dr. Diane Crocker, Professor of Sociology and Criminology at Saint Mary's University, is currently conducting a research study to address this issue. Her research encompasses the complexity of sexual violence by taking a participatory narrative approach to interviewing, which is different from traditional methods of quantitative self-report surveys or qualitative interviews and focus groups. The purpose is to better understand the context in which sexual violence exists, and the contributing factors, by asking participants to describe their experiences of sex, both consensual and non-consensual. The hope is that by exploring students' experiences, rather than their opinions, that her research will open new avenues for developing programs and policies that speak to students' lived experiences.

Bystander Training

Bystander training is an informational and interactive program designed to prevent acts of violence, with versions specific to sexual violence. The premise is to engage participants as potential witnesses to sexual violence and prepare them to intervene in these situations (Coker et al., 2016). Participants learn how to "interrupt situations that could lead to a sexual assault before it happens or during an incident; speak out against social norms that support sexual violence; and have the skills to be an effective and supportive ally to victims/survivors" (Banyard, Moynihan & Plante, 2007, p. 464).

By engaging participants as bystanders, rather than potential victims or perpetrators, bystander programs reduce feelings of defensiveness and increase feelings of empowerment. This produces changes at the individual level in participants' likelihood of intervening, and at the community level by spreading knowledge and challenging social norms (Coker et al., 2016). Proactive bystander behaviours create an opportunity to shift attitudes about sexual violence from acceptance to intolerance (McMahon & Banyard, 2012).

Bystander training programs have been evaluated for their success in altering oppressive attitudes and beliefs about sexual violence and reducing the occurrence of sexual violence on university campuses. A study by Coker et al. (2016) revealed that rates of sex victimization were lower on a college campus after providing bystander training compared to a similar campus, which did not provide the training.

Salazar, Vivolo-Kantor, Hardin and Berkowitz (2014) found that college men who participated in an online bystander program revealed more sexual violence prevention behaviours compared to the control group. These men were more likely to intervene in situations of sexual violence and engaged in less sexual violence perpetration. The study also found a positive change in these men's attitudes toward sexual violence. Men who completed the program reported: greater legal knowledge of sexual assault; greater knowledge of effective consent; less adherence to rape myths; greater empathy for rape victims; less negative date rape attitudes; less hostility toward women; greater intentions to intervene; less hyper-gender ideology; less positive outcome expectancies for non-consensual sex; more positive outcome expectancies for intervening; and less comfort with other men's inappropriate behaviours. These results were collected six months following the completion of the online bystander program.

Banyard, Moynihan and Plante (2007) revealed that longer (i.e. more hours of training) bystander training programs produced more effective results. Specifically, participants reported more prosocial bystander attitudes, increased bystander efficacy, and increased self-reported bystander behaviour. These results were still apparent after a 12-month follow-up.

Moynihan et al., (2015) revealed that bystander education was most effective for students who reported, before the intervention, that sexual violence was a problem. It is therefore suggested that universities first bring awareness to the issue rather than rely solely on bystander education as a prevention strategy.

Consent Education

Consent education programs provide information on the context of sexual violence and the details and importance of gaining consent. As noted previously, student populations are often unaware of the definition of consent and the importance of obtaining consent prior to all sexual encounters. To address this issue, consent education programs provide information on the rates of sexual violence, rape myths, the implications of consent, and the components of consent (i.e. clear, coherent, willing, ongoing) (New Zealand Family Planning, 2014).

Borges, Banyard and Moynihan (2008) conducted a study on the effectiveness of different styles of consent education for college students. Their results revealed that consent education which combines information, discussion, and engagement activities produced the best results.

Consent education is important for preventing sexual violence; however, teaching potential victims/survivors how to give consent and potential perpetrators the importance of receiving consent will not eliminate the issue. This is because perpetrators use sexual violence as a way to assert their power and control over others. In these situations, the victim/survivor does not have a choice in giving consent. It is important for consent education to acknowledge the role of power and control in situations of sexual violence to incorporate all victims'/survivors' experiences.

Education on How to Respond to Disclosures of Sexual Violence

It is important for individuals to be educated about how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence in order to best support victims/survivors. Individuals who are unaware of the context in which sexual violence exists and the impacts of such incidents might adhere to rape myths and victim-blaming when responding to disclosures, which can re-traumatize the victim/survivor.

Important topics in how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence include: the continuum of sexual violence; impacts of sexual violence; an understanding of rape culture; the prevalence of sexual violence; barriers to reporting; components of trauma-informed practice; skills for providing emotional support; and community resources [see Gallinaugh, 2016 for the description of a Dalhousie University course titled *Skills and Strategies for Responding to Sexualized Violence]*. Also see LearnRidge (2017) *Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: A Nova Scotia Resource*. This resource includes a training module on responding to a disclosure.

Education and training on how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence is a prevention strategy because of the opportunity to shift the culture from an acceptance of sexual violence to a culture of intolerance. When individuals who are likely to receive a disclosure of sexual violence on campus (e.g. faculty, counsellors, athletic coaches) receive training on how to respond, they are learning to dispel rape myths and support victims/survivors. This works toward creating an environment where the values, beliefs, and behaviours which perpetrate sexual violence are no longer tolerated.

Anti-oppression Education

Anti-oppression education provides a framework for understanding oneself and the environment within hierarchies of power in society. It is an examination and critical analysis of the consequences of these hierarchies of power (i.e. experiences of privilege and oppression). "The objective is to assist in the recognition, analyzing, and undoing of dominant ideologies and the empowering of the self to choose freely alternative ways of analyzing, understanding and intervening" (Garcia & Melendez, 1997, p. 25). Individuals are encouraged to reflect on how their own values, beliefs, assumptions, and actions contribute to social inequalities. This acknowledgement is necessary in order to change the ways in which individuals reinforce social hierarchies of power.

The concept of one's social location (gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion) is important in understanding how different forms of intersecting identities affect experiences of privilege and oppression. Individuals experience privilege and oppression in different ways, depending on the context and situation. Therefore, everyone both benefits from, and is negatively affected by, social hierarchies of power. However, certain groups who have been historically marginalized and are still marginalized experience oppression at a

disproportional rate. Anti-oppression education provides awareness of these experiences to demonstrate the consequences of inequalities in society.

