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# **NOT ONLINE. NOT ON CAMPUS. REPORT**

**Addressing sexual violence and  
Technology-Facilitated Violence on Campus**



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This report was written on the traditional territory of the **Wendat**, the **Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Métis**, and the **Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation**. Tkaronto, also known as Toronto, is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

As the author of this report, I am a third generation settler on this land. My maternal grandparents immigrated here from southern Italy and my paternal grandparents immigrated from the Azores, a set of islands in the Atlantic ocean which is an autonomous region of Portugal.

I am writing this report as a survivor of technology-facilitated sexual violence. It is through this lens and with this experience that I will continue to advocate for gender equity and the end of gender-based violence.

“ *Every single assault is life altering.*  
– Amethyst Program Coordinator ”

## INTRODUCTION

The **Not Online. Not on Campus.** project extends YWCA’s ongoing work to end gender-based violence, and builds on our recommendations from Project Shift: a knowledge-sharing project with a goal of eliminating cyberviolence against young women and girls. Recommendations from this project included the creation of women-centred training that supports survivors in a way that is supportive and non-judgmental (i.e. not blaming the victim). YWCA Member Associations (MAs) offer immediate assistance to women fleeing violence, provide counselling and referral services, and offer violence prevention and intervention programs. Informed by Member Associations, research, and trends, YWCA Canada develops resources and initiatives to create systemic change and shift the needle forward on ending gender-based violence.

The Not Online. Not on Campus. training will help people to respond to and support a person who discloses their experience of sexual violence, and offer a step-by-step breakdown of what to do when someone discloses sexual violence that has happened in person or online. YWCA staff will facilitate in-person trainings in partnership with colleges and universities in Ontario and Alberta. YWCA Canada has conducted a literature review and research informed by campus leaders, first responders in sexual violence, and violence prevention workers, to inform a new resource and a training for college and university leaders. With the support of [YWCA Hamilton](#) and [YWCA Lethbridge & District](#), we will train campus and other community leaders to better support people who report technology-facilitated and sexual violence.

As a national federated organization with Member Associations in nine provinces and two territories across Canada, YWCA Canada is focused on providing support and resources on a national scale. Part of this work requires the knowledge and understanding

that political context and will varies across the country based on the political climate, location and academic institution. YWCA Canada remains mindful of this varied political context within which our MAs operate, and will not stop this work until rape culture is disrupted on a national level and within academic institutions across the country. Academic institutions across Canada are at different stages of this work, and just because one institution is actively involved in sexual assault prevention and support efforts, does not mean that it is universally the case across the country. For example, Ontario was the first province to introduce mandatory campus sexual assault policies in 2015 with Bill 132 that required colleges, universities and private career colleges in the province to have stand-alone sexual violence policies by January 2017 (Canadian Women's Foundation [CWF], 2018). Other provinces followed, between 2016 and 2018 British Columbia, Quebec, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island enacted similar policies (Kost, 2020). However, Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador have not yet followed suit (Kost, 2020) Nova Scotia currently has a bill before its assembly (Kost, 2020). This demonstrates that the political context and requirements in which academic institutions are operating vary across the country, and therefore their progress in addressing sexual violence on campus varies as well. It is important to remain mindful of this while reading this report.

Please note that this report summarizes the outcomes of a project initiated and conducted in collaboration with YWCA Member Associations across Canada. No researchers from the iMPACTS Project or McGill University were involved in this phase of the project. The focus groups and related research were solely initiated and drafted by the YWCA. The content was not formally reviewed by an academic institution, subject to a research ethics board review, nor was it peer-reviewed by a scholarly journal. The opinions and interpretations are those of the author and YWCA Canada.

## PART ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to establish a comprehensive understanding of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses, over 100 different sources were reviewed, noted, and sorted. These sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, news and media articles, research reports, infographics, and Canadian university publications. In addition, available trainings pertaining to sexual violence and disclosures were reviewed to gauge the content and delivery of information on this topic. The following section will provide a summary of the most significant themes and findings that came out of the literature review as is relevant to this project.

### DEFINING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is an umbrella term that encompasses a continuum of harmful values and behaviours that target a person's sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression (Salvino et al., 2017). The World Organization (WHO) defines sexual violence 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" (2002, p. 149). It involves the use of power and control over others and can be perpetrated through physical force and/or verbal manipulation, coercion, and pressure (Nova Scotia Sexual Violence Prevention Committee [SVPC], 2017).

### OCCURRENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS

Young women experience the highest rates of sexual violence in Canada, as nearly half of all self-reported sexual assaults are against people aged 15 to 24 (Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario [CFS], 2015). It is estimated that approximately one in five women will experience some form of sexual violence while attending a post-secondary institution (CFS, 2015). However, some studies have reported an even higher prevalence, as

a 2016 study of six French-language universities across Quebec found that a quarter of students at these schools reported experiencing some form of sexual victimization (Zarrinkoub, 2016). Approximately 60-70% of all on-campus sexual assaults occur in campus residences, and the majority of perpetrators (75%) are known by their victims (Ending Violence Association of BC [EVABC], 2016). The first 8 weeks of the school year are particularly dangerous, as roughly two thirds of incidents of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses happen during this time (Salvino et al., 2017).

Some groups of women are at an increased risk of experiencing sexual violence because of the intersecting systems of marginalization and oppression that are associated with their identities. Intersectionality, a concept first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, explains how different systems of power and oppression, including racism, ableism, classism, homophobia, and sizeism, work together to impact a person's lived experiences (Salvino et al., 2017). These systems create overlapping and interdependent systems of oppression that cannot be examined in isolation (Salvino et al., 2017). As a result, certain women are more likely to experience sexual violence. For example, Indigenous women and girls are three times more likely to experience sexual violence than non-Indigenous women (Stevens & Chau, 2016). At least 1 in 5 transgender, genderqueer, and gender nonconforming students have experienced sexual violence (Salvino et al., 2017). Women with disabilities are four times more likely to experience sexual assault than women without disabilities (EVABC, 2016). In reading this report, it is important to keep in mind how intersectionality is directly linked to the occurrence and impacts of sexual violence.

There are numerous examples of sexual violence incidents and investigations that have taken place at academic institutions across the country. Some of these cases are incredibly complex and reflect the deeply entrenched nature of rape culture in all aspects of society, including the justice system. Many of these examples were reviewed and analyzed in writing this report (Appendix B). Properly referencing and discussing these cases would not be feasible in the context of this project given the length and capacity of this report. Referencing one or two incidents that have occurred would unfairly highlight

just a few academic institutions, when, in reality, this is a national problem happening at institutions across Canada. Appendix B provides references to cases and examples that were reviewed in writing this report, which provided context and understanding to the scope of this issue. This is not meant to act as an exhaustive list of incidents, but it does highlight the scope and severity of this problem.

## **RAPE CULTURE AND CONSENT CULTURE**

Rape culture has become so deeply entrenched in everyday society that male violence is not only normalized but also legitimized through the practices of victim-blaming, stigmatizing survivors, denying the existence of sexual violence, and the sexual objectification of women (SVPC, 2017). Rape culture relies upon societal attitudes that justify, tolerate, normalize, and minimize the occurrence of sexual violence and its impact on women and girls (Learning Network [LN], 2014). Gerald Walton, a professor in the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University, describes culture as a social script that we learn over time and that informally educates us about values, beliefs and behaviours that are broadly understood to be normal in any given society (2017). The social script that is dominant within rape culture is the product of gendered, raced, and classed intersections that are central to the structure of patriarchal and heteronormative culture (SVPC, 2017). Survivors of sexual violence are often silenced by rape culture as they are either shamed into staying quiet, or are socialized to believe that their assault was minimal and would not be considered a crime. Other products of rape culture include increased rates of sexual violence and ambiguity around the definition and practice of consent. In fact, a 2018 study from the Canadian Women's Foundation found that only 28 per cent of Canadians fully understand what it means to give consent, down from 33 per cent in 2015 (CWF, 2018).

In contrast to rape culture, consent culture is based in prevailing narratives of sexual activity, interpersonal relationships, and bodily autonomy all based in mutual consent (SVPC, 2017). According to the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, consent culture:

*"Is a culture in which the prevailing narrative of sex is centered on mutual understanding, respect and agreement on each other's desires and limitations. It is a culture that does not force anyone into anything, respects bodily autonomy and is based on the belief that a person is always the best judge of their own wants and needs" (CFS, 2015 p. 4).*

There are many steps that need to be taken to meaningfully implement consent culture, which includes deconstructing the systems and structures that support rape culture and gender inequity. According to the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario (2015), there are three components needed on campuses to build a culture of consent: (1) Education: disseminating a strategy to prevent sexual violence, (2) Support: developing campus specific programs to support survivors, and (3) Policies: developing robust policies that are developed with student consultation. Dismantling rape culture and meaningfully implementing consent culture are going to take significant and comprehensive changes to all levels of campus life and administration.

## REPORTING

It is widely recognized that sexual violence is an extremely underreported crime, as it is estimated that fewer than one in ten incidents are formally reported to the police (CFS, 2015). One national survey conducted by Ipsos found that the most common reasons for not reporting sexual assault to the police were feeling young and powerless (56% of respondents) and feelings of shame and self-blame (40% and 29% respectively) (Paperny, 2015). One in five respondents indicated that they believed that reporting was not going to do any good, and one in ten reported that they were afraid of the legal process (Paperny, 2015). Of those who did report their sexual assault to the police, only 22% reported being satisfied and only 2% felt the process was vindicating (Paperny, 2015). However, 39% of those who did report their assault described feeling abandoned and devastated, and 71% indicated that the overall experience of reporting their assault to the police was negative (Paperny, 2015). Racialized women are even less likely to report incidents of sexual assault

to the police because of previous experiences of racism, systemic discrimination, and mistreatment from police officers and the justice system in general (CFS, 2015).

