

Guidelines and  
Recommendations for  
Nova Scotia Universities  
and the Nova Scotia  
Community College

# Development of Survivor-Centric Sexual Violence Policies and Responses

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CONSUP  
COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document, *Guidelines for Nova Scotia Universities and the Nova Scotia Community College: Development of Survivor-Centric Sexual Violence Policies*, is the result of the Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Committee's (PSVPC's) work to fulfill part of its mandate. The PSVPC was formed in April 2018 as a direct result of Recommendation #9 in the report *Changing the culture of acceptance: Recommendations to address sexual violence on university campuses*. The Committee was mandated to share expertise and resources in the area of sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university and college campuses, and to develop policy guidelines to guide the development of stand-alone sexual violence policies for Nova Scotia universities. The Committee was further tasked, by the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, to develop recommendations for Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC to enhance survivor-centric responses to sexual violence at institutions.

The PSVPC's work to develop these policy guidelines and recommendations has been informed by its membership, which includes representatives from Government (the Departments of Labour and Advanced Education, Community Services, Health and Wellness, Justice, and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women), the universities (including faculty), the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), student groups, community-based organizations with expertise in sexual violence prevention, and the RCMP. See Appendix A on page 21 for a list of the Committee's membership. From its inception in April 2018, to April 2019, the Committee met 12 times. The development of this document has also been informed by research, presentations delivered by the Committee's membership at monthly meetings, and by other experts in the field of sexual violence prevention. See Appendix B on page 24 for the list of presenters and topics.

This guideline document is intended to be used as a resource by Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC when they update their existing stand-alone sexual violence policies, and as they work to ensure that their overall campus response to sexual violence is survivor-centric. Specifically, the document:

- provides a comprehensive and clear step-by-step approach to updating stand-alone sexual violence policies; and
- includes 11 recommendations for Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC to enhance survivor-centric responses to sexual violence.

The specific objectives of creating this guideline document are to ensure that each of Nova Scotia's 10 universities and the NSCC maintain up to date stand-alone sexual violence policies that are survivor-centric, and that they endeavor to enhance and uphold survivor-centric campus responses to sexual violence.

Pages 11-12 of this document outline a 'Step-by-Step Guide to Developing Survivor-Centric Sexual Violence Policies', and pages 13-14 outline 'Recommendations for Nova Scotia Universities and the Nova Scotia Community College – Enhancing Survivor-Centric Responses to Sexual Violence'.

## BACKGROUND

The 2015-19 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities outlined key deliverables to guide the Province and the universities to achieve a sustainable, accessible, and quality sector. One of the key deliverables of the MOU was to address sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university campuses. This work is critical to ensuring that Nova Scotia students can learn in environments free from sexual violence. Accordingly, the MOU outlined several deliverables to advance sexual violence prevention. These deliverables included:

- Nova Scotia universities will work with local and regional partners to develop policies, programs and activities that serve to enhance awareness and understanding of sexual violence;
- Nova Scotia universities will adopt stand-alone policies that address sexual violence; and
- A working committee will be formed with a mandate to work towards sexual violence prevention on campus by preparing a report and recommendations on sexual violence prevention for Nova Scotia's 10 university presidents and the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE).

In September 2016, the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC) was formed. The Committee's mandate was, as outlined in the 2015-19 MOU, to prepare a report and recommendations on sexual violence prevention for Nova Scotia's university presidents and the Minister of LAE. The Committee's membership consisted of government representatives, student representatives, a first responder on campus, faculty, administration, and representatives from community-based organizations with expertise in sexual violence prevention. In finalizing the recommendations, the Committee consulted with a broad group of stakeholders.

The Committee's report, *Changing the culture of acceptance: Recommendations to address sexual violence on university campuses*, was endorsed by the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) and the Minister of LAE, and publicly released in December 2017. It outlines 10 comprehensive and strategic recommendations which are meant to:

- reflect primary prevention initiatives;
- reduce victim blaming; and
- change the culture in which sexual violence exists to prevent its occurrence on university campuses.

Upon completion of its mandate, i.e. the development of the report and recommendations, the SVPC concluded its work.



The Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (PSVPC) was formed in April 2018 as a direct result of Recommendation #9 in the *Changing the culture of acceptance report*. The Committee's mandate is to share expertise and resources in the area of sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university and college campuses, and to develop policy guidelines to guide the development of stand-alone sexual violence policies for Nova Scotia universities. The Committee was further tasked, by the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, to develop recommendations for Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC to enhance survivor-centric responses to sexual violence at institutions.

The Committee's membership is composed of representatives from Government (the Departments of Labour and Advanced Education, Community Services, Health and Wellness, Justice, and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women), the universities (including faculty), the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), student groups, community-based organizations with expertise in sexual violence prevention, and the RCMP. The inclusion of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) on the Committee's membership reflects a commitment by both the university and college sector to share best or promising practices related to sexual violence prevention, and to ensure that the work to address sexual violence is well aligned across both sectors.

This document, *Guidelines and Recommendations for Nova Scotia Universities and the Nova Scotia Community College: Development of Survivor-Centric Sexual Violence Policies and Responses*, is the result of the Committee's work to fulfill its mandate to develop policy guidelines and recommendations. The PSVPC recognizes that sexual violence policies should be reviewed and critiqued regularly. This will help to ensure that such policies always reflect current survivor-centric approaches.

Throughout this document 'the universities' and 'Nova Scotia universities' refers to Nova Scotia's 10 universities represented by their respective presidents, and the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP).