Anti-oppression education is a sexual violence prevention strategy because it brings awareness to the culture and context in which sexual violence exists. Sexual violence prevention strategies will be limited in their effectiveness if social hierarchies of power remain. This is because social inequalities and sexual violence are rooted in systems of power and privilege. An analysis of these systems enables participants to critically reflect on how their attitudes and behaviours reinforce oppressive behaviours. Anti-oppression education encourages all groups, not only victims/survivors, to take action against oppressive systems because all individuals are impacted by social inequalities and responsible for changing them.

Participants' personal value systems and core beliefs will be challenged during anti-oppression education. In order to reduce participants' feelings of being overwhelmed and hopeless as a result of this education, it is important to increase feelings of empowerment. Accordingly, anti-oppression education programs should equip participants with strategies for challenging and taking action against social inequalities (Garcia & Melendez, 1997). These strategies promote social justice through a change in individual and community values, beliefs, assumptions, and actions. The goal is to break down personal, cultural, and systemic hierarchies of power.

Healthy Masculinity Education

Based on the premise that sexual violence is predominantly perpetrated by men, programs targeted towards men have been developed in an effort to prevent sexual violence. The purpose of these programs is to educate about the harmful effects of rigid male gender roles that create expectations of violence and aggression. In bringing awareness to the harmful effects of these expectations for both men and women, male participants begin to question and challenge traditional gender roles in their life. The aim is to reduce feelings of defensiveness in conversations about sexual violence by demonstrating to men how all genders are negatively affected by the issue.

It is important for healthy masculinity education to highlight the disproportionate oppression experienced by individuals who identify as women in our society. Although men are negatively affected by systems of oppression (i.e. traditional gender roles), they are still accountable for sexual violence.

Healthy masculinity programs address topics such as male socialization practices, teaching men to have empathy for victims/survivors, and emphasizing consent in intimate relationships (Fabiano et al., 2003). This requires men to change their oppressive attitudes and behaviours to reflect values and beliefs based in gender equality. A positive change in men's attitudes and behaviours about sexual violence is possible because healthy masculinity programs bring awareness to positive aspects of masculinity rather than blaming men for causing sexual violence (Fabiano et al., 2003). In addition, men are encouraged to act as allies in the fight against sexual violence. An ally is a "member of the dominant group or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her [or their] personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population" (Washington & Evans, 1991, p. 145, as cited in Fabiano et al., 2003, p. 106). Therefore, the role of men is to support victims/survivors by acting as allies rather than speaking for individuals who identify as women on this issue.

Alcohol Safety

As noted in a previous section, acts of sexual violence on campuses occur frequently in the presence of alcohol. Therefore, promoting a reduction in alcohol consumption is viewed as a

strategy in preventing sexual violence in the university context. Alcohol safety programs, such as Drink Responsibly And Feel Terrific (DRAFT), are useful in reducing the risks associated with drinking alcohol (*Promoting a Culture of Safety, Respect and Consent at Saint Mary's University and Beyond: Report from the President's Council,* Saint Mary's University, 2013). The Province of Nova Scotia's (2012) report titled *Reducing alcohol harms among university students: A summary of best practices* emphasizes the need to address students' misperceptions of peer drinking behaviours in education programs in order to decrease alcohol consumption.

Even though individuals know the risks associated with alcohol consumption, alcohol safety education programs are not meant to blame a victim/survivor who is intoxicated at the time of the incident. Nor are the programs meant to excuse the behaviour of the perpetrator who is intoxicated and less capable of making decisions about their behaviour. The purpose is to promote a culture of alcohol safety where students, when engaged in alcohol related activities, drink responsibly and engage in respectful behaviours. The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (2016a) has developed *A Framework to address High-Risk Drinking and Alcohol Harms Reduction on Canadian Campuses*. This framework is also outlined in their document titled *Reducing the Harms Related to Alcohol on Canadian Campuses* (2016b).

Awareness Campaigns

Awareness campaigns can assist in highlighting sexual violence as a critical issue, and in changing attitudes and behaviours which perpetuate the issue. Examples of awareness campaigns used on Nova Scotia university campuses include the White Ribbon campaign at Saint Mary's University (Saint Mary's University, 2013), #getconsent at Dalhousie University (Dalhousie University Human Rights and Equity Services, n.d.), "X-men against violence against women" at St. Francis Xavier University (Mahon, 2014), and NO MEANS NO (Canadian Federation of Students-Nova Scotia (CFS-NS), 2017).

The involvement of student and athletic groups in awareness campaigns is important because individuals are highly influenced by their peers. Because rates of sexual violence perpetration are higher among student athletes, athletes are especially meaningful participants in sexual violence awareness campaigns (Finn, 1995, as cited in Martell Counselling Services Ltd., 2014). University athletes are often well respected within the campus community, and therefore can send a strong message to others about expectations of behaviour.

Best or Promising Practices: Not Related to Education and Training

Campus Prevention Strategies

There are several effective strategies for preventing sexual violence on university campuses that do not revolve around education and training. For instance, a sexual violence specific policy at each university ensures the campus community is aware that sexual violence is a serious problem, which will be dealt with accordingly. A code of conduct specific to sexual violence also has this effect. The university can also communicate commitments to action to all its campus community regarding the seriousness of sexual violence, response protocols, and resources which are available to support students. The development of policies and codes of conduct, as well as communicating commitments to action, are three important strategies to shift the culture in which sexual violence exists from an individual issue to an institutional issue.

Universities can promote alcohol-free on-campus and off-campus activities to reduce the harms associated with alcohol for university students. This is especially important during orientation week to help set the standard for student behaviour. It is critical to provide sexual violence prevention education during orientation week as well.

<u>On-campus and Community Supports</u>

Women's and Gender Resource Centres are an essential component of victim/survivor supports on campuses. Therefore, it is important for these centres to be well-funded. On-campus chaplains are also a source of support for victims/survivors. Community resources can be utilized to support victims/survivors and to communicate sexual violence education and awareness. Examples of community resources include the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, and the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program.

<u>Trauma-informed Practices</u>

All efforts to prevent or respond to sexual violence should be built on knowledge from trauma-informed practices. Trauma-informed practice is based on research that shows individuals who are impacted by trauma have both short and long-term physical and psychological consequences. A trauma-informed approach takes into consideration how these impacts influence an individual's behaviour and overall presentation when seeking supports. Instead of reacting with "what's wrong with you?", service providers ask "what happened to you?"