There is also a fundamental lack of confidence in formal reporting processes of academic institutions, which means that students are not coming forward to report to their schools either. According to Amar and colleagues, the “campus adjudication processes, protocols, and responses to survivors, and student education are important considerations in reporting decisions” by student survivors (2014, p. 580). Students are more likely to report sexual violence if they believe the school’s judicial procedures will hold perpetrators accountable and appropriate sanctions will be used (Amar et al., 2014). Campuses that report zero incidents of sexual violence likely support a campus environment that shames survivors into silence and prioritizes the reputation of the institution (Ward, 2016). Charlene Senn (2016), a women’s studies professor at the University of Windsor stated:

*“No one should feel satisfied that there is no sexual violence on their campus, because every campus, because of the age of the students on the campus, has an elevated risk of sexual assault. So clearly they need to be addressing their campus climate” (Ward, 2016).*

It is hard to accurately quantify the amount of sexual violence that goes unreported on campuses because of policies, practices, and cultural norms that silence survivors (Jones, 2018).

## IMPACT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON STUDENTS

The trauma associated with sexual violence is significant and can be unique from trauma associated with other forms of violence (EVABC, 2016). The impact of sexual violence varies from individual to individual and depends on the nature of the incident, the characteristics of the survivor and the relationship (if any) to the perpetrator (EVABC, 2016). According to the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (2016): “Regardless of the degree of force, the threat of bodily harm, or the use of a weapon, sexual assault violates a victim/survivors’ fundamental beliefs that the world is safe and just” (p. 21). This can manifest itself in a wide variety of different forms of trauma for survivors, including

physically, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, and financially (EVABC, 2016). The impact of sexual violence for students can be particularly debilitating to their education if their academic institution does not have the appropriate accommodations, supports, and resources in place. Studies have found that students who are the victim of stalking make many personal changes in response to their experienced violence, including changing their schedules or routines, dropping classes, changing their phone number, moving homes or even dropping out of school (Stermac et al., 2018). One study by Stermac and colleagues (2018) spoke to 255 female undergraduate students attending universities in Southern Ontario who had reported experiencing stalking behaviour since entering their school. Among the participants, 37% of women reported making changes to their behaviours or attitudes at school in order to feel safer and more secure on campus (Stermac et al., 2018). These changes included restrictions in campus movements, increased vigilance, changes in social engagement and changes in academic engagement (Stermac et al., 2018). Stermac and colleagues (2018) concluded that sexual violence, in this particular case, was likely to impact a person's campus engagement, educational experiences, and academic performance in general.

## **IMPORTANCE OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS AND INTERVENTIONS**

The negative impact of sexual assault is worsened when students do not have adequate supports available to them on campus and when the necessary academic accommodations are not made. Institutions have a responsibility to prevent incidents of sexual violence from happening and properly respond to those that do (EVABC, 2016). Institutions must do everything possible to ensure the safety of survivors and to minimize the disruption to their education (EVABC, 2016). This includes the implementation of the necessary support services on campus, as well as academic accommodations. This can include access to counselling services without a wait time, delayed due dates on assignments, dropping a class or classes without academic penalty, and changes in class schedule and residence for the survivor or perpetrator. Survivors need to know what

institutional supports they have available to them at their school, and perpetrators of violence need to know what the consequences of their actions will be (Zarrinkoub, 2016).

It is important to establish these support services, however, they are rendered useless if students are not made aware of their existence, or do not have confidence in their results as they are not effective in practice. In a 2018 survey by Maclean's that surveyed more than 23,000 undergraduate students from 81 post-secondary schools across Canada, 31% of students reported that they were given no information on how to report a sexual assault and 25% said they were given no information on sexual assault services for students on campus (Schwartz, 2018). In a 2019 study done by CCI Research, 163,777 students from Ontario universities, colleges, and private institutions participated in a survey about their perceptions and experiences of sexual assault on post-secondary campuses. When asked if they understood where to access supports (e.g. counselling and health services), academic accommodations, and formal reporting options on campus related to sexual violence, 59.7% of university students and 48% of college students answered "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (CCI, 2019). Those who indicated that they had experienced sexual violence were then asked their level of satisfaction with the institutional response they received if they told a member of staff, faculty, administration, or any other service officer at the institution (CCI, 2019). Approximately 1 in 5 university and college students indicated that they were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied", and another 1 in 5 students reported being "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" (CCI, 2019).

## **ECOLOGICAL APPROACH**

In approaching the prevention of sexual violence on campus, it is necessary to address the multiple intersecting systems that create the environment within which violence is allowed to take place. A social ecological approach recognizes that violence is the product of multiple levels of interacting systems that influence individuals, relationships, communities and societies at large (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Campus ecology recognizes that there are multifaceted connections among health, learning, productivity,

and campus structures that need to be considered to improve the status and safety of campus communities (American College Health Association [ACHA], 2016). In order to meaningfully change the campus culture surrounding sexual violence, there needs to be changes made at each level of the ecological model (Appendix A). According to DeGue and colleagues (2014):

*“Sexual violence is a complex problem with social, structural, cultural, and individual roots. By designing prevention efforts that are equally complex, multifaceted, and embedded within our lives and environments we can enhance their effectiveness” (p. 360).*

By developing intervention strategies that address the community and institutional levels of change in conjunction with individual-related sexual violence risk factors, innovative and more promising opportunities for addressing sexual violence on campuses are developed (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009).

## **SYSTEMS AND POWER**

In order for sexual violence on campuses to be meaningfully addressed, there needs to be significant changes in the broader context of policy, economic, and social structures that support patriarchal and heteronormative systems of oppression (Todorova, 2018). As stated by Wane and colleagues (2018):

*“Violence against women and girls is a symptom of gender inequality and power imbalances between women and men and as long as gender inequalities continue to persist, there will be cases of gender-based violence in society. Attaining gender equality requires that we change systems and structures of oppression which require long-term and concerted efforts and strong political will” (p. 27).*

The local and every day sexual violence that is occurring on post-secondary campuses needs to be understood as the result of structures and systems that create the conditions that allow this violence to take place (Park, 2018). Efforts to address sexual violence on

campus will continue to fall short if they focus on changing the views and attitudes of individuals in education:

*“Without addressing or undermining the broader context of state, economic and social structures supportive of patriarchal and heteronormative cultures, material inequalities and political subjugation and marginalization of groups and subjects” (Todorova, 2018, p. 12).*

University and college campuses are embedded in the larger communities, structures, and systems that surround them, and as a result, it is imperative that they implement policies, practices, and curriculums that work towards dismantling the structures and systems that produce sexual and gendered violence (Todorova, 2018).

## **TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED VIOLENCE**

Technology-facilitated violence has added a whole new level of complexity to addressing sexual violence on campuses. According to Henry and Powell (2018), this reflects “the unprecedented power of new technologies in achieving new forms of social shaming – beyond geographic borders, at vast speeds, to diverse audiences, and often with unparalleled impunity” (p. 759). As defined by Henry and Powell (2018), technology-facilitated sexual violence “refers to a range of criminal, civil, or otherwise harmful sexually aggressive and harassing behaviours that are perpetuated with the aid or use of communication technologies” (p. 196). Cripps and Stermac (2018) recognize that women attending universities are particularly at risk for experiencing tech-facilitated violence, as “this group of women is both avid users of new technologies and overrepresented as victims of sexual violence” (p. 171). Additionally, many young Canadians have a blurred understanding of consent when technology is involved (Paltiel, 2016). One in five (21%) people aged 18 to 34 believe if a woman sends a man an explicit photo through text or email, this always means she is inviting him to engage in offline sexual activity (Paltiel, 2016).

Online communication technologies and platforms allow for the operationalization of social meanings, through which gender hierarchies and inequities are being manifested in new and complex ways (Henry & Powell, 2018). Online spaces are very much gendered and often reinforce offline gender inequalities and stereotypes (YWCA Canada, 2015). YWCA Canada's Project Shift was launched in May 2014 and engaged communities across Canada in preventing and eliminating cyberviolence against women and girls (YWCA Canada, 2015). In conducting seven consultations with 66 girls and young women across Canada, Project Shift was able to capture the thoughts and experiences of young women between the ages of 13 and 25 pertaining to cyberviolence. Consultation participants provided numerous examples of how their experiences of the digital world were gendered and how sexism and the sexualization of women were very much present on online spaces (YWCA Canada, 2015). For example, young women were critical of the double standards used to assess the behaviours of men and women on online platforms, referencing how young women's sexual behaviours are labelled as improper, whereas young men behaving in the same way are celebrated (YWCA Canada, 2015).

The impacts of experiencing technology-facilitated sexual violence are just as real and significant as the impacts from traditionally understood forms of sexual violence. In their study, Cripps and Stermac (2018) aimed to examine the cyber-sexual violence experiences of women in Canadian universities by distributing a survey to female students. The three most common forms of technology-facilitated sexual violence that were reported by the participants were online gender-based hate speech (58%), online sexual harassment (53%) and cyberstalking (52%) (Cripps & Stermac, 2018). More than half of the women who experienced cyber-violence did not report the incident, likely because Canadian legislation does not yet recognize many types of cyber-sexual violence as criminal offences (Cripps & Stermac, 2018). The results indicated that experiences of cyber-sexual violence were associated with symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and PTSD (Cripps & Stermac, 2018).