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

### Purpose

This guideline document is intended to be used as a resource by Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC when they update their existing stand-alone sexual violence policies, and as they work to ensure that their overall campus response to sexual violence is survivor-centric. Specifically, the document:

- provides a comprehensive and clear step-by-step approach to updating stand-alone sexual violence policies; and
- includes 11 recommendations for Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC to enhance survivor-centric responses to sexual violence.

## Objective

The specific objectives of creating this guideline document are to ensure that each of Nova Scotia's 10 universities and the NSCC maintain up to date stand-alone sexual violence policies that are survivor-centric, and that they endeavor to enhance and uphold survivor-centric campus responses to sexual violence.

## TERMINOLOGY – RAPE CULTURE, TRAUMA-INFORMED, AND SURVIVOR-CENTRED

Throughout this document, terms such as rape culture, trauma informed, and survivor-centred/survivor-centric are used. Because these are key concepts that are critical to advancing sexual violence prevention and response work, it is important to define them. Clear definitions provide the basis of a common understanding.

### Rape Culture

“‘Rape culture’ is a term that describes an environment where rape is pervasive, normalized and accepted as inevitable. Rape culture does not necessarily mean that society or individual people promote sexual violence in an outward, active manner. Rather rape culture is largely perpetuated via unexamined and false beliefs. Some examples of rape culture include myths about sexual violence, victim blaming, language that trivializes rape, jokes, sexual objectification in ads, images that glamourize sexual violence, song lyrics that send confusing and harmful messages about consent, and more” (Province of Nova Scotia, n.d. a).

“Rape culture contributes to societal scepticism of reports of sexual assault compared to reports of other criminal offences despite evidence that false reports of sexual assault are no more common than false reports for other types of crime (as low as 2%)” (Lisak, Gardinier, Nicksa, & Cote, 2010, p. 12 as cited in Ending Violence Association of BC, 2016).

Rape culture also contributes to the normalization of male sexual violence. Furthermore, it is well recognized that rape culture permeates systems and institutions such as the legal and criminal justice systems; this often results in the re-traumatization of victims/survivors and is a main deterrent to reporting sexual violence.

### Trauma-informed

“Trauma-informed practice (TIP) is a universal and systemic approach to service provision. It is based on an understanding of the prevalence of many forms of violence and trauma among children and adults – developmental, historical, simple/complex, weather-related, war-related, (sexual violence related), gender-based – and the wide range of adaptations people make to cope” (IWK Health Centre, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Province of Nova Scotia, 2015, p. 5).

TIP aims to make interactions, services, and systems receptive and supportive of people who have experienced trauma (IWK Health Centre, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Province of Nova Scotia, 2015).

## Survivor-centred

The *UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls* (2011) defines a survivor-centred approach as one that prioritizes the rights, needs, and wishes of the survivor. According to this approach, “The survivor has the right to:

- be treated with dignity and respect instead of being exposed to victim-blaming attitudes.
- choose the course of action in dealing with the violence instead of feeling powerless.
- privacy and confidentiality instead of exposure.
- non-discrimination instead of discrimination based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, HIV status or any other characteristic.
- receive comprehensive information to help (them) make (their) own decision instead of being told what to do” (UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, 2011).

“(A survivor-centred) approach helps to promote the (victim’s)/survivor’s recovery and (their) ability to identify and express needs and wishes, as well as to reinforce (their) capacity to make decisions about possible interventions” (UNICEF, 2010, as cited by the UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, 2011).

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The universities and the NSCC agree to uphold the following guiding principles as they work collaboratively with their administration, staff, student leaders, faculty representatives, and campus community to update their stand-alone sexual violence policies, and as they work to ensure that their overall campus response to sexual violence is survivor-centric. The principles of ‘collaboration’ and ‘inclusivity and accessibility’ were borrowed from the National Our Turn Committee (2017) report.

**Collaboration** – Administration, staff, student leaders, and faculty representatives will work collaboratively towards the prevention of sexual violence in order to help enhance the safety and well-being of the entire campus community.

**Inclusivity and accessibility** – The work to address campus sexual violence should include the voices of the diverse student populations at each institution, including the voices of students with disabilities who often experience a range of barriers to accessing services and receiving information through multiple mediums (definition adapted from National Our Turn Committee, 2017)

**Transparency** – The work to address campus sexual violence should be done in a transparent manner – demonstrated by clear, open, and regular communication between administration, staff, student leaders, faculty representatives, and the broader campus community.

**Informed by current research and first voices** – The work to address campus sexual violence should be informed by current research evidence and, when possible, the voices of victims/survivors. Victims/survivors should have the opportunity to engage in, inform, and critique the work in a manner that does not result in re-victimization.



***Persistent and continuous*** – The work to address campus sexual violence should be persistent, continuous, and ongoing.

The following principles are recommended for inclusion in each institution's stand-alone sexual violence policy. This is less about how key stakeholders work together and more about certain aspects that should be reflected and/or acknowledged in each institution's policy. This list of principles, with the exception of the 'acknowledgement of the gendered nature of sexual violence', has been borrowed from the National Our Turn Committee (2017) report.

***Acknowledgment of the existence of rape culture*** – The prevention of sexual violence cannot be achieved without acknowledgement of the existence of rape culture, since it is largely this culture that perpetuates the continued existence of sexual violence. In order for progress to be made, the prevalence of rape culture on campuses, and in society, needs to be acknowledged and addressed. Institutions can work to address the negative attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and assumptions associated with rape culture through the delivery of consent and by-stander education.

***Acknowledgement of the gendered nature of sexual violence*** – The gendered nature of sexual violence and the fact that marginalized populations are at a greater risk of experiencing sexual violence should be acknowledged. Racism, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, islamophobia, ableism, classism and sexual violence are entrenched in the same systems of power, privilege and oppression. Therefore, to eradicate sexual violence, we must work towards the eradication of all systems of oppression (Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, 2017).