A trauma-informed approach demonstrates respect, non-judgement and compassion for victims/survivors while providing choice in supports to increase the individual's feelings of control over accessing services (Knight, 2014). "Principles of a trauma-informed approach include:

- acknowledging the impact of trauma;
- empowering victims/survivors;
- maximizing choice related to disclosing, reporting, and accessing support;
- restoring control to the victim/survivor;
- recognizing the victim/survivor's need for (and right to) safety;
- building on the victim/survivor's strengths;
- treating the victim/survivor with dignity and respect;
- moving forward at the victim/survivor's own pace; and
- respecting the victim/survivor's right to privacy" (Elliott, Bjelajac, Fallot, Markoff, & Reed, 2005, as cited in EVABC, 2016, p. 23).

Gaps in Preventing Sexual Violence

Research in sexual violence prevention has revealed many gaps in current strategic efforts. This demonstrates that many aspects about the context of sexual violence are still unknown. However, based on the information we currently have available to understand sexual violence, there are adjustments that can be made to enhance the effectiveness of prevention efforts. These include providing awareness of sexual violence-specific policies and resources, and engaging victims/survivors of sexual violence in the development of these policies and resources. Ideally, university administration would be involved in all aspects of sexual violence prevention to send the message that sexual violence is an institutional concern.

With respect to sexual violence prevention education and training, it is important to include reference to, and discussion of, the culture and context in which sexual violence exists. Programs should be offered throughout the academic year to allow for greater access and participation. Encouraging faculty to integrate sexual violence awareness and education into curricula or course syllabuses would also help increase awareness. Ensuring sexual violence prevention education is accessible for all student populations, including language and

accessibility accommodations, is a necessity. It is also important for education and training to be available for the broader campus population. This has been identified as an area that is currently lacking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee members' knowledge and expertise, feedback from community stakeholders, as well as research and presentations on best or promising practices in sexual violence primary prevention were used to develop recommendations for sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses.

These recommendations are based on feminist, Black feminist[1], and anti-oppression frameworks for understanding gender inequality, sexual violence, and the culture and context in which it is perpetrated. Accordingly, the policies, programs and practices developed from these recommendations should incorporate these frameworks. The following resources[2] may assist with this:

- For information about how to incorporate a feminist lens into practice, see Avalon Sexual Assault Centre's report *The Avalon Model,* 2012, p. 14;
- For additional information on Black feminism and intersectionality, search for books and articles by authors bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, and Kimberle Crenshaw; and
- For information about how to incorporate an anti-oppression framework, visit South House Sexual & Gender Resource Centre's site (2012-2017) at http://southhousehalifax.ca/ and/or visit *shameless* magazine's site (2013) at http://shamelessmag.com/blog/entry/the-5-ws-and-the-h-of-the-anti-oppression-framewo and The Anti-Oppression Network's site (n.d.) at https://theantioppressionnetwork.wordpress.com/resources/terminologies-of-oppression/.

There is special consideration to include students, faculty, staff, and administration as active participants in sexual violence prevention. This acknowledges sexual violence as an institutional issue. Together, the recommendations address the personal, cultural and systemic levels of sexual violence in order to shift the current and universal culture of acceptance and silence to a culture of safety and respect.

The recommendations in this report complement the recommendations of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women Canada in their report, *Taking action to end violence against women and girls in Canada* (March, 2017). Specifically, the Committee's recommendations for the Federal Government are to:

- take a survivor-centric, prevention-based, trauma-informed strategy on gender-based violence tailored to the unique needs of marginalized groups (Recommendation 1);

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[1] Black feminism acknowledges the diversity of women-identified individuals and validates first person voice. Therefore, Black feminism incorporated an intersectional analysis into traditional feminist theory and practice. It maintains that experiences (e.g. racism, sexism, classism) are interconnected, and so the move toward gender equality must address all social inequalities. (Academic Room, 2013; Taylor, 1998).

[2] The reference to these resources is provided as information only. The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee is not responsible for the content contained within these resources, or for the content on the websites listed.

- adopt an intersectional approach to gender-based violence, addressing the higher rates of violence faced by some groups of women, including Indigenous women; immigrant and refugee women; visible minority women; women identifying as lesbian, bisexual, transgender; female sex workers; women living with disabilities; women with mental health issues; low-income women; women in Northern, rural and remote communities; and other marginalized sectors of the female population (Recommendation 2);
- implement an awareness campaign or educational program, developed in consultation with young people; this both should be: age-appropriate and culturally sensitive; include information on consent and respect in healthy relationships; provide information on legal services for survivors of gender-based violence; and raise awareness of support services for survivors of gender-based violence (Recommendation 11); and
- develop and invest in a nation-wide public awareness campaign to educate the public about consent, healthy sexuality, bystander intervention, and the role of men and boys in ending gender-based violence and rape culture, and that community groups, men's ally networks, and youth be consulted during the development of the awareness campaign (Recommendation 26).

The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee's Recommendations

The following ten recommendations represent advice from the SVPC for the Minister of LAE and the Partnership Committee to consider in order to address sexual violence on Nova Scotia campuses. Included with each recommendation is an explanation for its inclusion and relevant comments from SVPC members.

The SVPC recommends that the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) and the Partnership Committee work to ensure that Nova Scotia universities advance the following ten recommendations. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Minister and the Partnership Committee:

1) **Work with the universities to ensure they communicate and demonstrate commitments to action in sexual violence prevention on campus to students, faculty, staff, and administration. This communication should acknowledge the gendered nature of sexual violence and its disproportionate impacts on marginalized groups.**

It is important for both new and returning students, faculty, staff, and administration to be aware of the university's commitment to ending sexual violence on campus. To communicate the importance of such a message, and to ensure the message is received by the majority of the campus population, it is suggested that the commitments to action be communicated prior to the start of the school semester and throughout the academic year. This message should also be communicated during on-campus training for Residence Assistants and student leaders. To demonstrate the university's commitments to action, the communication should include a progress report at the end of each academic year.

2) **Work with the universities to develop a standard of behaviours specific to sexual violence prevention which encompasses the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration. These standards should outline values, beliefs, and behaviours, and provide links to the university's code of conduct and/or policies related to sexual violence and discrimination and harassment.**

It is important for each university to outline standards of behaviours specific to sexual violence prevention to create an environment in which sexual violence is not tolerated. The purpose of providing links to the university's code of conduct and/or policies related to sexual violence, and discrimination and harassment, is to ensure that the campus community is aware of the

consequences of their actions if they do not adhere to the university's standards of behaviours. Providing a link to the university's discrimination and harassment policy will help to ensure that the campus community is aware of the importance of showing respect for diversity and equity across all populations.