Online sexual violence can be particularly difficult to legislatively address because of the ambiguity pertaining to how cyberspace is regulated. Participants from Project Shift recognized that dealing with online sexual violence is going to require systemic and social change, but this is rendered more complex because it is difficult to identify, “who is responsible for regulating various communications technologies and responding to incidents” (YWCA Canada, 2015, p. 19). Without a clear distinction of who is responsible and liable for regulating and maintaining certain online spaces, it is easy for people and their concerns to fall through the cracks. There need to be policies that clarify this responsibility at different institutional levels, including schools, social media platforms and governments (YWCA Canada, 2015). Cyberspace is vast and that can make it overwhelming to regulate, however, it requires clear and detailed policies.

#### **ONLINE TRAINING CURRENTLY AVAILABLE**

In assessing the content and delivery of online trainings currently available pertaining to sexual violence on post-secondary campuses, the goal was for the researcher on this project to complete as many trainings as possible given their capacity. However, this information source was extremely limited because a majority of trainings offered at institutions are not available to those who are not a student, faculty member or staff. Trainings made available to students and staff pertaining to sexual violence are already sparse, and without the necessary login credentials, there are even fewer trainings and resources available. In asking one university why their training could not be made available to the researcher, they attributed it to copyright limitations. The researcher was able to complete three trainings: (1) Responding to Disclosures on Campus created by the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children at Western University, (2) Upstander Training created by the Government of Ontario and (3) Support Survivors of Sexual Violence created by the Government of Nova Scotia.

In reviewing the content of the trainings, there were many common themes discussed throughout, including consent, intersectionality, rape myths, how to respond to

disclosures, and self-care for those who receive a disclosure. Although each of the trainings addressed these topics, they were done in different capacities and with different levels of depth and detail. Without critiquing a specific training, it is important to note that if three separate people only participated in one of these trainings, they would have acquired a different level of knowledge and skills. Based solely on the knowledge they acquired from the training, it would not be fair to say that each person would be equally prepared to understand the systemic causes of sexual violence and how to appropriately respond to a disclosure. Each training approached the delivery of the content differently, and used different strategies and approaches to convey their message, including videos, quizzes and reflective questions.

Perhaps the most important learning from participating in these trainings, is that there was virtually no reference to technology-facilitated sexual violence. There is an apparent gap pertaining to what online sexual violence means, what online consent looks like, how to respond to someone who discloses online sexual violence, how to report this type of violence, and what unique resources are available to survivors. Collectively in all three trainings, there was one sentence about cyber misogyny and one sentence regarding the 2015 law change in Canada regarding cyber violence. With the exception of those two small sections, there is a clear absence in content pertaining to online sexual violence and how to support a survivor who has experienced this form of violence. These trainings point to the apparent need for resources and tools that recognize the severity and increasing occurrence of technology-facilitated sexual violence, as well as the unique supports and resources that need to be developed in response.

## PART TWO: PROCESS DESCRIPTION

### FOCUS GROUPS AND CONSULTATIONS

In enhancing the effectiveness of sexual violence intervention and prevention programs, it is important to understand the community you are entering and their specific needs (Banyard et al., 2009). In contextualizing the response, there needs to be a nuanced understanding of a community's unique needs and their readiness for change (Banyard et al., 2009). This allows programs, supports, and resources to meet the community where they are and work together to move forward (Banyard et al., 2009). With 32 Member Associations (MAs) that work on the frontlines with women across Canada, YWCA Canada has a unique opportunity to capture the unique needs of different communities across the country. YWCA Hamilton and YWCA Lethbridge & District both conducted focus groups and key informant interviews with stakeholders in their communities. In total, 12 people participated in discussions and were able to share their thoughts and perspectives pertaining to sexual violence on campuses. The people included in these consultations held different roles in their campus communities, including both male and female students, faculty members, student advisors, a resident advisor (or don), a student union employee, and a sexual assault coordinator. It was a priority to have a wide range of participants included in the consultation process as to capture the thoughts and perspectives of different stakeholders on campus.

Prior to beginning focus groups, each MA was given access to the same three documents and resources to ensure they had everything they needed to prepare and conduct their consultations. Each MA was provided a five-page document that outlined the objectives of the consultations, the logistics of preparing and conducting these discussions, and the participant questions. Mandatory questions were provided to the MAs to ensure consistency in the content and discussions across the focus groups. Each MA was also given a document where they were to fill out their post-focus group reflections and thoughts. As the researcher on the project only had access to the audio recordings of the

discussions, it was important that MA facilitators had the opportunity to note any important non-auditory interactions that they believe were significant or worth documenting (i.e. body language, facial expressions, general mood and tone of the room). Lastly, each MA received a consent form to have participants read and sign before beginning the discussions.

## THE RESOURCE

YWCA Canada will develop a tool (a printed, one page, multifold pamphlet), slide deck, and training script to address the issue of sexual violence online and on university campuses. The tool will target leaders at institutions of higher education, including professors, student leaders, teaching assistants, residence advisors (dons), and administrative staff, to inform them on how to support a person who discloses their experience of sexual violence. The resource will include two separate step-by-step breakdowns of what to do when someone discloses sexual violence that has happened in-person or through an online platform. The tool is meant to act as a tangible and easy-to-use resource that people can utilize immediately following a disclosure of sexual violence. The hope is that users will keep the tool in an accessible location (i.e. in their wallet, office, etc.) so they can easily access it if needed. Although each person has a different level of experience and knowledge in responding to disclosures of sexual violence, the hope is that this tool will act as a clear and easy visual resource to outline the “dos and don’ts” of an appropriate response and the immediate next steps for survivors.

The tool will be accompanied by an in-person or online training delivered by the YWCA MAs and potentially YWCA Canada staff. This training will begin with a presentation that provides context to the issue and occurrence of sexual violence on campuses. It is important that participants understand what sexual violence is, how often it is happening on their particular campus and what structures and social systems work to maintain this violence. In deconstructing these harmful patriarchal systems, the goal is to: begin to undermine social norms and systems that uphold rape culture and patriarchal structures;

dispel harmful rape myths; and explain the importance of establishing a consent culture on campuses.

The training will then transition into an explanation of how to properly use the tool and how to appropriately respond to disclosures of sexual violence. The actual content of the tool will be based on three sources: (1) learnings from prior YWCA Canada projects on related topics, (2) review of relevant literature by YWCA Canada's researcher, and (3) focus group findings from YWCA MAs. Although the exact content and layout of the tool cannot yet be confirmed, it will be based on providing users with the necessary knowledge and steps to provide a survivor-centered and trauma-informed response. One side of the tool will be based on providing support to survivors of "traditionally" known forms of sexual violence, and the other side will be dedicated to providing support to those who have experienced online sexual violence. Some of the anticipated content pieces will include: what to say and what not to say to a survivor, the different medical options they have available and may need to immediately seek, formal reporting options, how to access academic and safety accommodations, and the support resources they have available to them on campus and in the wider community. Only those who attend the training will receive a hard copy of the tool. It is important that people are educated about the systemic issue of sexual violence and are taught how to properly use the tool before receiving it.

## **ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTION**

Academic institutions have a responsibility to the staff and students on their campus to actively work towards preventing and responding to sexual violence in an effective and supportive manner (EVABC, 2016). A failure to do so is known as "institutional betrayal", and is likely to cause further harm and trauma to survivors on campuses (EVABC, 2016). In understanding that sexual violence is a systemic and structural issue, post-secondary institutions need to move forward with collective responsibility across their campuses in addressing this issue (Godderis & Root, 2017). According to Godderis and Root (2017):

*“Collective responsibility means that everyone in the campus community is, at some level, engaged in anti-violence work, including students, senior administration, faculty, staff and even visitors to campus” (p. 4).*

The actions and responses of the most well-informed individuals on a campus will be undermined if they are not supported by institutional procedures, supports and policies that recognize this collective responsibility (Godderis & Root, 2017). In order to meaningfully address sexual violence in post-secondary institutions, there must be a campus-wide recognition of the significance of the issue, and support from the highest levels of campus leadership to allocate the necessary funding and resources to support the comprehensive prevention and response this issue needs (ACHA, 2016).

## **ROLE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION – YWCA CANADA**

In addressing sexual violence on campus, it is imperative that post-secondary institutions recognize the proactive role that community organizations need to have in this work. Academic institutions need to honour and recognize the tremendous legacy of activism, advocacy and support of community organizations, as well as the knowledge and expertise they have accumulated in their work (Godderis & Root, 2017). According to Miglena Todorova, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto,

*“When working against sexual and gender-based violence, this means designing and practicing prevention approaches that are not invented, approved and regulated by university authorities but are created, enacted and overseen by local grassroots communities” (Todorova, 2018, p. 12).*

YWCA Canada has a unique and important role in this work, as the country’s oldest and largest multi-service organization that supports women and girls across Canada. YWCA Canada is on a mission to end violence against women through advocacy and the development of critical violence prevention and intervention resources. YWCA Member

Associations respond to the immediate needs of women at critical moments in their lives. Diverse women present daily across the country at YWCA shelters, emergency rooms, counselling, and family support centers for support after experiencing sexual and physical violence. YWCA Canada has been involved in gender-based violence and cyberviolence prevention work for many years and has developed a strong knowledge base to move forward and continue to develop this work.