***Intersectionality*** – The term 'intersectionality' was first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (National Our Turn Committee, 2017). It refers to "...people and their experiences (being) 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" (Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, 2017, p. 65). Institutions can work to address oppressive thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours through the delivery of anti-oppression education.

***Gender sensitivity and gender inclusivity*** – According to the National Our Turn Committee (2017), "A gender sensitive approach recognizes that sexual violence is part of a broader spectrum of gender-based violence and violence against women and girls" (p. 11). "A gender inclusive approach recognizes that individuals of any gender identity or sexual orientation may perpetrate and experience sexual violence" (National Our Turn Committee, 2017, p. 11).

***A trauma-informed approach*** – "A trauma-informed approach to sexual violence seeks to ensure that the prevention and support programs implemented respect the wishes of survivors and reduce re-traumatization" (National Our Turn Committee, 2017, p. 10). According to the Ending Violence Association of BC, 2016, as cited in National Our Turn Committee, 2017, p. 10, "...being trauma-informed within the campus context refers to understanding the impacts of

sexual violence on survivors (and others) and responding in a manner that promotes their empowerment and recovery and minimizes re-traumatization)”.

***A survivor-centric approach*** – A survivor-centric approach often refers to the policies, procedures, and broader policy frameworks and/or responses to sexual violence which aim to ensure that the rights, needs, and wishes of the victim/survivor are prioritized. See the ‘Definitions’ section on page 28 of this document.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

The 2015-19 MOU between the Province of Nova Scotia and the universities outlined the following aspects with respect to the development of stand-alone sexual violence policies.

- The policies should be developed and renewed every three years through an inclusive process;
- The Universities commit to engaging with elected student representatives to help ensure student involvement;
- One of the key objectives of the policies should be a focus on prevention by promoting greater awareness through education;
- The policies must clearly state complaint procedures and response protocols for addressing the issue within the institution; and
- The policies must be published in a manner that is understandable, easily accessible, and publicly available.

While these guidelines are still relevant, it should be noted that universities and the NSCC agree that engaging in ongoing policy review and updates should be more frequent than every three years, as outlined in Recommendation #1 in this document on page 13. The universities and NSCC agree to uphold these guidelines each time they renew their sexual violence policies.

## RE-VICTIMIZATION AND ITS IMPACT

A key component of working to address sexual violence from a trauma-informed and survivor centric approach is understanding re-victimization and its impact. Revictimization, or secondary wounding, is a common experience among victims of crime and violence (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d.). “Secondary wounding occurs when people respond to a (victim of sexual violence) by either making (them) feel ashamed, or blaming them for the sexual (violence)” (Aphrodite Matsakis, 1994, as cited in Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, 2017). “We know that the most important factor which helps to determine the extent of long-term post-traumatic effects for an individual is the level of support (they receive) following a traumatic

event” (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d.). There are three streams of secondary wounding which involve shaming or blaming the person for: being targeted; their reactions during and immediately following the sexual assault; and the symptoms and coping mechanisms they have developed as a result of the harm that was done to them (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d.). It is important to note that there are often limited resources available to meet the needs of diverse populations; this can further contribute to secondary wounding (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d.). The PSVPC is recommending, as an addition to the National Our Turn Committee’s checklist of what survivor-centric policies should include, a list of ‘culturally specific resources for victims/survivors’ (see pages 14-15 of this document).

Examples of secondary wounding can be obvious, or subtle, and it is not only words that impact victims/survivors, it is also the tone in which we speak (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d.). When someone discloses that they have been a victim of sexual violence, it is critical that the person who receives the disclosure not engage in the following:

- express denial, disbelief, or engage in avoidance – “This couldn’t have happened”, “You’re over-reacting”, “You’re making this up”, or fail to acknowledge the disclosure;
- discount the incident, or minimize it – “You’re making too much out of it”, ‘I don’t think he meant to do it”, “That wasn’t as bad as it could have been”;
- imply blame for being targeted – “You shouldn’t let yourself get so drunk”, “Why did you go there with him?”, “Didn’t you lead him on?”;
- imply blame for the person’s actions during or following the assault – “Why didn’t you scream, or run, when you had the chance”, “Why didn’t you tell someone right away?”, “If you were sexually assaulted, why didn’t you report it to the police?”;
- stigmatize the person – view the person as unstable, permanently damaged and/or deficient by attributing most or all of their emotional and behavioural reactions to the trauma, and/or labelling them as an attention-seeker, a resistant or non-compliant individual, or a non-credible person; and
- fail to protect their privacy – not maintaining confidentiality by sharing their personal information, in any form to anyone, without their consent (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d.).

In the case of campus sexual violence, secondary wounding can also occur when victims/survivors of sexual violence are asked to participate in sexual violence prevention work. Students who are actively engaged in initiatives to address sexual violence are sometimes asked to take on additional roles on their respective campuses (PSVPC members, personal communication, November 20, 2018). While some students welcome the opportunity, others feel that they can’t say ‘no’; this negates the individual’s sense of choice which can trigger a trauma response (PSVPC members, personal communication, November 20, 2018). As universities and the NSCC continue to work collaboratively with students to address sexual violence, it is important to consider how best to involve victims/survivors in the

work without adding undue emotional strain and potentially re-victimizing them (PSVPC members, personal communication, November 20, 2018).