3) **Encourage the universities to collaborate in developing a Nova Scotia specific bystander education program. Once developed and evaluated, this program should be recognized as a best practice for use at Nova Scotia university campuses.**

The Executive Director of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre provided information on a successful Department of Justice Canada grant titled *Increasing Awareness of the Criminal Justice System through Bystander Education.* It will involve the development of a Nova Scotia specific bystander education program to be implemented on Nova Scotia university campuses. The goal is to create a pool of "master trainers" to provide continuity and maintain motivation. The grant will fund research and development over a 2-year period, the salary of the program developer, and costs associated with an advisory committee.

4) **Work with the universities to reframe their communication about the risks associated with alcohol consumption. This communication should acknowledge the link between the consumption of alcohol and the perpetration of sexual violence.**

The purpose of this recommendation is to reduce harms associated with high-risk drinking on university campuses. The SVPC acknowledges that alcohol consumption does not cause sexual violence. However, a reduction in high-risk drinking will decrease situations in which sexual violence is more likely to occur. Instead of alcohol harm reduction programs focusing solely on the risks associated with alcohol consumption for a potential victim/survivor, these programs should focus on how alcohol may be used to facilitate or excuse sexual violence perpetration for individuals who already have oppressive attitudes, values, and beliefs. Programming should also educate about the myths and stereotypes about alcohol consumption and sexual assault and the laws pertaining to administering a noxious substance, sexual assault, and consent. In addition, programming should include communication about the deliberate use of alcohol to commit sexual offences.

A number of Nova Scotia universities are already working in partnership with the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse to implement their *Framework to address High-Risk Drinking and Alcohol Harms Reduction on Canadian Campuses*. This framework would guide the implementation of this recommendation. In particular, the implementation of Strategic Area 1 of the framework titled, 'Health promotion, prevention and education', could incorporate new messaging that emphasizes the link between the consumption of alcohol and sexual violence perpetration. This recommendation will only be effective at preventing sexual violence if combined with the other recommendations to change the culture in which sexual violence exists.

5) **Work with the universities to ensure the delivery of consent education for the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration – with an aim to identify key elements that can be used to inform development and consistent delivery.**

The SVPC agreed that the entire campus community including students, faculty, staff, and administration, should be included wherever possible as participants in sexual violence prevention education.

This recommendation highlights the importance of delivering education which is consistent amongst Nova Scotia universities. Therefore, it is suggested that universities identify key elements of their consent education to inform development and consistent delivery. It is important to acknowledge the range of victim's/survivor's experiences by highlighting the difficulties and complexities of consent in incidents of sexual violence. In addition, the SVPC agrees that consent education should be developed based on feminist, Black feminist and anti-oppression frameworks. [For more information on how to incorporate a feminist lens into practice see Avalon Sexual Assault Centre's report *The Avalon Model*, page 14].

6) **Work with the universities to ensure the development and delivery of anti-oppression education for leaders on campus.**

The SVPC agreed that anti-oppression education is a critical component of sexual violence prevention. The purpose of anti-oppression education is to change oppressive attitudes and behaviours which contribute to inequities in society. Sexual violence, as an act of gendered oppression, will not end until all forms of social inequities are addressed because all social inequities are rooted in the same systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

According to best practices, anti-oppression education should be offered as two modules. The first module would provide baseline education on power, privilege, and oppression in society and encourage participants to reflect on their roles in perpetuating social inequities. The second module would encourage participants to take action against oppressive barriers and would contain examples specific to the participant population. For example, education for faculty could include examples and exercises related to classroom scenarios by highlighting the responsibility of individuals in positions of power (i.e. professional power) to educate on power and privilege and to intervene in situations of oppression. Education for students should be provided separately from faculty, staff, and administration to address the potential for uncomfortable power dynamics. As well, education should be offered in-person and in small groups to allow for discussion.

7) **Work with the universities to ensure the development and delivery of training on how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence for the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration – who are most likely to receive disclosures.**

The implementation of sexual violence primary prevention strategies, such as bystander training, creates an environment in which sexual violence is discussed more openly. Victims/survivors may, therefore, feel more comfortable disclosing the harm that was done to them. Consequently, it is critical for universities to ensure that their campus community is appropriately trained to receive such disclosures without causing further harm to victims/survivors. In addition, as previously noted, when individuals who are likely to receive a disclosure of sexual violence on campus (e.g. faculty, counsellors, athletic coaches) are given training on how to respond, they are learning to dispel rape myths and support victims/survivors. This contributes to cultural change by creating an environment in which the values, beliefs, and behaviours which perpetrate sexual violence are no longer tolerated.

Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: A Nova Scotia Resource was created as part of the province's sexual violence strategy, *Breaking the Silence*, to help Nova Scotians learn more about sexual violence and how to support victims/survivors. The training can be accessed through LearnRidge (2017) at https://nscs.learnridge.com/. The training is for service providers, friends, family members, neighbours, teachers, first responders, counsellors, and anyone who is acting as a support person or is concerned about sexual violence.

The course is free of charge and open to anyone. A certificate is provided to individuals who have registered and completed the course. The training is made up of six separate modules, which include a mix of text and interactive elements such as videos, graphics, timelines, and quizzes.

The modules are as follows:
- Sexual Violence: An Introduction;
- Responding to a Disclosure;
- Choices following Sexual Violence;
- Exploring Sexual Consent;
- Enhancing the Well-being of Support People; and
- Indigenous Perspectives.

8) **Share this report with the following Provincial Government departments and agency – Community Services, Education and Early Childhood Development, Health and Wellness, Justice, and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women – to assist these departments and the Advisory Council with their work on sexual violence prevention.**

9) **Convene a provincial sexual violence prevention committee to support the development of new, or the revision of existing, stand-alone sexual violence policies. Common guidelines and reporting structures should be developed with input from each Nova Scotia University (including elected student representatives and faculty), the Nova Scotia Community College, and community leaders with expertise in sexual violence prevention.**

The overall purpose of the provincial sexual violence prevention committee will be to share expertise and resources in the area of sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses. The committee should make every effort to ensure that its membership is reflective of marginalized populations. In addition, in order to reduce duplication of efforts, a province-wide collaboration should be supported between this committee and any other committees focused on sexual violence prevention.

It is important for each university to have a stand-alone policy for responding to incidents of sexual violence. This is due to sensitive areas in sexual violence reporting, disciplinary procedures and the potential involvement of external resources for victim/survivor supports. As part of the 2015-19 MOU, each university in Nova Scotia is required to develop such a policy. The SVPC recommends the creation of a standard guideline for the development of these policies. Such a guideline should align with the guidelines for policy development as outlined in the MOU. It is suggested that a stand-alone sexual violence policy guideline be developed by the provincial sexual violence prevention committee to assist each university to develop and/or to revise their policies.