## CAMPUS LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

The literature highlights the need for post-secondary faculty, staff, administrators, and student leaders to be educated about the nature and impact of sexual violence and rape culture on campuses. People in these positions have a larger role in shaping the norms and policies of an institution and are often seen as the gatekeepers of resources and knowledge (Banyard, 2014). These leaders on campus are not necessarily going to be trained experts, but it is imperative that they know how to provide the appropriate and immediate response to a disclosure (Nunez, 2015). Changes can be created in communities by training individuals who are popular opinion leaders, as key leaders of subgroups within a community have a powerful effect on their group's peer norms (Banyard et al., 2009). According to Banyard and colleagues (2009), "These leaders become role models and endorsers of the new attitudes and behaviours, and thus spread the trends across their sphere of influence" (p. 448).

Faculty and university staff need to recognize that based on the statistics of sexual violence on university campuses, they are going to be in constant contact with survivors. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests that students are increasingly disclosing incidents of sexual violence to their professors and teaching instructors (Root & Godderis, 2016). According to Root and Godderis (2016):

*"These studies highlight that post-secondary instructors often build relationships with their students through the learning process and are seen as one of the few trusted "entry points" into receiving institutional support" (p. 5).*

There is a very real possibility that campus leaders are going to receive a disclosure of sexual violence, regardless of their comfort level, expertise, or willingness to respond and provide support (Root & Godderis, 2016). As a result, it is essential that these influential people receive the appropriate training to properly respond to a disclosure and understand their role and responsibility within the context of an organized institutional response (Root & Godderis, 2016).

## RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURES

The immediate response a person receives when they first disclose an incident of sexual violence is an important indicator of their wellbeing following their victimization. Barb MacQuarrie, the Community Director at the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children at Western University recognizes that the first time someone discloses sexual violence is considered a critical point of intervention (Xing, 2017). MacQuarrie stated:

*“The first time somebody tells someone else they were assaulted, the kind of response they get can determine whether or not they tell anyone else again. [...] It can determine whether they go on to seek support” (Xing, 2017).*

Research suggests that disclosures of negative experiences are associated with lower levels of depression, social anxiety, negative mood, psychological distress, and traumatic stress, as well as an increased grade point average (Cripps & Stermac, 2018). However, this is only true when someone receives a positive and compassionate response to their disclosure. Negative reactions to the disclosure of sexual assault have been linked to greater post-traumatic stress disorder symptomology, self-blame, and maladaptive coping strategies (Cripps & Stermac, 2018). Examples of negative reactions to a disclosure include blaming the survivor for the assault, providing controlling or distracted responses, disregarding the survivor’s needs, and displaying an overly distressed response to the disclosure (Cripps & Stermac, 2018). It is important that leaders on campuses are appropriately trained and have the necessary resources and knowledge to respond to a disclosure of sexual violence

with empathy and compassion in order to avoid further harm and retraumatization to the survivor.

## PART THREE: FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

The following section highlights key findings and themes from focus groups, consultations and key informant interviews. This will include direct quotes from participants, analysis and discussion of the impacts of these findings and other questions they may raise. In order to maintain the confidentiality of participants, the participants who are employed by their institution to provide support to students in some capacity will be referred to as “student service employee.” It is important to understand the context and the role in which they work, to support students, without being specific about their job title, which may lead to their identification. Titles that remain are broad enough that they do not risk identifying the individual.

### LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS

The consultation participants generally reported that they were not familiar with anything pertaining to sexual violence on their campuses, including the current policies, resources and training. There was recognition that these things are likely to exist in some capacity, but that they were not readily available or accessible to the campus community and could only be found if personal initiative was taken by an individual to find them.

#### The Occurrence of Sexual Violence on Campus

Many participants did not have a clear understanding of how often sexual violence occurs on their campus. Quite alarmingly, some participants did not believe that sexual violence had ever taken place on their campus, including a student services employee:

*“From what I know, we haven’t had any occurrences physically on campus. We’ve had students that have had it affected to them before, that we kinda deal with on their end. But we haven’t had any physical occurrences of the school.” – Lethbridge student service employee*

According to the available evidence, the idea that sexual violence has not occurred on any post-secondary campus across Canada is simply not true. It is a fact that sexual violence in all of its forms is present on campuses across the country. Therefore, the lack of understanding pertaining to the occurrence of sexual violence is more likely attributed to the silencing of survivors who come forward, the lack of transparency by the institution in their reporting mechanisms, and insufficient and inadequate resources for students to report. Combined, these variables create an environment where students do not feel comfortable or supported enough to come forward and report. A student in Lethbridge shared that in order to access information pertaining to the occurrence of sexual violence on their campus, they had to actively seek it out. They stated:

*"I think I knew it was high, but only because of like my seeking out that knowledge. I don't think it's readily available to students to really understand that –the gravity of how much it goes on." – Lethbridge student*

This again points to the lack of transparency by academic institutions in their reporting mechanisms and a perceived motivation to conceal this type of information, as it has the potential to reflect negatively on the school.

### **Sexual Violence Policies**

Only one participant was able to cite any of the policies pertaining to sexual violence at their institution, and that person was a student support services employee on their campus. Many of the participants recognized that while their institution had policies, you had to actively seek them out and that they would only do so if a situation arose where they felt like they needed to. One Lethbridge student services employee stated:

*"I would know where to maybe find it and I probably wouldn't seek it out unless I was approached with the situation where I was having to deal with something like that, like a student came for." – Lethbridge student services employee*

Similarly, another student services employee stated:

*"Sometimes, I will say it's our negligence, in that we've never gone out to search for it. But I believe that if any of that happens around the campus, we would all have access to – it's not like it's not there. We just haven't been in such situations when we needed them." – Lethbridge student services employee*

This idea was also shared by students:

*"It's just, you're not really gonna seek it out. It feels like the terms and conditions to like a website or an app. [...] If you feel like it's not something that you need to worry about personally, you're probably not going to seek it out. Because the general mindset is, don't do it. [...] You have to seek it out on your own. And I don't think people do that very often." – Lethbridge student*

This is the first example of a reoccurring theme in the consultation findings, that acquiring information pertaining to sexual violence should only be done in reaction to an event, rather than it being important information to proactively learn before an incident of violence occurs. When a residence advisor at a university in Hamilton, Ontario was asked if they knew the sexual violence policies on their campus, they responded:

*"No, I don't. Do we have policies? I don't think we do." – Hamilton residence advisor*

Although they support first-year students in the dorms, this person had no knowledge of whether their institution even had sexual violence policies at all. This is quite alarming, as first-year students often turn to their residence advisors for support and guidance during such a confusing and overwhelming time. One Lethbridge student was quite blunt in saying that although they should read policies like this one, they are not likely to.

*"It's just another reading – the thing I should do but won't, you know? Yeah." – Lethbridge student*

It is quite clear from the participant's responses that knowledge of policies pertaining to sexual violence on campus is generally very little to none at all.

### **Resources and Supports on Campus**

Many of the participants were not able to recall any of the supports and services available on campus for survivors of sexual violence. There was a general recognition that while these services likely exist, an individual would need to take initiative to find them. One participant recognized that navigating the system as it currently exists at their institution to find resources and supports is incredibly difficult. Particularly for a first-year student who is unfamiliar with the structure of a post-secondary institution and is already likely experiencing an overwhelming amount of change. They stated:

*"I don't even know the average student would really know what to do because like in first year, I wouldn't have known what to do. You know? I know a lot of community resources and stuff like that. But on campus, I would have no idea what to do or how to navigate things." – Hamilton residence advisor*

A student services employee at a Hamilton, Ontario institution shared that they were aware of the resources and supports available on campus primarily because they sought them out for a student who needed them. Although they work very closely with students in their position, this information was not presented in their onboarding process when starting the job. They stated that you had to take personal initiative if you wanted to acquire this type of information. It is quite concerning those in leadership positions at academic institutions who work closely with students on a daily basis do not have this information easily available on hand if needed. It is something they would need to take time to find after receiving a disclosure, as opposed to being able to provide immediate support and resources. A residence advisor in Hamilton, someone who also works closely with students, stated:

*"I can't imagine even all of the community advisors remembering, even with all of our training and stuff like that. We're just told we're supposed to call someone and then that's that. We don't even necessarily know all the resources. [...] They always want us to recommend COAST [Crisis Outreach and Support Team]. But they don't want us to mention that COAST is cops, and that could be like really uncomfortable for students." – Hamilton residence advisor*

Despite the fact that resident advisors are meant to provide guidance and support to the students on their dorm floor, this participant was not confident that other people in their position were aware of all the resources that students have available to them on campus. It would seem in this case there is also less transparency regarding the supports, as it is problematic to refer students to a service that is coordinated by the police whereas students may understand it to be a social or community support service.

### **Information is Not Accessible**

Participants were quite clear that while information and policies pertaining to sexual violence on campus might exist, they would have to take the initiative to seek them out. As a result, it is essential then that this information be accessible and easy to find. However, based on the participant's feedback, this does not seem to be the case. Students in particular, who are likely to seek out this type of information, reported that information pertaining to sexual violence is not easily found on campus. One student stated:

*"I think one way that [Name of institution] could definitely improve is on the main web page, like [Institution webpage] is that there would be like some sort of menu that is just the emergency services of any sort and is just like everything listed there. So having to like scroll to the bottom, like – "Is it down here? Am I looking for Support? Contact?" – Lethbridge student*

Another student stated:

*"I find a lot of major university websites or just major companies, if you want to find anything on their website, you have to look for a long time. And it's really frustrating and I usually give up because I'm like, 'Whatever, it's not worth it.'" – Lethbridge student*

It seems that finding this type of important information is not an easy or quick process for students or staff of an institution. In times of crisis and heightened emotion, it is essential that people are able to quickly find clear and concise information. A Hamilton student services employee echoed these sentiments and commented that it can be difficult to find institutional policies, and while they might be online, websites are not easy to navigate and information is not apparent. They also mentioned that students often seek out support from student services for help in finding this type of information after failing to find it on their own. Policies, resources and supports that do exist at academic institutions are rendered useless if the people that are meant to utilize these things are not able to easily find or access them.