It is critical for service providers to implement strategies to prevent secondary wounding. Practices to support victims/survivors include:

- believe the person – it is critical that the person is believed. If they receive a negative response from the first person they disclose to, they are less likely to seek additional supports and/or engage with the legal system;
- utilize a trauma-informed approach – the goal is to support the person to heal, regain autonomy, and feel empowered;
- be mindful of vicarious trauma – service providers can experience burn-out, compassion fatigue, or vicarious trauma. When this happens, they are less likely to identify signs of secondary-wounding and are more likely to contribute to it; and
- incorporate self-care (Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, n.d.)

## **A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DEVELOPING SURVIVOR-CENTRIC SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICIES**

The step-by-step guide outlined below was created based on input from the PSVPC members in order to provide an overview of the key components of a comprehensive process to develop survivor-centric sexual violence policies. It is intended that these guidelines are used by Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC during their sexual violence policy reviews and update processes. The guidelines may also be used by other universities and community colleges outside of Nova Scotia as a resource when developing or renewing their sexual violence policies.

### **1. Develop a Sexual Violence Policy Committee/Advisory Group**

One of the main purposes of this committee should be to develop and/or renew the university's or community college's sexual violence policy. The committee should include broad representation from the institution's community including those who are directly responsible for receiving disclosures and reports, and those responsible for adjudicating cases. The committee should also be composed of student service support staff, and university/community college Human Resources staff if the policy's scope includes faculty and staff. This committee should also include elected student representatives from the institution. The committee should have a responsibility to engage in ongoing reviews and updates of its institution's sexual violence policy as outlined in Recommendation #1 in this document on page 13.

## **2. Develop a Clear Definition of Sexual Violence**

The institution's sexual violence policy should "Clearly define relevant terms (e.g., sexual violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, date rape, rape culture, consent, coercion, acquaintance sexual assault, drug-facilitated sexual assault). Definitions should align with legal definitions and be informed by experts in the field of antiviolenace" (Ending Violence Association of BC, 2016, p. 4-5).

The definition of sexual violence outlined in the institution's sexual violence policy should reflect the breadth of examples of sexual violence, including actions that are physical and/or psychological in nature when such actions target an individual's sexuality.

## **3. Engage Subject Matter, Legal, and Policy Experts**

The purpose of engaging such individuals is to gain feedback from experts about the content of the policy. These individuals should be consulted regularly throughout the policy development process.

## **4. Engage in Broad Campus Consultation**

The university's or community college's administration should engage in consultation with its broader campus community, including faculty, staff, and students. Ample time should be given to the consultation process, and a number of consultation options should be provided e.g. in-person meetings, on-line surveys, and anonymous feedback options. In-person meetings should be held during timeframes that maximize faculty, staff, and student participation.

## **5. Obtain Internal Approval**

Once the campus consultation process has been completed and the policy has been refined based on the feedback received, the institution's policy should be advanced through its internal approval process.

## **6. Focus on Enhancing Awareness & Policy Implementation and Resourcing**

Once the policy is approved by the institution's senate and/or board, it should be posted on the institution's website in a location that can be easily found. The institution's focus should then be centred on enhancing awareness about the policy throughout the campus community. A critical aspect of this is to ensure that members of the campus community who are most likely to receive disclosure and reports of sexual violence, and those who are responsible for investigating reports, are well versed on all aspects of the policy.

It is also essential that the institution identify and establish the necessary resources required to support the implementation of its sexual violence policy.

## **7. Evaluate the Policy**

The institution's sexual violence policy should be evaluated to ensure that its complaint procedures, response protocols, and investigation processes (if applicable) are survivor-centric. An evaluation framework will help institutions determine how well they have been able to operationalize their policies (see section 'Evaluating Survivor-Centric Sexual Violence Policies on page 15 of this document for more information about the proposed evaluation framework).



## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NOVA SCOTIA UNIVERSITIES AND THE NOVA SCOTIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE – ENHANCING SURVIVOR-CENTRIC RESPONSES TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

The PSPVC recommends that the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) and the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP), along with the President of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), work to ensure that Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC advance the following 11 recommendations. The overall intent is that the universities and the NSCC enhance survivor-centric responses to sexual violence on campuses by utilizing trauma-informed and survivor-centred approaches. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Minister, CONSUP, and the President of the NSCC ('the Parties') work collaboratively to ensure that:

1. The universities and the NSCC have procedures in place to ensure a survivor-centric response to sexual violence by updating their sexual violence policies at least once every three years, and engaging in ongoing policy review and updates, as required, to anticipate and/or respond to emerging issues;
2. The universities engage with elected and appointed student representatives throughout their sexual violence policy review and update process according to the processes outlined in their respective student consultation agreements and/or under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities. The NSCC will continue to engage with student representatives regarding its sexual violence policy review and update process through student representation on the College's sexual violence prevention advisory committee, and through other mechanisms as identified;
3. The universities and the NSCC engage with faculty and staff representatives at their respective institutions throughout their sexual violence policy review and update process. The engagement of faculty and staff could be achieved through representation on their respective institution's sexual violence prevention advisory committee, and through other mechanisms;
4. The universities strengthen their ability to respond to complaints using trauma-informed and survivor-centric approaches on an ongoing basis by seeking input from elected and appointed student representatives and other stakeholders to help identify existing and new training opportunities, and working collaboratively to address training requirements. The NSCC will also strengthen their ability to respond to complaints using trauma-informed and survivor-centric approaches by seeking input from stakeholders as well as students through student representation on the College's sexual violence prevention advisory committee, and through other mechanisms as identified;
5. The universities and the NSCC collaborate with experts in the field of sexual violence prevention and response to ensure approaches are informed by research evidence and best practices and/or promising approaches;