In the report titled, *Taking action to end violence against women and girls in Canada* (Standing Committee on the Status of Women, March, 2017), Recommendation 7 states that each university's stand-alone policy should be "informed by evidence-based research, include anonymous, confidential and secure reporting mechanisms for survivors of sexual violence on campuses, and provide sexual violence intervention and sensitivity training for all employees of post-secondary administrations, campus police, students, faculty and other staff during orientation times". Guidelines should also direct that stand-alone policies should include

information about off-campus reporting and disclosure options. For example, policies should list the police as an alternate reporting option, and community support services as agencies to which victims/survivors could disclose.

10) **Encourage each university to establish a sexual violence prevention advisory committee or utilize a similar existing committee to support sexual violence prevention. The Committee's membership should include elected student representatives. The purpose of the sexual violence prevention advisory committee will be to:**
   - **develop an implementation plan for the recommendations contained within this report; and**
   - **share information on the institution's progress in preventing sexual violence on campus, including the effectiveness of its institutional strategies in preventing sexual violence.**

The committee should make every effort to ensure that its membership is reflective of marginalized populations. The SVPC recognizes that both financial and human resources are required to successfully implement the recommendations in this report. Collaborations and partnerships are strongly encouraged to leverage expertise and best practices available on some of the campuses and within communities that house universities and the NSCC.

When each university communicates their commitments to action, they will share information about their progress in preventing sexual violence. In addition, a member of each institution's committee will be responsible for sharing this information with the provincial sexual violence prevention committee. This will ensure that the university sector and other key stakeholders are well informed about Nova Scotia's initiatives to address sexual violence prevention.

This report has referenced feminist, Black feminist and anti-oppression frameworks as accepted best practices for understanding and preventing sexual violence. Resources have been cited in the report that may assist advisory committees in better understanding these frameworks.

Members of the sexual violence prevention advisory committee (or the similar existing committee) should be aware of the Association of Atlantic Universities' (AAU) work on developing common reporting guidelines. This work is expected to be complete in 2017 and should be helpful in assisting the universities and the NSCC in adopting similar approaches to reporting sexual violence.

Additional Comments

It is important that sexual violence education accommodate participants' varying levels of awareness of the issue and aim to reach the most populations to effect lasting change. Therefore, it is suggested that when bystander education, consent education, disclosure training, and anti-oppression education is developed, the universities consult with elected student representatives and student and community groups which are marginalized in our society (e.g. Indigenous, Black/African Nova Scotian, LGBTQIA2S+, international students, and individuals with disabilities). In addition, education and training could be offered in multiple modules based on participants' prior understanding of the issue, and participants' resistance to change.

It is suggested that all education related to sexual violence prevention contain an awareness of:

- the cultural context in which sexual violence exists;

- the impact that intersecting identities have on individuals; and
- an analysis of power and privilege in our society.

Topics within sexual violence prevention education should include:

- rape culture and rape myths;
- gendered violence;
- short and long-term trauma impacts;
- the role of the perpetrator; and
- types of systemic oppression including misogyny, trans-misogyny, hyper-masculinity, heterosexism, racism, ableism, classism, patriarchy, and colonialism.

ADDITIONAL PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The SVPC would like to acknowledge the importance of a holistic approach to addressing sexual violence prevention, which reflects a range of prevention strategies from primary to tertiary. This report focuses on primary prevention strategies, which portray feminist, Black feminist, and anti-oppression frameworks. However, there are prevention strategies, not included in the SVPC's recommendations, which can also help to increase the overall effectiveness of sexual violence prevention. All sexual violence prevention strategies should be trauma-informed and centered on believing the victim/survivor to create an environment in which sexual violence is not tolerated.

The following sections highlight important strategies for preventing and addressing sexual violence on university campuses, which are not included as recommendations in this report. The SVPC believes these additional strategies should be considered by the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) and the Partnership Committee to incorporate a holistic approach to sexual violence prevention on university campuses.

Primary Prevention Strategies

Enhanced Access Acknowledge Act (EAAA)

Enhanced Assess Acknowledge Act (EAAA) is a sexual assault resistance program for women-identifying individuals on university and college campuses. It was developed and evaluated by Dr. Charlene Senn from the University of Windsor over a ten-year period. EAAA addresses the need for women-identifying individuals to resist acts of sexual assault (SARE Centre, 2017). The program takes a feminist approach by acknowledging the social context in which sexual violence exists. It sends a message that sexual assault perpetrated by men is only present when a man is willing to behave in a coercive and controlling way. Despite the program's focus on resistance education for potential victims/survivors, this message reduces victim-blaming.

A focus on what women-identifying individuals should and should not do to protect themselves can promote victim-blaming by ignoring the influences of social hierarchies of power. Therefore, sexual violence intervention strategies should not rely solely on teaching potential victims/survivors defensive strategies. However, it is critical to note that current sexual violence prevention programs have not solved the issue because sexual violence is still occurring at high rates on campuses. Therefore, it is advantageous and empowering for woman-identifying individuals to learn strategies for self-defence. In addition to providing education and training, such as bystander and consent education to shift the culture in which sexual violence exists, Dr. Senn suggests the EAAA program to help potential victims/survivors protect themselves.

The EAAA program teaches best practices and knowledge in self-defence, activism, advocacy, research, and prevention strategies (Senn et al., 2015). This is achieved through 10 hours of education on topics such as dispelling rape myths. Women-identifying individuals also learn how to resist acts of sexual assault when they occur through two hours of self-defence training. The program is focused on male perpetrated acquaintance sexual assault and has been shown to be effective for young women in university. It is designed to be inclusive of heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian, asexual, and trans-women (SARE Centre, 2017).

Senn et al. (2015) conducted a study on the effectiveness of the EAAA program at reducing incidences of sexual assault on three Canadian university campuses. The study revealed a significant difference between first-year female students who participated in the EAAA compared to students who had not participated. Individuals who participated in the EAAA program experienced a 46% reduction in completed rapes and a 63% reduction in attempted rapes (SARE Centre, 2017).

Based on Senn et al. (2015), the SVPC acknowledges the effectiveness of the EAAA program in preventing acts of sexual assault. However, the program is not included as a recommendation in this report because the SVPC believes that the EAAA's focus on potential victim's/survivor's sexual violence resistance behaviours does not adequately address changing the culture of sexual violence. This would conflict with the SVPC's focus on cultural change as a primary prevention strategy for sexual violence.