### **TRAINING ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS NOT PROVIDED**

Most of the participants indicated that they had never received training pertaining to sexual violence education, prevention and response on campus. If they had received training, it was because they chose to do so. One participant cited the lack of available training pertaining to sexual violence to the fact that sexual violence had not occurred on their campus, and therefore had not been needed. When asked if they had received any training pertaining to sexual violence prevention, they stated:

*"I think we haven't because, as bad as it sounds, it hasn't happened. Usually it happens off campus so it doesn't happen directly for us having to deal with it, even though the after effects, normally we have to deal with. Yeah, I think that would be probably the reason why." – Lethbridge student services employee*

Another participant cited their busy schedule as the reason they had not chosen to participate in any of the available trainings. They stated:

*"I know there's something available, but again, I'm too busy to attend that I could barely attend this today. So, I mean, that sounds bad, that sounds like an excuse, but you know, sometimes it's difficult to get out of the office." – Lethbridge student services employee*

For most of the academic institutions across the country, trainings that focus on sexual violence are elective, and therefore, are overlooked by many. This type of information is not seen as valuable enough to enforce as a mandatory training in most academic institutions across the country.

A resident advisor from Hamilton discussed the fact that if trainings are made available to students on campus, it is done once a year for students in residence. Therefore, students who do not live in residence or cannot attend the training for any reason do not have access to that information. They stated:

*"I think the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office did a presentation to all students in residence, but if you weren't in residence, you wouldn't have gotten that presentation. So you wouldn't have known that exists. Because they weren't like touring lectures or anything like that. And so you're hoping that the students – just that small portion that's in residence, paid attention on that day with all of the orientation going on, enough to know that that's where you're supposed to go if something happens. Probably not." – Hamilton resident advisor*

In the case of this particular institution, it seems that training is offered once a year to students as opposed to on an ongoing basis. Therefore, if students or staff are unable to attend the yearly training or events for any reason, they do not receive such important and valuable information.

A few participants described trainings that they have received, although these trainings are not specific to the topic of sexual violence. These trainings are combined with

other topics, including other forms of assault, harassment and bullying. A Hamilton student services employee discussed how training that is provided to staff is more of an umbrella training, as it is not specific to sexual violence, although it may get mentioned at some point throughout. A student services employee in Lethbridge shared similar thoughts, they stated:

*“When we do orientation, I think it gets rounded with harassment and bullying. It’s all kind of the same process.” – Lethbridge student services employee*

It seems that information pertaining to sexual violence is not seen as valuable enough to warrant its own distinct training that recognizes the unique social conditions, causes and impacts of its occurrence.

#### **HAVE NOT NEEDED THIS INFORMATION – SO DO NOT KNOW IT**

Many respondents indicated that the reason they had never acquired this information is because they claimed they would never be a perpetrator of sexual violence or that they believed no one in their life had experienced sexual violence. When asked if they knew the policies pertaining to sexual violence on their campus, one Lethbridge student responded:

*“No, because I’ve never had to actually worry about myself breaking those kind of rules in the first place. Yeah, because I have a moral compass already instilled in me. So, I avoid any sort of physical contact that would be uncomfortable for someone else anyway. [...] I think the problem with policy is that people who are going to break policies aren’t going to care about reading them in the first place anyways. And those who aren’t going to break policies are also not going to care to read them because they’re not going to plan to do those certain acts anyways. So it’s there, but no one’s gonna really read it.” – Lethbridge student*

Sexual violence is complex, particularly as it increasingly moves to online spaces. It is important that people have a clear understanding of what sexual violence entails and what

actions will be taken if policies are broken. This approach regarding policies, whether related to sexual violence or otherwise, is quite concerning. How can one make the assumption that they have not or will not break policies if they do not know what they are to begin with?

There was a reoccurring assumption by participants that no one in their life had experienced or been impacted by sexual violence. Two Lethbridge students shared their thoughts on this:

*"I've never had to deal with the situation like that. So I've never actually taken the time to look into it because I don't have to – I've never had the experience." – Lethbridge student*

*"I also never had to deal with someone who's been through violence or whatever." – Lethbridge student*

This is a harmful assumption to hold and is most likely not the case. Perhaps this better reflects the fact that they have not been able to create a safe enough space where people have felt comfortable to disclose such vulnerable and sensitive experiences. As a result, they believe that no one in their life has been impacted by sexual violence, whereas they just do not know about it. A student services employee from Lethbridge shared the assumption that they had never needed this information before, however, they did recognize that it would be good knowledge to have. They stated:

*"I haven't had it occur. So I haven't had to need the information, but it would be good to know what to do in the situation." – Lethbridge student services employee*

A reoccurring theme throughout the participant's responses is that information pertaining to sexual violence is generally sought out in reaction to an incident of violence, rather than proactively before it happens. Rather than this knowledge being inherently valuable and worth the time and resources it would take to make it standard knowledge across campuses, it is understood to only be necessary on an individual basis and only after violence has occurred. A proactive approach would prioritize education and advocacy

as a way to prevent sexual violence from occurring in the first place. It would also ensure that everyone on campus knows the resources and supports available to them pertaining to sexual violence. This way if an incident of sexual violence does happen, hopefully survivors can take some comfort in knowing the options they have available to them, rather than having to seek them out during an emotional and vulnerable time.

## LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED VIOLENCE

Most of the participants admitted that their knowledge level pertaining to technology-facilitated violence was quite low. There was, however, a common understanding that this form of violence is on the rise and is becoming increasingly normalized in a society that relies heavily on technology and online interactions.

### **University Staff Not Familiar with Online Sexual Violence**

When participants were asked about their knowledge level pertaining to sexual violence that is being facilitated over online platforms, they generally shared that they have very little to no knowledge about this occurrence. Particularly concerning was that a student services employee, who is responsible for supporting students on campus, also had minimal knowledge of technology-facilitated violence. They stated:

*"I don't see a lot of it because my social media is pretty much on lockdown. I just have like family and friends. Um, but I do know from what clients share with me, like, there's quite a bit online. [...] So things definitely happen, but I feel not as well versed in that because I don't see it other than what's strictly sent to me." – Lethbridge student services employee*

When a Hamilton residence advisor was asked if the training they did receive on sexual violence contained any information about technology-facilitated violence, they responded: "No." There is an apparent gap in knowledge pertaining to online sexual violence, although this type of violence is becoming increasingly common.

### **Increase of Online Sexual Violence**

Despite the lack of knowledge, there seems to be about the nuances and complexities of technology-facilitated violence, there was a general recognition among participants that this type of violence is becoming increasingly common. One participant stated:

*"I would say in our kind of society, sexual violence is highly occurring through the social media than it is physically – for young adults, this is very intimidating for them. Majority of them don't come out to even speak about it. [...] There's still cases where you would find somebody's being harassed or videos shared. They probably contain private materials. [...] When they get into conflicts, in most cases, they try to abuse one another using such information that are supposed to be private. So I think it's more riskier." – Lethbridge student services employee*

One participant stated that although they have not had a student come forward to disclose an incident of online sexual violence, there is a common understanding that it is happening. They stated:

*"I haven't had really a student in the academic sphere, post-secondary, come forward. But you know that it's prevalent and I think it's because I have children in high school. So I know that it didn't end in high school. But I wouldn't say that they are necessarily coming forward with, at least in my position, to say that's happening." – Lethbridge student services employee*

There was also discussion that took place around specific apps being used to facilitate sexual violence, including Snapchat being used to send nude photos and negative encounters on dating apps such as Tinder. One participant stated:

*“Not necessarily my role of people coming to me, but it is something that I would say is a problem within this campus. Most of our, not most, but a lot of our individuals here would use Tinder and things like that. And you do hear about some horror stories on there.” – Lethbridge student services employee*

One student did recognize that although sexual violence is on the rise, it is hard to get an accurate picture of its occurrence because it is often difficult to track and regulate cyber space. They stated:

*“It’s harder to quantify those. [...] It’s hard to really know how much it occurs because it can happen so privately and anonymously that I would assume it happens a ton, but who’s to say exactly how much or how often?” – Lethbridge student*

### **Normalized Occurrence**

The most common understanding that participants had pertaining to technology-facilitated violence, is that it is becoming increasingly normalized and accepted behaviour. It seems that people are not clear on what behaviours are considered to be online violence, as behaviour that would previously be understood to be inappropriate is now recognized as normal. One participant stated:

*“Whatever happens online is so normalized these days that, like some things that I would think are probably really inappropriate, and could fall under that umbrella – maybe my daughter’s experience, she would be like, “Well that’s just what happens. That’s just normal.” Do you know what I mean?” – Lethbridge student services employee*

Another participant mentioned that getting an unsolicited nude photo has really become the norm and does not elicit outrage anymore because it happens so frequently. They stated:

*"You do hear quite often, just like even in passing, whether it's through friends or whatever – more of a personal connection, not even through my work – but that it's like really normal to get like a dick pic." – Lethbridge student services employee*

This same participant did a great job in connecting how the normalization of online sexual violence is one of the impacts of having a broader society that it so deeply embedded in rape culture. They commented:

*"It's rape culture, right? It's just further allowing that to kind of flourish and live, and then it creates standards moving out of high school to hear it's something that's accepted. And then, I don't know, maybe something that people don't feel fits under the scope of sexual violence, even though it does, it becomes something that is so normalized that I think, probably why all of us at this table are saying nobody's come forward is because it something that has become normalized." – Lethbridge student services employee*

Many of the participants shared that online sexual violence is becoming normal at an earlier age, and that many of their middle school- and high school-aged children are experiencing it. They shared numerous examples of how their own children have shared experiences of online sexual violence. One participant stated:

*"My daughter was in middle school and approached by boys to ask for her to send naked pictures of herself and like it's happening, yeah, well before you think it is." – Lethbridge student services employee*

They also shared their concerns that schools are not doing enough to address this behaviour as soon as it happens, and as a result, this type of behaviour gets reinforced and normalized. One participant stated:

*"I have to say though, through my own experience, I don't feel that the schools are addressing it well enough at all. Actually, in fact, I think they are turning a blind eye to it, especially if the boys and the ones that are probably more likely to do it are the ones that are more popular." – Lethbridge student services employee*

Another participant stated:

*"I've found that the teachers and the school don't –they just turn a blind eye to that. And so that's actually a bit disheartening when you're trying to actually support your kids." –  
Lethbridge student services employee*

Without active intervention and education at an earlier age pertaining to online sexual violence, students will continue to enter post-secondary environments with the belief that this behaviour is normal and will go without consequence.