6. Each university and the NSCC explore the development of an independent process in which the disciplinary, remedial educational, and/or restorative processes, and the appeal process, are specific to sexual violence. This process, including the procedures for an appeal, should function independently of other processes for complaints, investigations (if applicable), decisions, and appeals. The Parties recognize that this separate investigative process may not be applicable to unionized employees who are subject to different procedures as outlined in their collective agreements;
7. In the event that an investigation, such as a criminal and/or civil proceeding, limits an institution's ability to collect adequate statements and information to conduct a thorough investigation and make a finding, the universities and the NSCC should develop procedures that support survivor-centric interim measures to address a complainant's report of sexual violence in a timely manner;
8. The universities and the NSCC are intentional in their efforts to enhance diversity among the individuals responsible for responding to disclosures and/or complaints of sexual violence on their respective campuses;
9. The universities and the NSCC work to ensure that individuals responsible for responding to disclosures and/or complaints of sexual violence on their respective campuses are appropriately trained in trauma-informed approaches. Training programs should be evidenced-based and reflective of best and/or promising practices. Furthermore, the universities and the NSCC commit to exploring the development of a common pool of diverse investigators and adjudicators, that all institutions can access;
10. The universities and the NSCC work to ensure that members of the campus community are trained to receive a disclosure of sexual violence from a trauma-informed approach. The module 'Responding to a Disclosure' from the training *Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: A Nova Scotia Resource* (LearnRidge, 2019) is recommended; and
11. The universities and the NSCC work to develop an evaluation framework that can be used to conduct a content evaluation and implementation evaluation of each institution's sexual violence policy. This evaluation framework should be adaptable to each university and the NSCC.

## **NATIONAL OUR TURN COMMITTEE'S SURVIVOR-CENTRIC SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY CHECKLIST**

This policy checklist was taken from the report *Our Turn A National, Student-Led Action Plan to End Campus Sexual Violence* (2017). According to the National Our Turn Committee (2017), the checklist reflects components that should and should not be included in an ideal survivor-centric policy. Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC may choose to refer to Our Turn's policy checklist to help guide their development of survivor-centric policies. The PSVPC has recommended adding the following to Our Turn's list of what survivor-centric policies should include:

- ‘culturally specific resources for victims/survivors’; and
- ‘educational resources on sexual violence prevention’.

#### **Campus sexual violence policies should include:**

- ✓ Recognition of the intersectional impacts of sexual violence
- ✓ Acknowledgement of campus rape culture
- ✓ Required sexual violence support and sensitivity training for all those involved in the complaint process
- ✓ Clear timelines
- ✓ A specific immunity clause for drug and alcohol use
- ✓ Anonymous and third-party complaint options
- ✓ Survivor-centric interim measures
- ✓ Protection from face-to-face encounters during the complaint process
- ✓ Culturally Specific Resources for Victims/Survivors
- ✓ Independent third-party member of the appeal committee
- ✓ Educational Resources on Sexual Violence Prevention

#### **Campus sexual violence policies should not include:**

- ✗ Time limits for filing a formal complaint
- ✗ Threatening sanctions for vexatious, malicious, or false complaints
- ✗ A gag order (either during or beyond the complaint process)
- ✗ A loophole whereby a complaint can be suspended if the respondent ends their relationship with the school (i.e. transfers or drops out)

### **EVALUATING SURVIVOR-CENTRIC SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICIES**

The development and implementation of survivor-centric sexual violence policies should be informed by existing research, as well as supported by ongoing research. This will help to ensure that such policies reflect current survivor-centric approaches. In order to ensure that institutional policies respond to the needs of victims/survivors, the PSVPC recommends that such policies be evaluated, in part, against metrics focused on survivor-centric overarching principles. According to the CDC National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control (n.d.) “Evaluation is the activity through which we develop an understanding of the merit, worth, and utility of a policy” (p.1). Accordingly, the overall intent of evaluating Nova Scotia universities’

and the NSCC's sexual violence policies is to determine how well institutions have been able to operationalize their stand-alone sexual violence policies from a survivor-centric approach. The metrics should include, but not be limited to, those principles for survivor-centric sexual violence policies outlined in this document on pages 8-9.

In order to engage in evaluation of the institutions' sexual violence policies, the PSVPC recommends the development of an evaluation framework that can be used to conduct a content evaluation and implementation evaluation of each institution's sexual violence policy. This evaluation framework should be adaptable to each university and the NSCC. See Recommendation #11 in this document on page 14. Content evaluation and implementation evaluation are two types of policy evaluation identified by the CDC National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control (n.d.). While content evaluation will help institutions determine the extent to which their stand-alone sexual violence reflect survivor-centric principles, implementation evaluation will help to determine how well the policy is administered from a survivor-centric approach.

The third aspect of policy evaluation is impact evaluation which relates to whether the policy achieved its intended impact (CDC National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, n.d.). Impact evaluation will help to determine, in part, the extent to which students are aware of the policy, and the extent to which they believe the policy is a solid tool that guides timely and comprehensive responses to sexual violence from a survivor-centric approach.

The PSVPC recommends the delivery of a campus climate survey to address impact evaluation of the institutions' policies. The survey should be delivered in 2019, and again in 2023. The survey would examine the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours related to sexual violence on Nova Scotia campuses. The survey would also examine the rates of various forms of sexual violence. Furthermore, the survey would help to examine the aspects previously mentioned i.e. the extent to which students are aware of the policy, and the extent to which they believe the policy is a solid tool that helps to guide a survivor-centric response on their respective campus.