The SVPC members agreed that, in combination with changing the culture in which sexual violence exists, training for potential victims/survivors is important. Therefore, the SVPC is in favour of a Nova Scotia university (to be identified) implementing the EAAA program on their campus with an aim to evaluate its effectiveness in the Nova Scotia context.

Secondary Prevention Strategies

Education on Sexual Violence Policies and Practices

A sexual violence-specific policy could enhance the prevention of sexual violence if potential perpetrators are aware of the seriousness of the incident and the associated disciplinary actions. In order for this to be effective, the sexual violence policy needs to be well advertised to the university population. An awareness of the sexual violence policy will also assist victims/survivors in understanding their rights after experiencing an incident and may increase their feelings of support from the university. Ideally, a sexual violence-specific policy would be well known to all students, faculty, staff, and administration similar to each university's policy on plagiarism.

Reporting

It is important for universities to collect data on disclosures and reports of sexual misconduct on campus for consistent, comparative reporting (when required) and to examine the prevalence of sexual violence. This will assist in policy development and determine the effectiveness of best or promising practices in the prevention of such incidents. The Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) formed a sub-committee representative of universities across the region with a mandate to develop a 'reporting template'. The sub-committee's recommended approach was reviewed by AAU Council (Presidents) in April, 2017. Following institutional review and input, the draft reporting template was returned to the AAU working group for further consideration.

<u>Safe Disclosure Options</u>

It is important for victims/survivors of sexual violence to feel safe when disclosing an incident to the university. Sexual violence-specific policies should outline several options for disclosures in order to increase this safety. For example, the university can designate several staff to receive a disclosure to increase the victim's/survivor's choice and empowerment. Also, victims/survivors should have the option to make an anonymous disclosure. The SVPC suggests each university consider the safety of the victim/survivor when developing disclosure protocols.

<u>Survivor Supports</u>

Research has shown that social supports during and after an experience of sexual violence can impact the likelihood of a victim/survivor developing mental health issues (Tremblay, Hébert & Piché, 1999; Yancey & Hanson, 2010, as cited in Shönbucher, Maier, Mohler-Kuo, Schnyder & Landolt, 2014). Shönbucher et al. (2014) found that adolescents who experienced sexual violence were most satisfied with experiences of peer supports in addition to professional counselling.

Individuals in a supportive role are required to believe the victim/survivor and provide emotional care. Therefore, it is important for peer supports to have knowledge about how to respond to a disclosure of sexual violence. The Dalhousie Student Union's (DSU) Sexual Assault and Harassment Phone Line is an example of such a peer support service. Volunteers were trained on the culture and context of sexual violence, which helped to ensure that non-judgemental support was provided to each caller.

In the Standing Committee on the Status of Women Canada's report (March, 2017) for the Federal Government, one of their recommendations speaks specifically to survivor supports on campus. Recommendation 8 "urges all jurisdictions to discuss mechanisms by which the provinces and territories could require all university and college administrations to establish sexual assault centres on campus, with free counselling services". These centres could help to offset the long wait times currently experienced within campus mental health counselling services. According to Ms. Chambers, sexual assault centres on campus should provide "immediate security assistance for those who make calls with regard to assaults or harassment; safety planning; counselling; health care, including testing for [sexually transmitted diseases] and pregnancy and assistance with the completion of a rape kit if desired; accommodations with regard to academic requirements; accommodations to ensure no-contact with the perpetrator; and connections to peer supports" (Lori Chambers, "Deposition for Standing Committee, Ottawa," *Submitted Brief,* 19 October 2016, as cited in Standing Committee on the Status of Women, March, 2017).

<u>Partnerships with Community Resources</u>

It is important for universities to partner with gender and women's resource centres and sexual assault resource centres to assist with the development of sexual violence prevention strategies and to provide support for victims/survivors of sexual violence. Individuals from such community organizations can provide non-judgemental and compassionate emotional support for individuals who experience sexual violence if this service is requested. They can also provide education on the process of reporting an incident, including information on the complexities of the legal system. These are important supports for victims/survivors, which a university faculty or staff may not be able to offer.

The SVPC suggests each university in Nova Scotia develop an ongoing collaboration with community organizations and police/RCMP services to increase the effectiveness of their policies, practices, and supports [see the Province of Nova Scotia's *Breaking the Silence*

website (https://breakthesilencens.ca/where-to-get-help) for a directory of sexual violence-specific resources].

CONCLUSION

Despite a growing awareness of the issue, sexual violence remains a serious issue in our society. This report highlights best or promising practices in sexual violence prevention, as well as gaps which need to be addressed. The purpose is to create a holistic strategy for sexual violence prevention that places responsibility on students, faculty, staff, and administration for changing the attitudes and beliefs which perpetuate sexual violence. In order for this change to be possible, it is necessary for prevention strategies to target the personal, cultural and systemic levels. A combination of all ten recommendations in this report aim to change the culture in which sexual violence exists by addressing all three of these levels.

In keeping with the 2015-19 MOU agreement to review sexual violence-specific policies every three years, it is suggested that each university review and evaluate the implementation of the recommendations in this report. The SVPC recommendations are based on current research about sexual violence. However, as this is a complex issue, there is still much to learn. As more research is conducted and society's understanding of sexual violence evolves, it is suggested that each university take this knowledge into consideration and alter its strategies accordingly. This report is intended as an initial step toward the elimination of sexual violence on Nova Scotia university campuses and society as a whole.

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Appendix A

Definitions

Acquaintance Sexual Assault: Acquaintance sexual assault is an act of sexual assault committed by an individual known to the victim/survivor. The perpetrator is in a position of trust because of this relationship and may use this trust to manipulate the situation.

Binary (also Gender Binary): "A socially constructed system that divides sex and gender into two discrete, opposite, and disconnected categories of male/man/masculine and female/woman/feminine. This type of system is problematic for people who are intersex, trans, or gender variant" (Province of Nova Scotia, n.d.).