### **NOT PREPARED TO RESPOND TO A DISCLOSURE**

Participants generally shared that they did not feel well enough equipped to properly respond to a disclosure of sexual violence, and that they would feel more comfortable responding if they had more knowledge or training on the topic. One student was quite honest that they did not know how to respond to a disclosure, but they seemed to think that was acceptable because they were not a counsellor. They stated:

*"I don't know who to redirect them to. I'm not a counselor, I'm a computer scientist." –  
Lethbridge student*

In response to this belief, it is important to recognize that unfortunately, everyone has the potential to experience sexual violence and it is not unlikely that either you or someone around you will have this experience. This type of information is universally valuable, and there is no way to predict whether you might need to respond to a disclosure of sexual violence at some point in your life. Additionally, it is equally important to recognize that everyone on campus has a role in eliminating sexual violence at any given academic institution. Another participant recognized that although they feel they could adequately respond to a disclosure, they would feel better prepared if they had more information. They stated:

*"I think I could feel more equipped. I think it would just be like a fish trying to stay in water. But I think I would know enough to be able to help them at least get to the next step. To someone that would know more." – Lethbridge student services employee*

The only participants that did express that they felt prepared to respond to a disclosure of sexual violence was because it was their job to do so, i.e. student support services, or because they had received training from outside the academic institution.

## **DESIRE FOR MANDATORY TRAINING**

Most of the participants expressed that making sexual violence training mandatory is a needed and appropriate step to take. There seems to be a common understanding that while training on this topic is important, it will not be well attended unless it is made mandatory. One participant, a student services employee on a Lethbridge campus, recognized that the occurrence of sexual violence continues to rise and believes that mandatory training is no longer a choice, but a necessity. They stated:

*"I think 100% it needs to be mandatory, I don't see it as another choice. I think we've made leaps and bounds, [...] having the supports within our community. But Alberta is behind on certain things. [...] So I think it's not a question, it has to happen. Sexual violence isn't stopping, it's probably progressing, getting worse – our numbers in Lethbridge went up this year in crime." – Lethbridge student services employee*

One student recognized that motivating people to attend trainings that already exist is difficult, and so mandating these types of trainings would be necessary to get people to participate. They stated:

*"I don't think that there is necessarily a shortage of resources or training. I just think it's a tough job to motivate people to do anything and let alone talk about sexual violence for a couple hours. So yeah, I think the mandatory nature of future training would probably be necessary." – Lethbridge student*

The participants that were employed by academic institutions shared their desire for mandatory training, and recognized the value this information has for both employees and students. One participant stated:

*"If we get this kind of trainings, it would be really valuable for us as instructors, to know how we can even spot someone going through such hard- and also on the side of the students, you could see it would be appropriate for them." - Lethbridge student services employee*

When three Lethbridge student advisors were asked if they believed there should be mandatory training pertaining to sexual violence they responded: (1) "I love it. Let's do it." (2) "Start it today." (3) I'm okay with that. It's good."

One participant shared a very important component of implementing mandatory training, and that is having the necessary administrative support. In order for sexual violence trainings, resources and education to be appropriately implemented, it is essential that high-level administrators and decision makers within academic institutions prioritize this work and recognize the intrinsic value that this content has. They stated:

*"If you can't make sexual violence training mandatory, at least have a- because it comes down from your supervisor too if they support that. Because in the role that I worked before, and I'm not going to say where I worked, but my supervisor was not supportive of us leaving the job to go for a training for like, even the Mental Health First Aid I took. I had to like practically beg to take this training and we were frontline staff, like, we're the people that deal with students every single day. [...] They weren't supportive, it was pulling teeth to get the time to go do this. So I think too it comes down to the people higher up supporting those initiatives and saying "Great, go do that." [...] It does make a difference when you have support. So everybody needs to buy in." - Lethbridge student services employee*

This quote reflects an essential component of creating systemic and meaningful change, which is having the support and buy-in from decision makers at the highest levels. This is where advocacy work becomes incredibly important in ensuring that these administrative leaders understand the urgency and importance of implementing the necessary changes.

### IDEAL TYPE OF TRAINING

In regards to how this type of training would best be delivered, participants varied on what approach they believed would be the most impactful and well attended by staff and students. Some participants suggested that an in-person training would be best suited for a topic that is so complex and important. Having an in-person training would allow for richer group discussion and the sharing of thoughts and different perspectives. One participant stated:

*"I like in person because talking like this and getting other people's perspective makes me think like, "Oh, I've never thought of it that way or that's a great idea," Like, I learn better that way than sitting through the security training and confidentiality that I still can't get through and get any of the questions right." – Lethbridge student services employee*

Another participant recognized the importance of an in-person training as the more effective approach in providing context to the issue of sexual violence in terms explaining the complexities of rape culture and the systemic sexism that exists. An in-person training allows for the personal connection that is often necessary to emphasize the extent of these complex systems and the harmful impacts they have on people. One participant stated:

*“And I think it should be in-person too, because men don’t understand. And I mean, I know not all men, but when it comes to male-to-female violence. [...] I think men need to understand. Like, my husband, it’s interesting, like it blows my mind that he doesn’t live with the same just underlying level of fear that I have at all times than he just- I’m so used to it I don’t even think. I’m always looking, at my car, got my keys, just always. I lock the door behind me when I come in the house. But men, I don’t think they have that. They don’t understand what it’s like to be scared all the time.” – Lethbridge student services employee*

Other participants believed that an online training would work better because of the convenience of participants being able to do it whenever and wherever works best for them. Interestingly, one of the student participants commented that having an online training would be nice because you could complete it without anyone knowing. This begs the question of why someone might prefer that other people not know that they have completed training pertaining to sexual violence. It may be just another indicator of how of deeply entrenched rape culture is in influencing people’s thoughts and beliefs.

One participant, a student services employee at a Hamilton institution, pointed out that the best approach to training is likely going to depend on the audience. They mentioned that depending on your audience, whether that be students or staff, or depending on the unique needs and situation of the campus, the ideal delivery of training may differ. They shared that college campus culture is often described as “parking lot to class”, which means that students go directly from their car to class and back without spending much time on campus. In this case, an in-person training might not be well attended, because students are not spending significant time on campus outside of class. They also mentioned that in their experience, college students are more interested in an event with there is food and some sort of tangible takeaway item that is offered. In contrast, university students may respond better to a training that offers a certificate and a credential that can be added to their resume.

## YWCA: A VALUABLE PARTNER

### Expertise

Most of the participants recognized that the YWCA should be actively involved in work pertaining to sexual violence on campuses because the organization has a long history in engaging in this type of work and has acquired an expertise on the topic. A Hamilton student services employee shared that YWCA is an ideal organization to collaborate with because they are a community-based feminist organization that has valuable expertise to share with institutions. One participant stated:

“It’s different when I say it as an instructor compared to when you come in to stress on it, because the way you will bring this information makes more sense. You’ve been with those women, you’ve handled cases that were unbelievable because no one saw it coming, right? So if you brought such examples, to let the students know that this is important, to create that awareness on that to them, that will be great.” – Lethbridge student services employee

Some participants shared that having the YWCA in their community was a valuable resource that they had already been sharing with their students, and so bringing the organization right to the students on campus would be useful. One participant commented:

“We have small classes, and we notice a lot. We see a lot. Many students don’t talk. We’ve seen bruises around their necks and you know this isn’t right. But whenever you ask them, they don’t want to open up, right? We can’t force them. But knowing that there could be someone who is better off understanding them, and that could be you guys. That makes it really easy on us so that we can just say – “You know what, why don’t you allow me to introduce you to someone who will basically understand you better.”” – Lethbridge student services employee

The YWCA in Hamilton, specifically the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton Area (SACHA), was once quite involved on campus at a local academic institution. Unfortunately, that partnership is no longer present. One participant shared some disappointing insights into how the training and conversation surrounding sexual violence has weakened since SACHA has no longer been involved. It is disheartening to hear that progress has not just been stalled in dismantling rape culture, but that there have been steps backwards. The participant stated:

“So the training was once offered by a community service that has an expertise in sexual assault prevention and response. And now it has been done in-house. The quality has changed since it has been converted in-house that there has been less emphasis on trust and rapport, less emphasis on sitting with and hearing survivors and more about the very rigid protocol: whom do you call, at what point, what options does a student have, and very much protecting certain liabilities for the institution.” – Hamilton residence advisor

This demonstrates the positive impact that community organizations can have on institutions, but also the stagnation and regression that can happen when community expertise is not utilized.

