



UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SUPPORT CENTRE 2019-2020 REPORT

**REPORTING PERIOD:  
JANUARY 2019 TO JUNE 2020**

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.





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FOR AN ACCESSIBLE VERSION OF THIS REPORT,  
PLEASE CONTACT US AT [SVPSCENTRE@UTORONTO.CA](mailto:SVPSCENTRE@UTORONTO.CA)

# INTRODUCTION

The University of Toronto's Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre (SVPSC) aims to make it easier for members of our community – students, faculty, staff, and librarians – to access supports and information. With locations on all three campuses, the Centre is one way the University is working to provide our community with a clear pathway for people seeking support.

The Centre is continually working to raise awareness with workshops, training, and campaigns. Under the University's Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, the Centre also provides support and accepts disclosures and reports of sexual violence.

This report provides a snapshot of the Centre's work over the 18-month period from January 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020. The Centre's activity from 2017 and 2018 was previously reported in its inaugural report. Following guidance from the Ministry, moving forward, the Centre will be using the academic calendar year, from July 1 to June 30, to report activity. This period was selected to allow alignment with the academic calendar year.

Like many on-campus services, the SVPSC has adapted to the changing work environment and challenging circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, we quickly transitioned from in-person to virtual operations. This was done smoothly and with minimal disruption, as the Centre continued to provide the same level of service and saw steady levels of community engagement.





# OUR COMMITMENT TO THOSE WE SERVE

We recognize that individual needs, circumstances, and choices are unique. Our core principles and practices are anti-oppressive and trauma-informed. When you choose to access services from us, you will:

- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Receive non-judgmental, empathetic care
- Be free to ask questions and drop in and out of service
- Learn about on- and off-campus support, resources and accommodations, including emergency housing, short-term academic or workplace assistance and emergency financial aid
- Receive as-needed referrals to on- and off-campus services including counselling, medical and legal services
- Be fully informed about Centre policies, confidentiality and conditions of service
- Get the information you need to make informed choices about whether to report sexual violence and how and where to do it
- Know that your decision will be respected



# A COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is a serious issue on Canadian campuses. It can occur between individuals regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status. It is overwhelmingly committed against women, especially women who experience the intersection of multiple marginalized identities.

At the University of Toronto, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre (SVPSC) is working to create a campus environment where all members of our community can study, work and live free from sexual violence. The Centre supports members of the U of T community who have been impacted by sexual violence and works to promote respect and uphold a culture of consent across the University's three campuses.

Photo Credit: Roberta Baker





# WHAT WE MEAN BY SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CONSENT

The University's definition of sexual violence is broad and includes a range of behaviours. Sexual violence can be physical in nature, such as forced kissing or touching. It can also be non-physical, as with stalking or verbal sexual comments. It can occur in private, in public, or online, and it can occur between two or more people regardless of gender, gender expression, gender identity, or sexuality. A defining feature of sexual violence is the absence of consent: this means that the behaviour has not been discussed or agreed to by all parties and that at least one person in the situation has not said yes or agreed to the sexual interaction.

Examples of sexual violence might include but are not limited to:

- inappropriate and unwelcome comments or physical contact of a sexual nature
- sexual harassment
- sexual assault (including assault by a partner or marital partner)
- stalking
- indecent exposure
- circulating degrading sexual imagery
- voyeurism
- cyber sexual harassment
- sharing intimate photos without consent
- stealthing (i.e., removing a condom without consent during sex)

Consent is an everyday practice that needs to come before many different types of interactions. A part of creating a culture of consent on campus is normalizing the practice of checking in with each other before we act, from small ways that may seem innocuous to ways that directly link to sexual violence.

Photo Credit: Stephen Dagg



# WHAT WE DO

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre plays a coordinating role with other support services on campus and leads education and prevention initiatives across the University.



Karen B. K. Chan, speaker at an Orientation Week event organized by the Centre is pictured above. Photo Credit: Rachel Evangeline Chiong



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

We successfully partner with internal and external organizations and experts to offer a variety of education and training opportunities centred on preventing sexual violence and raising awareness of existing services and supports.

The Centre's education initiatives are designed to be interactive and thought-provoking and to enhance our community's ability to understand, respond to and prevent sexual violence.

## SUPPORT

People affected by sexual violence need a welcoming, safe, and confidential space where they can talk to caring professionals and learn about their options. This is what the SVPSC provides to the U of T community.

Any member of our community who has experienced or witnessed sexual violence

Our most popular **workshop** topics include:

- Skills for Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence: Using a Trauma-Informed Approach
- What is Harassment? Tools for Identifying and Addressing Racial and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Delivered in partnership with the Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office)
- Sexual Violence Disclosure Skills for Student Leaders and Residence Dons
- Building Consent Culture During Orientation & Beyond

or who has received a disclosure of sexual violence can contact the Centre for support. It does not matter when or where the sexual violence happened or whether or not they choose to make a formal report.