Consent: Consent is "an agreement to engage in a sexual activity. It must be fully voluntary, clearly communicated, and ongoing. All sexual activities that are engaged in must be consented to: if there is consent given for a particular sexual activity, this consent does not automatically extend to other sexual activities. Consent can be withdrawn at any time, including during a sexual activity that had previously been consented to. As defined by Canadian law [Criminal Code s. 273.1], consent is 'the voluntary agreement ... to engage in the sexual activity in question.' Consent does *not* legally exist if:

- Sexual activity is agreed to by someone other than the persons directly involved,
- The person is incapable of consenting to the sexual activity (for example, because they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs),
- An abuse of power, authority, or trust is used to coerce the victim/survivor to engage in sexual activity, or
- One party expresses (through their words or their conduct) a lack of agreement to engage in the activity,
- The person, having consented to engage in sexual activity, expresses by words or conduct a lack of agreement to continue to engage in the activity" (EVABC, 2016, p. 20).

Cyber-bullying: Cyber-bullying is "any electronic communication through the use of technology including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, computers, other electronic devices, social networks, text messaging, instant messaging, websites and electronic mail, typically repeated or with continuing effect, that is intended or ought reasonably be expected to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress or other damage or harm to another person's health, emotional well-being, self-esteem or reputation, and includes assisting or encouraging such communication in any way" (Province of Nova Scotia, 2013a).

Equality/Equity: Equality is the process of providing everyone in society with equal resources. "Equity involves ensuring that everyone has access to the resources, opportunities, power, and responsibility *they need* to reach their full potential as well as making changes so that unfair differences may be understood and addressed" (Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, n.d.).

Gender Expression: Gender expression is the "external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being masculine or feminine [although can be a blend of both or neither]" (The Human Rights Campaign, 2017).

Gender Identity: Gender identity is "one's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth" (The Human Rights Campaign, 2017).

Gender-based Violence: Gender-based violence is "any form of behaviour – including psychological, physical, and sexual behaviour – that is based on an individual's gender and is intended to control, humiliate, or harm the individual. This form of violence is generally directed at women and girls. It reflects an attitude or prejudice at the individual or institutional level that aims to subordinate an individual or group on the basis of sex and/or gender identity" (Saint Mary's University, 2013, p. 82).

Hyper-sexuality: Hyper-sexuality is the preoccupation with sex in society. It "includes the cultural and marketing messages that our value as individuals comes from our sex appeal and behaviour, the sexual objectification of people, the blurring of the lines between adult and child sexuality, the mainstreaming of pornography and the exploitation of sex and sexuality for marketing purposes. Hypersexualization is not the same thing as the normal process of sexual maturation and does not promote sexual health, or healthy relationships" (Hypersexualization Project General Backgrounder, July 2012, NS Department of Health and Wellness, as cited in Saint Mary's University, 2013, p. 82).

Intersectionality/Intersecting Identities: Intersectionality/Intersecting identities is an understanding that people and their experiences are shaped by their connection to different social locations (e.g. race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion). Individuals who identify with multiple forms of marginalized social locations are more negatively impacted by inequality in society. For example, Indigenous women experience gendered violence disproportionately in comparison to White women.

LGBTQIA2S+: An acronym used to represent individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, two-spirited (and other identities such as questioning, pansexual or unsure). Sexual orientation and gender identity exist on a continuum and therefore, there are other identities individuals may use which are not listed under this term.

Sexual Assault: "Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact that occurs without ongoing and freely given consent. Sexual assault includes *any* form of sexual contact where consent has not been given (e.g., non-consensual touching that is sexual in nature, forced vaginal or anal penetration)" (EVABC, 2016, p. 19).

In Canadian law [Criminal Code s. 265.1], sexual assault is any act where:

- "without the consent of another person, he applies force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly;

- he attempts or threatens, by an act or a gesture, to apply force to another person, if he has, or causes that other person to believe on reasonable grounds that he has, present ability to effect his purpose; or

- while openly wearing or carrying a weapon or an imitation thereof, he accosts or impedes another person or begs" (Government of Canada, 2017).

Sexual Cyber-bullying: Sexual cyber-bullying is the "repeated, unsolicited, threatening behaviour of a sexual nature by a person or group using cell phone or Internet technology with

the intent to bully, harass, and intimidate others" (Cape Breton University, 2016, p. 3).

Sexual Harassment: "Sexual harassment is any unwanted communications or actions that are sexual in nature, and are offensive, intimidating, or humiliating. It can take many forms, including verbal, written, or visual. Sexual harassment includes unwanted touching, offensive jokes, sexual requests, and verbal abuse. Sexual harassment is a type of sex discrimination, and falls under *Human Rights Law* (not the *Criminal Code of Canada*)" (EVABC, 2016, p. 19).

Sexual Misconduct: "*'Sexual misconduct*' includes the following:
(a) Sexual assault;
(b) Sexual exploitation;
(c) Sexual harassment;
(d) Stalking;
(e) Indecent exposure;
(f) Voyeurism;
(g) The distribution of a sexually explicit photograph or video of a person to one or more persons other than the person in the photograph or video without the consent of the person in the photograph or video and with the intent to distress the person in the photograph or video;
(h) The attempt to commit an act of sexual misconduct; and
(i) The threat to commit an act of sexual misconduct" (Cape Breton University, 2016, *Sexual Violence Policy*, p. 2).

Sexual Orientation: Sexual orientation is **"**an inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people" (The Human Rights Campaign, 2017).

Sexual Violence: "Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting" (Province of Nova Scotia, 2015a).

Victim Blaming: "Victim blaming occurs when the victim of a crime or an accident is held responsible – in whole or in part – for the crimes that have been committed against them" (St. Francis Xavier University, 2016, p. 2).

Appendix B

Sexual Violence Prevention Committee Members

MEMBERSHIP

The committee was co-chaired by Ava Czapalay, Senior Executive Director, Higher Education Branch, Labour of Advanced Education (LAE), and Dianne Taylor-Gearing, President, NSCAD University.