One participant spoke about the name recognition that YWCA Canada has and how the organization’s well-regarded reputation may be leveraged as another tool to put pressure on institutions and decision makers to take action. They stated:

“I think YWCA Canada trying to do this kind of project, it might add a little bit – like just because it’s a bigger organization, more weight onto campuses to pressure them. [...] It’s much more public if a university decides to ignore what YWCA Canada has to say. I think that there’s also a lot of political pull the YWCA has when they make statements.” – Hamilton residence advisor

Participants were quite clear that they see the YWCA as having an important role in this work both on and off campus.

### **Increased Capacity**

Participants recognized that working with community partners, like the YWCA, increases the capacity that institutions have to engage in education and training pertaining to sexual violence. One participant, a Student Services Employee spoke about student support employees being overloaded with this work. Having the extra support and resources from community organizations would help to lighten the burden that is placed on student supports and widen the reach of this important work. Other participants shared similar sentiments:

*"Well, it's important because we're so overloaded." – Lethbridge student services employee*

*"The more resources, the better, right?" – Lethbridge student services employee*

Having more people dedicating their time and resources to ending sexual violence is going to increase the capacity of this work and its positive impact.

### **Third-Party Resource**

Many of the participants shared that having access to supports that are separate from the institution and located off campus can be a good resource for both students and staff. The fact that students may have to repeatedly see a counselor, student or staff member on campus may deter them from wanting to have certain sensitive conversations with them. People may feel more comfortable seeking support from someone who works off campus or makes infrequent visits, as this reduces the chances of uncomfortable run-ins with someone who knows their sensitive information.

One participant stated:

*"If I were going to see a counselor, I have to see them again at some point in the hallway. Like oh great – they know all my secrets, you know? So having maybe the YWCA is nice you know? And then you don't have to see them as often?" – Lethbridge student*

One Lethbridge student participant pointed out that students or staff may not feel comfortable accessing campus resources because of negative encounters or experiences they may have had in the past. In this case, it is important that the institution have community partners that they can refer people to. They commented:

*"Just more kind of awareness or like just having faces around because I know some people might be resistant to use university services just based on experiences with the university. So to have a face of another place they could go might be really helpful." – Lethbridge student*

Another interesting reflection is that staff may be more comfortable having richer and more complex discussions in a training that is facilitated by someone other than their employer. People may feel hesitant to engage in certain discussions or ask certain questions because the training facilitator is employed by the institution and they may be concerned about job security. This fear would be mitigated if they had an outside organization, like the YWCA, come in to facilitate the training and moderate a rich and confidential discussion on issues pertaining to sexual violence.

## **INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS**

Participants identified numerous systemic barriers that they believed are either preventing or restricting the occurrence of training and education pertaining to sexual violence on campus.

## **Scope and Jurisdiction**

A student services employee on a Lethbridge campus provided some valuable insights into the restrictions made to the scope of the institution's work because of the legal jurisdiction that the institution has. Interestingly, they spoke about how the legal jurisdiction of the institution to conduct an investigation has narrowed in their most recent policy update. They stated:

*"Our scope has narrowed; previously we could have two [Name of institution] community members, so that's anybody who attends to business on the [Name of institution]. If there was an incident of sexual violence, no matter the geographical location, it met our policy. So it could happen, let's say, student-to-student at an off-campus party, and they could come here, and it met our policy, and we could do a formal investigation for a formal complaint. That has been changed. So now it's still university community members, but the act of sexual violence has to physically happen on campus for it to meet our scope and jurisdiction, which you know, that's not where sexual violence happens, I would say in about 99% of our cases." – Lethbridge student service employee*

As a result of these jurisdictional restrictions, this academic institution is now only responsible for investigating incidents that happen physically within the geographical limits of the institution's property. This means that the institution does not have to respond to incidents that happen to students within their communities, including local bars, libraries and shopping centres. What then is the institution's responsibility to handle incidents of online sexual violence that cannot be easily traced to a physical location? What is the geographical location of cyberspace? These technicalities may be used by institutions to justify their inaction in addressing these occurrences of violence.

## **Institution Liability and Image**

Some of the participants shared their understanding that academic institutions seem to be making decisions that best meets their needs in terms of liability and

maintaining a positive image, rather than what is in the best interests of staff and students. One participant, a resident advisor on a Hamilton campus, was quite clear in their belief that the institution they worked for was making decisions in order to prevent running into legal trouble and to avoid accountability. It was the participant's understanding that the institution had ended their relationship with SACHA, a community organization that actively works to support survivors and provide preventative education, because having an outside partner provided a level of accountability and responsibility to the school that they did not want. They stated:

*"The switch was, I would say, almost entirely about liability and accountability. You know, they would hate to lose their donors over having to address something like students being harmed on campus. So I feel like for them, it's an easier system to cover it up than to not cover it up because the only people that know are at [Name of institution]. And then they would rather people now know about external resources because then SACHA can't even remotely track what's taking place. Even just for the purposes of saying [Name of institution] hasn't done anything." – Hamilton residence advisor*

This participant also shared their belief that the institution was making decisions about sexual violence training and available resources that reflected this self-serving motivation. They stated:

*"But Reslife didn't train that [Trauma-informed approach], they trained for like, you acknowledge, and then you pretty much kind of carry the conversation along until you can get outside to call your supervisor. So it's less about the student, and more about covering Reslife." – Hamilton residence advisor*

*"Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office, they're the only people that will talk about any of that. Everyone else just avoids it. [...] I'd ask, if we don't trust the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office, who do we go to on campus? So that's the only option they said that there is, there is no one else on campus. And I think the whole point is that [Name of*

*institution] wants to keep everything insulated, because with SACHA, there is accountability.” – Hamilton residence advisor*

A student services employee in Hamilton shared similar thoughts, mentioning that it seemed to them that the institution was concerned with its liability and insurance over anything else, likely indicative of their big institutional structure as a bureaucracy. They shared that whatever training that is offered on campus seems to be prioritized for those in counselling positions, rather than making things available for all leaders on campus. Their perception was that the institution would rather invest in a strong referral system to counsellors than training all individuals on campus to have a foundational understanding of rape culture and preventative education.

### **Confidentiality**

Participants spoke about how certain legal requirements of their employer, the academic institution, to break confidentiality can be an ethical dilemma for them that often puts them in positions to break trust with students. For example, a residence advisor from Hamilton spoke about how they have to report a disclosure of sexual violence to their supervisor regardless of whether or not the student wants them to. They stated:

*“The sexual assaults in residence are usually reported to their community advisors, so the students, and then we are told that we have to report to someone above us even if they’re like begging us not to, so like, you break that trust with your student.” – Hamilton residence advisor*

Having these types of administrative requirements and limitations can be extremely harmful in maintaining a trusting relationship with institutional leaders, and it can prevent people from feeling comfortable to come forward to disclose.

## PART FOUR: CONTENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will provide recommendations for what the content of the training and tool should include based on the needs and gaps identified in three sources: (1) learnings from prior YWCA Canada projects on related topics, (2) review of relevant literature, and (3) the focus group findings. Although the exact content and layout of the tool will be identified in the next phase of the project, it will be based on these recommendations.

### PROACTIVE VERSUS REACTIVE APPROACH

The dominant understanding amongst participants was that knowledge pertaining to sexual violence should be sought out in reaction to an incident of sexual violence. In response to this reactive approach, it is recommended that this resource advocate for a proactive approach, which means providing knowledge and training before an incident occurs, rather than after. Adopting this approach is particularly important for two reasons. (1) If someone who already has knowledge on how to appropriately respond receives a disclosure of sexual violence, they can provide immediate support and resources to the survivor, as opposed to needing to reactively seek out the information. (2) This type of knowledge and training is not only important for the practical tools it provides in responding to disclosures, but this type of education and discussion is essential to disrupting rape culture. There needs to be a universal foundational understanding of what rape culture means and what structural conditions are maintaining it. This type of knowledge needs to be prioritized and recognized as an essential component of maintaining a healthy and safe academic environment for all staff and students of an institution. Participants recognized proactive education as a key component of sexual violence prevention. One participant stated:

*"We know through education, that actually is the best prevention strategy. If we're not educating people, and people aren't coming, the topic is never going to change and gender-based violence is never going to end. So, people do need to get educated." – Lethbridge student services employee*

It is recommended that that this resource emphasize the importance of gaining this knowledge and having these important discussions about rape culture and sexual violence as a tool of prevention and education. A Hamilton student services employee echoed this recommendation, commenting that a strategy to address sexual violence on campuses requires proactive education, as opposed to a reactive response once it occurs. Education and proactive knowledge sharing is the only way that rape culture can begin to be dismantled, which is the environment where sexual violence is currently enabled to occur and thrive.

### **EVERYBODY HAS A ROLE**

Many of the participants mentioned that sexual violence was not something they themselves or anyone in their life had experienced, and therefore they had never needed this type of information or training. There seemed to be rejection of personal responsibility in responding to or disrupting rape culture and a false confidence that no one in their life had been impacted by sexual violence. In response to this, it is recommended that this training emphasize the critical role that every single individual has in this work both in their community and more specifically, on their particular campus. No longer can people excuse their lack of knowledge or ignorance by saying this was not information they needed, this was not their area of work, or this was not something that impacted themselves or others in their life. This training will make it quite clear that in order to systemically dismantle rape culture and prevent sexual violence, every individual has a role to play in this. This recommendation coincides with the need to take a proactive approach in addressing sexual violence, as this type of knowledge and preventative training needs to be prioritized as important information to share and a basic understanding that everyone should have.