## ASSESSING CULTURAL CHANGE

The 10 recommendations outlined in the *Changing the culture of acceptance* report were purposefully developed to be primary prevention oriented. The overall goal of the recommendations is to change the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that sustain rape culture. The ultimate outcome is to have campuses where students can study and learn in environments free from sexual violence. It is therefore critical to evaluate the extent to which we see a cultural shift over a period of time as the result of our efforts.

Two points are noteworthy to mention. Firstly, the type of research utilized should be appropriately suited to the type of social problem it aims to assess. Secondly, the more complex the problem, the more difficult it is to ascertain direct connection between specific efforts and changes in the nature of the problem (D. Crocker, personal communication, November 28, 2018).

Accordingly, in order to identify the most appropriate approach, it is important to consider that campus sexual violence is a complex social problem. Complex problems do not have easily observable causes and effects. In order to address them, we need to foster collaboration, examine emergent practices (i.e. practices that emerge from in-depth exploration of the context), and experiment with novel interventions (D. Crocker, personal communication, May 16, 2018 and October 24, 2018).

The PSVPC recommends the following approaches to assess culture change over time:

- Narrative research to supplement the survey data:
  - Anecdote circles and sensemaking workshops should be delivered in 2019-20.
    - Anecdote circles are similar to focus groups because they are another way of conducting a group interview; however, unlike focus groups they elicit people's stories and experiences rather than their opinions. During an anecdote circle, participants respond, each in turn, to broad and open ended "story prompts". The story prompts ask them to describe some aspect of the problem being studied. Participants then ask each other questions about the story and the facilitator helps the group understand the story tellers' experience (Cognitive Edge, 2018).
    - Anecdote circles would be followed by participatory sensemaking workshops in which members of the university community meet with a facilitator. The workshop would help participants make sense of the stories gathered in the circles, and identify ways that the university could help amplify characteristics of positive stories, and address themes arising in the negative stories. This process can help to improve policy, programs, and processes, but it is also part of the culture change process itself. By engaging members of the university community, it helps to create the conditions for change.
  - A SenseMaker® Questionnaire should be administered in 2019-20 and again in 2023-24.
    - SenseMaker Questionnaires allow the collection and analysis of hundreds of stories. The questionnaire begins with a story prompt. Once research participants have recounted their story, the questionnaire asks respondents to "signify" or index their own stories. The researcher then maps the ways in which stories have been "signified" rather than looking first at the stories themselves. The data therefore helps to map the culture we are trying to understand (Cognitive Edge, 2018).

Narrative research approaches aim to deepen the researcher's understanding of the topic being explored by understanding the meaning people attach to their stories related to the topic. In essence, narrative research approaches:

- ask people to tell short stories about their experiences/behaviours rather than asking their opinion;
- ask people to interpret the meaning of their own stories; or, ask a group to interpret the meaning of stories provided by other members of the same group; and



- produce patterns in the stories which emerge from participants' interpretation of the stories, rather than from the researchers' interpretation (D. Crocker, personal communication, October 24, 2018).

It is the intent that the climate survey, anecdote circles and sensemaking workshops, followed by the SenseMaker® Questionnaire, will provide robust data related to the prevalence of sexual violence on Nova Scotia campuses, and also inform a deeper understanding of how Nova Scotia students understand the context in which campus sexual violence occurs. The participatory aspect of narrative research becomes part of the culture change process.

While it may be not be possible to directly connect the implementation of the 10 recommendations outlined in *Changing the culture of acceptance* to cultural change, if we see such a shift over the next five years, it would be reasonable to infer that sustained efforts to implement and maintain key initiatives outlined in the 10 recommendations have had a positive impact on our collective beliefs, attitudes and behaviours to create more respectful and safe campus environments for all Nova Scotia students.

## **EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES**

*Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: A Nova Scotia Resource* was created as part of the Province's 2015 sexual violence strategy, *Breaking the Silence*, to help Nova Scotians learn more about sexual violence and how to support victims/survivors. The training is provided on-line and is free. It can be accessed through LearnRidge (2019) 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. It is composed of six modules as follows:

- Sexual Violence: An Introduction;
- Responding to a Disclosure;
- Choices following Sexual Violence;
- Exploring Sexual Consent;
- Enhancing the Wellbeing of Support People; and
- Indigenous Perspectives.

Any number, or all, of the modules may be completed. It takes approximately four to six hours to complete all six modules. The modules include a mix of text and interactive elements such as videos, graphics, timelines, and quizzes. If a participant registers for the course and completes all six modules, they will receive a certificate of completion (Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, 2017).

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## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF PROVINCIAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

This list reflects the Committee's membership between April 2018 to April 2019.

Name	Title	Association
<b>Government</b>		
<b>Ava Czapalay (Co-Chair)</b>	<b>Senior Executive Director</b>	<b>Department of Labour and Advanced Education – Higher Education Branch</b>
Sarah Granke	Specialist, Sexual Violence Prevention & Supports	Department of Community Services
Robert Strang	Chief Public Health Officer	Department of Health
Mike McMurray (April – June 2018)	Director, Universities and Colleges	Department of Labour and Advanced Education – Higher Education Branch – Universities and Colleges Division
Margaret Ann Bruhier	Planning and Development Officer	Department of Labour and Advanced Education – Higher Education Branch – Universities and Colleges Division
Meghan Murphy (July – October 2018)	Planning and Development Officer	Department of Labour and Advanced Education – Higher Education Branch – Universities and Colleges Division
Dana Bowden	Manager, Special Initiatives for Victims	Department of Justice – Court Services Division
Sonya Ferrara	Government Enforcement Officer	Department of Justice – CyberSCAN Unit
Stephanie MacInnis- Langley	Executive Director	Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
<b>University Representatives (including faculty)</b>		
Ted Vaughan (until December 2018)	Chief Administrative Officer	Atlantic School of Theology
Paula Barry	Associate Vice President Student Experience	Mount Saint Vincent University