We are here to help our community members decide what they want to do and to support any decision they make.

## DISCLOSING AND REPORTING

The Centre supports those who wish to disclose or report an incident of sexual violence they experienced.

Disclosing involves telling someone about an incident of sexual violence. For example, a student can disclose simply by speaking to a fellow student, a faculty member, or a staff member about an experience of sexual violence. The Centre also hears disclosures and is a supportive place where an

individual can go to disclose an experience of sexual violence.

Reporting involves telling a designated person at the University about an incident of sexual violence for the purpose of initiating official University procedures. A report is not required in order for someone to receive support, services, or accommodations from the University.



## **WHAT WE HAVE DONE: NEW ROLE PROFILE** **EDUCATION LEAD – JENNIFER FLOOD**

In September 2019, a dedicated Education Lead was hired by the Centre with a focus on reviewing education initiatives. Over the past year, the Education Coordinator has offered training reviews, developed a strategic plan for training programming, and consulted about educational programming across our tri-campus.



**What are the key responsibilities of your role as the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator – Education Lead?**

In my role, I am responsible for leading and supporting the development of the University's Sexual Violence Prevention Education curriculum by developing, delivering, and evaluating training and education materials to increase awareness of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre and University of Toronto's Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment. I work from a tri-campus perspective, meaning I collaborate and support educational work across all three campuses.

**How would you summarize the importance of what you do?**

Education is crucial to any form of long-lasting change. We often see that sexual violence and other forms of oppression and discrimination intersect, meaning a person may experience multiple forms of oppression such as racism, sexism, cissexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, etc. Research tells us that women of color, specifically Black and Indigenous women, Two-spirited folks, people with disabilities, and people who identify as LGBTQ2S+, disproportionately experience sexual violence in addition to other forms of violence simultaneously. Education work is incredibly important but must address all forms of oppression in order to reach true liberation.

**What has been the biggest success or area of progress since you started in the role?**

Having the opportunity to work and learn from colleagues in the U of T community to enhance training curricula and programming offered by the Centre. We have been able to partner with folks across the campuses

in myriad ways, including conversations, video development, training and program development, and much more. We will continue to build these partnerships in the future as we know this work can only happen as a collective.

**What would you suggest to anyone who feels they or their staff need to learn more about sexual violence prevention?**

I would say that is a great start! Prevention of any form of violence, harm, oppression, ism, etc., starts with acknowledging that we all need more education and awareness. We offer a variety of workshops at all levels of change, including historical, individual, relationship, community, and society-level factors. Our workshops also align with the Guiding Principles for Sexual Violence Education and Initiatives. Anyone who is a member of the U of T community can request training from the Centre. We also offer training consults to groups on campus who are interested, as well as a host of educational programs and events throughout the year open to all members at U of T.

To learn more about our programming, I'd encourage people to visit the [SVPS Centre website](#), or contact me directly, at [jennifer.flood@utoronto.ca](mailto:jennifer.flood@utoronto.ca).

Photo Credit - Previous Page: Jessica Laforet  
Photo Credit - Below: Kristina Doyle



## WHAT WE HAVE DONE



*so you wanna...*  
**HUG YOUR FRIEND.**

**DO YOU HAVE CONSENT?**

Consent is the ongoing practice of checking in with someone else, and respecting their boundaries before engaging further with them.

Before **hugging your friend** try asking, **can I give you a hug?**

**#CheckInForConsent**

**CONSENT.UTORONTO.CA**



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Photo Credit: Luke Lopez



# EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

## BUILDING & REINFORCING A CULTURE OF CONSENT

Growing consent culture on campus means looking at our daily interactions with our colleagues, friends, our students, staff and faculty. A culture of consent is one where communication and consent are the norm in all interactions. In such a culture, individuals are respected, not objectified, and have autonomy over their actions, bodies, and decisions. Incidents of harm and violence are not minimized.

Consent is a routine practice that needs to come before many different types of interactions. Part of creating a consent culture on campus is normalizing the

practice of checking in with each other before we act in small ways that may seem innocuous, to ways that directly link to sexual violence.

A focus of the SVPS Centre's work during the reporting period has been to educate, inform, and proactively model attitudes and behaviours that demonstrate a culture of consent. The SVPS Centre has created a series of educational videos, tools, and conversations to help build awareness and to continue developing a culture of consent on campus.

**Some key highlights of this work have involved:**

### #CHECKINFORCONSENT CAMPAIGN

In September 2019, the Centre released a Tri-Campus Consent Campaign. The development of this campaign was informed by student focus groups, ongoing feedback with key stakeholders, and social marketing research. The campaign included a series of posters, postcards, campaign promotional material, TV screens, and social media assets.