Name	Title	Association
Government		
Ava Czapalay Co-Chair	**Senior Executive Director**	**LAE's Higher Education Branch**
Stephanie MacInnis Langley	Executive Director	Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Sarah Granke	Specialist, Sexual Violence Prevention & Supports	Department of Community Services
Margaret Ann Bruhier	Planning and Development Officer	LAE's Higher Education Branch – Universities and Colleges Division
Student Representatives		
Collette Robert	Chair	Students Nova Scotia (SNS)
Charlotte Kiddell	Chairperson	Canadian Federation of Students-Nova Scotia (CFS-NS)
Kathleen Reid	President	Dalhousie Student Union (DSU)
First Responders on Campus		
Jane Collins	Nurse Manager, Student Health Services and S.A.N.E. and Manager, Sexual Assault Response Team	Saint Mary's University
Administration and Faculty		
Camille Cameron	Dean of Law; Weldon Professor of Law	Dalhousie University Schulich School of Law
Colin Dodds	Past President, Professor in Master of Finance Program	Saint Mary's University
Administration		
Dianne Taylor-Gearing Co-Chair	**President of NSCAD, and Chair of the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP)**	**NSCAD University**
Peter Halpin	Executive Director	Association of Atlantic Universities
Kelly Gallant	Associate Vice President, Communications and Marketing	Mount Saint Vincent University
Nicholas Hatt	Dean of Students	University of King's College
James Sanford	Executive Director, Student Services	Acadia University
Norm Smith [Member from September to November 2016]	Senior Director, Student Services	Cape Breton University

Name	Title	Association
John Mayich [Joined Committee in November 2016]	Director, Student Affairs	Cape Breton University
Margaret (Margie) McKinnon	Director of Health, Counselling and Accessible Learning	St. Francis Xavier University
Community-based Organizations with Expertise in Sexual Violence Prevention		
Jackie Stevens	Executive Director	Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
Lucille Harper	Executive Director	Antigonish Women's Resource Centre
Sexual Violence Prevention Committee Observer		
Kathleen Allen	AVP, Enrollment and Student Services	Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)
Co-op Intern		
Brittany Orchard	Co-op Intern (Dalhousie School of Social Work student)	Department of LAE- Higher Education Branch - U&C Division

Appendix C

Sexual Violence Prevention Committee: Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

The Province recognizes sexual violence as a serious health, social, and public safety issue, and acknowledges that incidents of sexual violence are under-reported in Nova Scotia[3]. In an effort to address this issue, Nova Scotia released its first sexual violence strategy, *Breaking the Silence: A Coordinated Response to Sexual Violence in Nova Scotia*, in June, 2015. The definition of sexual violence adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and stated in Nova Scotia's provincial strategy is:

"Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting."

The *Breaking the Silence* strategy outlines actions to support sexual violence response and prevention in three areas:
- improving services and supports;
- public education, awareness, and prevention; and
- approach and accountability.

In the context of the Province's efforts to address the issue of sexual violence through its *Breaking the Silence* strategy, the 2015-19 *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities* commits the Parties to working together to address the issue on university campuses.

In addition, the 2015-19 MOU commits the universities to:
- adopt specific policies that address sexual violence;
- renew the policies every three years through an inclusive process, which engages elected student representatives;
- focus on prevention by promoting greater awareness through education; and
- ensure that the policies clearly state complaint procedures and response protocols.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

In order to respond broadly to a collective commitment to sexual violence prevention on campuses, the 2015-19 MOU specifically commits the Partnership [composed of the university presidents and several Deputy Ministers] to form a working committee composed of government representatives, elected student representatives, first responders on campuses, faculty, administration, and representatives from community-based organizations with expertise in sexual violence prevention. Consequently, the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee has been formed. The purpose of the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee is to work towards sexual violence prevention on campuses, with a key task to prepare a report and recommendations for the Partnership.

TERM

This Terms of Reference remains effective until terminated by agreement between the Parties of the 2015-19 MOU [the Province of Nova Scotia and the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP)].

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[3] A Sexual Violence Strategy for Nova Scotia – What we have heard http://novascotia.ca/coms/svs/what-we-heard/

MANDATE AND RESPONSIBILITIES
The mandate of the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee is to work towards sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia campuses, with a key task to prepare a report and recommendations on sexual violence prevention for Government and university presidents (i.e. the Partnership Committee).

Accordingly, this Committee is tasked with:
• working collaboratively to examine the issue of sexual violence on campuses in the Nova Scotia context; and
• developing a report, with recommendations, to advance sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses.

This Committee's work will complement efforts under the *Breaking the Silence* strategy to help us move toward our shared vision of a Nova Scotia free from sexual violence.

KEY DELIVERABLE
The committee will prepare a report, with recommendations, by the end of April, 2017.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Members of the Committee commit to:
• make every effort to attend scheduled Committee meetings;
• make timely decisions and take action so as to not slow, or prevent, advancement of the work; and
• notify the membership, as soon as practical, if any matter arises which is deemed to affect the advancement of the work.

Members of the Committee can expect to:
• be provided with complete, accurate, and meaningful information in a timely manner;
• be given reasonable time to make key decisions; and
• be advised about potential risks and issues that could impact the advancement of the work.

ACCOUNTABILITY
The Sexual Violence Prevention Committee is accountable to the Partnership Committee of the 2015-19 *MOU between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities*. The Committee will submit its final report, with recommendations, to the Partnership Committee.

Specifically, the Committee is accountable for:
• fostering collaboration;
• maintaining, at all times, a focus on its agreed outcomes and scope;
• identifying and working to remove obstacles to the successful delivery of its outcomes; and
• monitoring and managing the factors outside of its control that are both detrimental and critical to its success.

ASSUMPTIONS
The recommendations developed by the Committee should reflect principles of social justice and equity in addressing sexual violence on university campuses as a complex social issue.

PRINCIPLES
During the course of its work, the Committee will strive to uphold the following principles:

- Respect;
- Diversity;
- Equity;
- Integrity; and
- Innovation.

MEETINGS – STRUCTURE AND PROTOCOL
Frequency:
The Committee will meet every two to three months, or as agreed, until the draft report is prepared and submitted to the Partnership. Consequently, the frequency of meetings following the October, 2016 meeting will be determined depending on what is required to complete the work.

Communications and confidentiality:
Committee members will possess information or documentation of a confidential nature. Confidential information and related discussions must not be disclosed to external stakeholders without prior approval.

Meeting Notes:
Meeting notes will list attendees and will reflect the key actions and decisions arising from the meetings. Conversations will not be recorded as minutes, nor will individual comments be recorded.

Technology:
The Committee may utilize a teleconference dial-in option to facilitate meetings and information exchange. Members may suggest other technologies required to facilitate meetings.

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS
The Universities and Colleges (U&C) Division of the Higher Education Branch of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education will provide secretariat support to the Committee.

Appendix D

Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Prevention Strategy Definitions

Public health interventions are often grouped into categories of prevention according to when the intervention occurs. Sexual violence interventions can be divided into these categories:

- Primary Prevention: Approaches that take place *before* sexual violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimization.
- Secondary Prevention: Immediate responses *after* sexual violence has occurred to deal with the short-term consequences of violence.
- Tertiary Prevention: Long-term responses *after* sexual violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of violence and sex offender treatment interventions.

Taken from: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/svprevention-a.pdf