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Association</b>
Margaret McKinnon	Director of Health, Counselling and Accessible Learning, Student Services	St. Francis Xavier University
Sébastien Dol	Director of Student Services and Internationalization	Université Sainte-Anne
Tom Brophy	Senior Director of Student Services	Saint Mary's University
James Sanford	Executive Director of Student Services	Acadia University
John Mayich	Director, Student Affairs	Cape Breton University
Professor William Lahey (until October 2018)	President and Vice-Chancellor	University of King's College
Katie Merwin	Dean of Students	
<b>Dianne Taylor-Gearing (Co-Chair)</b>	<b>President of NSCAD University</b>	<b>NSCAD University</b>
Melissa MacKay	Advisor on Sexual Violence	Dalhousie University
Diane Crocker	Professor, Department of Criminology	Saint Mary's University
Peter Halpin	Executive Director	Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP)
Scott Stewart	President	Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT)
Collette Robert	Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator	Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP)
<b>NSCC</b>		
Elizabeth Yeo	Director, Student Services	Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)



<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Association</b>
Dale Gruchy	Instructor, NSCC Kentville	Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)
<b>Student Representatives (including elected representatives) &amp; Dalhousie's Survivor Support Centre Representative</b>		
Aidan McNally	Chairperson	Canadian Federation of Students- Nova Scotia (CFS-NS)
Masuma Khan	VP Academic & External	Dalhousie Student Union (DSU)
Shannon Pringle	Survivor Support Manager	Dalhousie Survivor Support Centre
Tristan Bray	Executive Director	Students Nova Scotia (SNS)
<b>Community-based Organizations with Expertise in Sexual Violence Prevention</b>		
Jackie Stevens	Executive Director	Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
Lucille Harper (until November 2018)	Executive Director	Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association
Wyanne Sandler	Executive Director	
Lorraine Whitman	President	Nova Scotia Native Women's Association
Justine Colley-Leger	African Nova Scotian Sexual Violence Community Engagement Coordinator	East Preston Family Resource Centre
Carmella Farahbakhsh	Administrative and Volunteer Coordinator	South House Sexual and Gender Resource Centre
<b>RCMP</b>		
Linda Gray	Sergeant	RCMP Sexual Assault Unit

## APPENDIX B

### PRESENTATIONS DELIVERED TO THE PROVINCIAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

In order to help guide the development of its sexual violence policy guidelines and recommendations to enhance survivor-centric responses, the PSVPC invited a number of speakers, including individuals from its own membership, to share their knowledge and expertise. The list of presenters is outlined in the table below.

<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Title and Association</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Caitlin Salvino	Chair, National Our Turn Committee	<i>National Our Turn Committee</i>
Dr. Diane Crocker	Professor, Department of Criminology, Saint Mary's University	<i>Evaluating Change in a Complex Context</i>
Tristan Bray	Executive Director, Students Nova Scotia (SNS)	<i>Shared Perspectives: A Joint Publication on Campus Sexual Violence Prevention and Response – Students Nova Scotia (SNS)</i>
Sonya Ferrara	Government Enforcement Officer, CyberSCAN Unit, Nova Scotia Department of Justice	<i>What you need to know about the Intimate Images &amp; Cyber-protection Act</i>
Wayne MacKay	Professor Emeritus of Law and Yogis & Keddy Chair in Human Rights Law, Schulich School of Law	<i>Discussion – Enhancing Survivor-Centric Response Protocols</i>
Aiden McNally	Chair, Canadian Federation of Students – Nova Scotia (CFS-NS)	<i>Student Priorities for Sexual Violence Policies</i>
Masuma Khan	Vice President (Academic and External), Dalhousie Student Union (DSU)	
Tristan Bray	Executive Director, Students Nova Scotia (SNS)	
Lucille Harper	Executive Director, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association (AWRCSASA)	<i>Institutional Re-victimization and Secondary Wounding</i>

Presenter	Title and Association	Topic
Masuma Khan	Vice President (Academic and External), Dalhousie Student Union (DSU)	
Jackie Stevens	Executive Director, Avalon Sexual Assault Centre	
Dana Bowden	Manager, Special Initiatives for Victims, Court Services Division, Nova Scotia Department of Justice	
Susan Wilson	SANE Program Coordinator	<i>Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program</i>
Christine Hanson	CEO, NS Human Rights Commission	<i>A discussion with the CEO of the Human Rights Commission about human rights and university campuses</i>

## APPENDIX C

### RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS/SURVIVORS

The following list of resources were taken from the Province of Nova Scotia's Break the Silence website ([www.breakthesilencens.ca](http://www.breakthesilencens.ca)). View the 'Where to get help' tab (<http://www.breakthesilencens.ca/where-to-get-help>) (Province of Nova Scotia, n.d. b) to ensure access to the most up-to-date information. This list of resources is not intended to be comprehensive.