### **NORMALIZE THE CONVERSATION**

Many of the participants shared how difficult it is for some people to engage in conversations surrounding rape culture and sexual violence because it makes them uncomfortable. It seems there is a stigma and a level of discomfort in addressing these

topics, which prevents people from seeking out this knowledge and information. It is essential that conversations and education surrounding rape culture and its impacts take place, and in order for this to happen, there needs to be immediate efforts to normalize this topic and these types of conversations. One Lethbridge student said:

*"I think it being a tough subject is probably a big barrier for some people. It's just hard to navigate the topic. And so, if someone was to disclose to you, I think there's still a level of uncomfortability people have with talking about it, maybe approaching it the wrong way because of how it's been talked about in the past. So I think that could be part of it too. [...] Maybe training will help people be more comfortable, but I sense that with some people, there is still an uncomfortability with talking about it." – Lethbridge student*

Many of the participants spoke about the need to normalize these conversations in order to move towards providing the necessary preventative education. One participant stated:

*"But wouldn't it be so beautiful if that was an education point? If it didn't have to get to that point: instead of scaring kids straight, why couldn't we just have this normalized conversation?" – Lethbridge student services employee*

Based on these identified needs, it is recommended that this resource and training present the content in a way that is non-judgmental and compassionate in order to create a level of comfort and openness to having these discussions. It is recommended that this resource stress the importance of normalizing conversations and reducing the stigma pertaining to discussions surrounding rape culture and sexual violence.

## COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE

Many of the participants spoke about their desire to be trained on how to emotionally support someone who discloses sexual violence. Responding to a survivor with compassion and empathy is an essential component of properly responding to a disclosure. One participant recognized that teaching this level of empathy is nearly

impossible to do by simply looking it up and reading it off of a website, but can be much more meaningfully taught and discussed at a training delivered by experts. They stated:

*"I think the biggest benefit you see from that training is not so much knowing where to direct people, but actually knowing how to emotionally support and respond to somebody because those tools are way hard to just look up and direct somebody somewhere right? You know, that's something you just have to know of learn for yourself. And I think it's hard to get that anywhere but those kind of trainings." – Lethbridge student*

In recognizing that not everyone at an institution, regardless of their position, is going to be an expert on this topic and responding to disclosures, responding with compassion and facilitating a warm handoff to an expert is incredibly important. Based on this need, it is recommended that this resource focus on providing trauma-informed training that prioritizes responding to disclosures based on the knowledge and understanding of the complexity of trauma and its widespread implications (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014). In implementing a feminist trauma-informed approach, there will be focus on locating the occurrence of sexual violence within systems of oppression, rather than pathologizing women and victim blaming (YWCA Canada, 2016). Participants of the training will be instructed on how to avoid re-traumatization when responding to a disclosure, how to present survivors with their options and how to best support them in making a decision at their own pace (YWCA Canada, 2016). Key messages of trauma-informed practice that will be emphasized include normalizing the experience and reducing the stigma pertaining to experiencing sexual violence, messages of resilience, communicating that the assault was not their fault, and reassuring them that they do not have to experience this alone (YWCA Canada, 2016).

## CONSENT

Based on participants' comments, there still seems to be uncertainty pertaining to the definition of consent and how to apply this definition in practice. This is quite concerning, as consent is a fundamental and foundational piece of sexual violence prevention. The implementation of a consent culture cannot be established unless the meaning and practice of consent becomes common knowledge. One participant stated:

*"I think it's [consent] one of those things that is also for a lot of people still fairly ambiguous. Not that it should be but I think it still is as our understanding of what sexual violence entails evolves. I think so too, does the definition of consent and I just don't think that people necessarily know exactly where we should be at with it." – Lethbridge student*

It is recommended that the training include the definition of consent and a detailed description of how it is applied in practice. Online consent will be emphasized, as there seems to be the largest knowledge gap on this topic. There was no clear understanding of how consent is translated to online spaces and what distinct elements of practicing consent exists online.

## RAPE CULTURE

The literature was explicit that rape culture is deeply entrenched in everyday society and post-secondary campuses are not immune to that. Rape culture perpetuates victim-blaming, which includes shaming survivors for their actions and decisions rather than holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes. Generally speaking, the onus is placed on women to stay safe and protect themselves, rather than condemning and punishing violent behaviours. It is common for sexual violence survivors to be questioned as to what they were wearing, where they were going or who they were with when they were assaulted. Women are often told what not to do in order to avoid sexual violence, as opposed to educating the general public and potential perpetrators of why rape culture

and sexual violence are criminal and will be punished as such. One participant provided a shocking example of how rape culture was being reinforced in their child's school:

*"I think too often, when the authorities are trying to deal with it, they're doing it from the wrong angle. [...] [Son] went to a presentation and it was for all of the students and their parents to come that the RCMP put on. And the whole thing from beginning to end was all "Girls, don't send naked pictures of yourself. Girls." "They're gonna ask you and you say no." And then they showed Amanda Todd and all that. And I even sent a strongly worded email, which I do not do very often, at the end just like, "Hey, how about boys respect their female friends. Boys.""* – Lethbridge student services employee

This narrative perpetuates rape culture and continues to place responsibility on women to prevent their own sexual assault. It is recommended that this resource and training focus on providing the necessary education and contextual understanding of rape culture in order to begin to dismantle its harmful systems and beliefs. The training will prioritize a discussion of the systemic issues and processes that continue to maintain rape culture, and how these patriarchal and heteronormative systems can be unravelled. It is recommended that the training have a purposeful focus on what language and systems need to be in place in order to establish systemic consent culture.

## **TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Based on participant discussions, there is a large knowledge gap when it comes to technology-facilitated violence. There is a common understanding that online sexual violence is happening and is becoming an increasingly large issue, but beyond that, there is little knowledge of the nuances of this type of violence and how to specifically respond to a disclosure of online sexual violence. Participants shared a desire to learn more about online sexual violence, one participant stated:

*"I'd like to know that I'm up to date maybe with what is happening. I'm just thinking like, I know about online, you know, social media stuff, but I'm getting older and there's things I won't know." – Lethbridge student services employee*

Based on this knowledge gap, it is recommended that the training dedicate particular attention to discussing what online sexual violence means, how to explore online spaces safely and how to properly report sexual violence on any given online platform.

## **REPORTING PROCESSES**

Participants shared that they did not have a clear understanding of the reporting procedures at their institution if a student were to disclose that they experienced sexual violence. Based on this knowledge gap, it is recommended that this training and accompanying tool clearly outline the proper procedures in formally reporting sexual violence, if the survivor chooses to do so. It will be clearly emphasized that formally reporting is an individual choice and that survivors should not be pressured to make any particular choice, but rather, should be supported and presented all of their available options. In recognizing that every institution may have different processes and procedures, it is recommended that the actual training portion be customizable so that the YWCA facilitators can input contextual and institution-specific information. The actual tool will have a more generic overview of common reporting processes, while the training content will actually provide the institution-specific processes and procedures when it comes to reporting and seeking out supports on campus.

## CONCLUSION

The first phase of this project has identified many knowledge gaps when it comes to sexual violence that occurs on post-secondary campuses. In reviewing the relevant literature and consulting campus community members, it is clear that rape culture is deeply entrenched on campuses and its impacts are complex and widespread. Preventative action needs to be taken now to continue the work being done to dismantle rape culture and expand the scope and capacity of supports that are available to survivors on campus. In moving forward into the next phase of this project, the recommendations that came out of this research will be used to inform the content development of a training and tool that will help users to properly support a person who discloses their experience of sexual violence.

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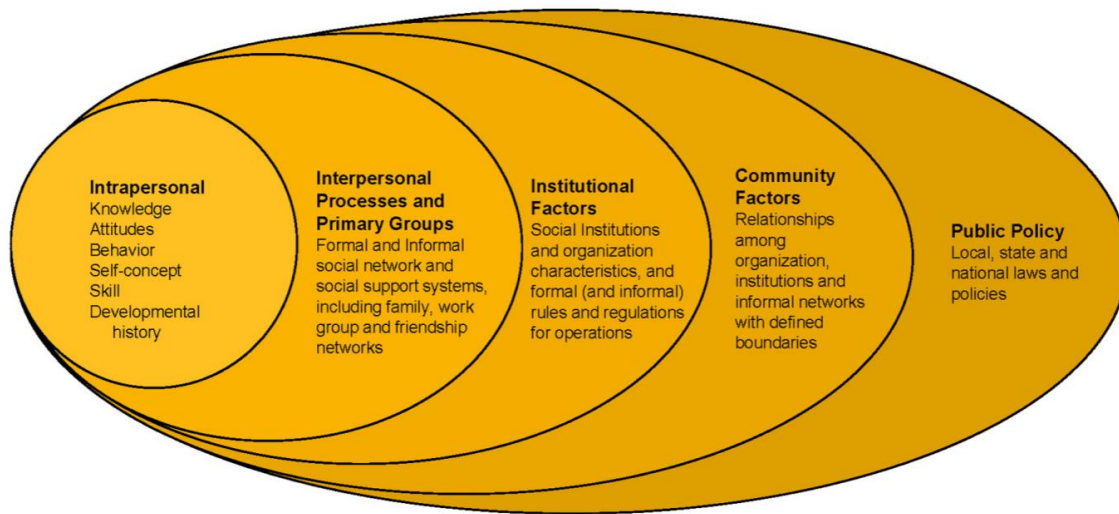
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## Appendix A



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