#### 911

- Emergency services

#### 811

- Health information and services
- If you are hearing-impaired and would like to access this service, call 7-1-1 (TTY).
- When you call 811, a Registered Nurse will give you the advice and information you have requested and provide reassurance concerning all kinds of general health issues and questions, including sexual violence.
- Service is offered in English, French and interpretation services are available in over 100 languages.
- 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Dial 8-1-1

#### 211

- 211 is a free, confidential information and referral service to more than 3,000 community and social services across Nova Scotia.
- 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Dial 2-1-1

#### **Independent Legal Advice for Sexual Assault Survivors Program – 2-1-1**

- This program provides up to 4 hours of free, independent legal advice for sexual assault survivors who are 16+ years of age.
- You do not have to report to police or take legal action if you use this service.
- Registration is done through an independent agency, 211 Nova Scotia. Dial 2-1-1 for intake.
- <https://novascotia.ca/sexualassaultlegaladvice/>

#### **Dalhousie Student Union Sexual Assault and Harassment Phone/Text Line – 1-902-425-1066**

- The phone/text line offers non-judgemental, active listening, support, systems navigation, and referrals to anyone who has experienced or has been affected by sexualized violence.
- Calls are taken from 12 p.m. – 12 a.m., 7 days a week.
- There are only 2 phone line operators taking calls/texts and they may be helping another person when you call. If you are unable to get through, please try again later.
- The phone/text line is operated by Dalhousie Student Union.

### **NS Mi'kmaq Crisis and Referral Line – 1-855-379-2099**

- The Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Crisis and Referral phone line is available 24/7 toll-free to Mi'kmaq people across the province.
- The Centre also provides online support through the Eskasoni Crisis Worker Facebook account. Both are a service of Eskasoni Mental Health.

### **Victim Services Emotional Support – 1-902-490-5300**

- Emotional support for victims of sexual violence
- No police involvement is necessary in order to get support.
- Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., based in Halifax

### **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program**

- SANE services are supportive, nonjudgement and confidential. SANE care can be provided by doing one of the following:
  - Go to any open emergency department. At those centres where SANE Program response is provided, the staff will call the SANE. At other locations, staff will coordinate care or provide information regarding the nearest SANE response site.
  - Call local police or RCMP.
  - Contact your primary health care provider.
  - Contact a SANE 24-hour response line:
    - ✓ **Halifax area:** 902-425-0122
    - ✓ **Guysborough, Antigonish, Pictou and Richmond Counties:** 1-877-880-SANE (7263)
    - ✓ **Sydney area:** 1-844-858-8036
    - ✓ **Yarmouth area:** 1-833-577-SANE (7263)

(Nova Scotia Health Authority, 2018). Visit the website for up to date information:

[http://www.nshealth.ca/service-details/Sexual%20Assault%20Nurse%20Examiner%20\(SANE\)%20Program](http://www.nshealth.ca/service-details/Sexual%20Assault%20Nurse%20Examiner%20(SANE)%20Program)

## APPENDIX D

### DEFINITIONS

***immunity clause for drug and alcohol use*** – An example of an immunity clause for drug and alcohol use is cited in York University’s Policy on Sexual Violence. “A survivor or community member acting in good faith who discloses or reports sexual violence will not be subject to actions for violations of the University’s policies related to drug and alcohol use at the time that the sexual violence took place.” (York University Policy on Sexual Violence, Section 8.3 as cited in National Our Turn Committee, 2017, p. 38)

***primary prevention initiatives*** – “Approaches that take place before sexual violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimization.” (Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, 2017, p. 72)

***survivor-centric*** – A survivor-centered approach refers to ensuring that the rights, needs, and wishes of the victim/survivor are prioritized (UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, 2011). Often survivor-centred is used to refer to the actual approach of working with victims/survivors, and survivor-centric is used to refer to the policies, procedures, and broad responses that prioritize the rights, needs, and wishes of the victim/survivor.

***victim blaming*** – “Victim blaming is a devaluing act that occurs when the victim(s) of a crime or an accident is (are) held responsible — in whole or in part — for the crimes that have been committed against them” (“Victim Blame”, 2007, as cited in The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2009, p. 2)

***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.” (World Health Organization (WHO) as cited in Province of Nova Scotia, 2015, p. 3)



## APPENDIX E

### NOVA SCOTIA UNIVERSITIES' AND THE NOVA SCOTIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S (NSCC'S) SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICIES (WEBLINKS)

#### **Acadia University**

[https://counsel.acadiau.ca/tl\\_files/sites/counsel/resources/PDF/Sexual%20Violence%20Policy.pdf](https://counsel.acadiau.ca/tl_files/sites/counsel/resources/PDF/Sexual%20Violence%20Policy.pdf)

#### **Atlantic School of Theology**

<http://www.astheology.ns.ca/webfiles/PolicyProceeduresProtocolsforManagementofSexualViolence.pdf>

#### **Cape Breton University**

<https://www.cbu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Sexual-Violence-Policy-Guidelines-5.pdf>

#### **Dalhousie University**

[https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university\\_secretariat/policy-repository/Sexualized%20Violence%20Policy%20APPROVED.pdf](https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/policy-repository/Sexualized%20Violence%20Policy%20APPROVED.pdf)

#### **Mount Saint Vincent University**

[http://www2.msvu.ca/DocumentCentral/Documents/Sexual%20Assault%20\(Policy%20Against\).pdf](http://www2.msvu.ca/DocumentCentral/Documents/Sexual%20Assault%20(Policy%20Against).pdf)

#### **NSCAD University**

<https://navigator.nscad.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/5.8-Sexualized-Violence-Policy-5.pdf>

#### **Saint Mary's University**

<https://smu.ca/webfiles/SexualAssaultPolicyandProcedures.pdf>

#### **St. Francis Xavier University**

<https://www.stfx.ca/sites/default/files/Sexual%20Violence%20Policy.pdf>

#### **University of King's College**

<http://policies.ukings.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/20190328UKCSV.P.pdf>

#### **Université Sainte-Anne**

<https://www.usaintanne.ca/images/documents/ressources-humaines/politiques/Politique-violence-sexuelle-04-02-2017.pdf>

#### **Nova Scotia Community College**

<https://www.nsccl.ca/docs/about-nsccl/policies-procedures/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>