The target audience for the campaign was broad. It included first-year undergraduate students across all three campuses, both domestic and international, who may or may not have engaged in these conversations already, lived on campus, been sexually active, or been exposed to comprehensive sexual education. The target audience also included survivors of violence who needed to see their experiences reflected in this campaign.

The Consent Campaign aimed to:

- normalize the practice of consent
- decrease stigma around engaging in conversations about consent
- encourage people to think about consent in their everyday lives
- link individuals to further information on consent

#### Consent Campaign Metrics

815

Consent Campaign print products distributed to members of our tri-campus community

21.8K+

reached organically via Instagram and Facebook posts with 498 likes, 309 shares, and 5310 impressions

## CONSENT CONVERSATION VIDEO SERIES

In February 2020, students across the University of Toronto gathered to explore conversations about consent in their everyday lives. Through conversations, these short **three-five minute** videos provide

a snapshot of some of the lived experiences of students across our U of T campuses. These videos expand on the print and social materials from the #CheckInForConsent Campaign.

## TEACHING CONSENT WEBINARS SERIES

The Centre collaborated with the Family Care Office to co-develop a three-part webinar series, featuring Dr. Nadine Thornhill, an educator specializing in child

and adolescent sexuality. The webinar series focuses on teaching kids, tweens, and teens consent, and is permanently available on the **Centre's YouTube channel**.

## CONSENT ACTION WEEK

The Centre hosted its first and second *Consent Action Week* in January 2019 and January 2020. Each week included a series of interactive workshops across all three campuses centred on consent conversations. There were more than

**ten** programs held across our campuses for the inaugural Consent Action Week. One set of workshops saw participants co-creating an art piece, while another focused on healing after trauma.

## ORIENTATION LEADER TOOL KIT FOR BUILDING A CULTURE OF CONSENT DURING ORIENTATION

Messaging provided during orientation can set the tone for someone's experience at the University of Toronto. Orientation is an opportunity to educate, inform, and proactively model attitudes and behaviours that demonstrate a culture of consent. Modelling the essence of consent throughout orientation sets the stage for prioritizing consent in all aspects of one's life.

To support this goal, the Centre worked with Student Life Professionals and student leaders to create a tool kit for Orientation Coordinators that outlines some of the ways

they can integrate consent within their orientation program and model a consent culture. It includes a list of guidelines for orientation programs to consider.

In addition to this tool kit, the Centre collaborated with Student Life, Student Societies, and Orientation Coordinators to train orientation leaders and embed consent programming within the 2019 orientation program. **Twelve** keynote presentations took place across campuses during Orientation Week, with over **2000** incoming undergraduate students participating.



## NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REMEMBERING 30 YEARS LATER

2019 marked the 30th anniversary of the École Polytechnique de Montréal shootings. To recognize the anniversary year, **the Centre lead the coordination of remembrance events** for each of the University's three campuses for the *National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women*.

To honour the lives lost, the Centre at U of T Scarborough, in collaboration with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office and the Principal's Office, hosted a unique commemoration event. They held a remembrance ceremony that mobilized attendees to assemble wellness kits for donation to women in need. Over 75 kits

were made and distributed to a shelter and young parenting centre serving women in Scarborough.

St. George programming included a commemoration that was held at Hart House. The program included a presentation of the Award for Scholarly Achievement in the Area of Gender-Based Violence, which was established in 2016.

U of T Mississauga held a tribute that was followed by a resource fair that showed community gender-based violence agencies within Peel.

## NEW COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP

The Centre collaborated with the Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office to develop a new training session for faculty and staff entitled **“What is Harassment? Tools to Identify and Address Racial and Sexual Harassment in the Work Environment”**. The session will be part of the Centre’s regular programming from now on.

In this workshop, participants learn and apply important skills by thoroughly addressing the elements of how to prevent unacceptable behaviour in the workplace. The workshop includes a detailed overview of sexual and racial harassment and explains key definitions. Participants also discuss sexual harassment prevention.

This training:

- Provides an overview of key race-related and sexual harassment terms and definitions outlined within the Ontario Human Right Code
- Identifies manifestations of racial and sexual harassment and their impact on the individual and the work environment
- Explains institutional processes and the role of the Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office and the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre in responding to instances of racial and sexual harassment.

## PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

We offer a variety of programming and events that are open to all members of the University tri-campus community. The Centre hosted regular affirming self-care

programming, such as dog therapy, art circles, affirmation design, and writing workshops. The following are program highlights from each campus:

Specialized affirmation cards developed by the Centre in 2017. Photo Credit: Frizz Kid



## “I BELIEVE YOU” DAY

The Centre at St. George organized a drop-in affirmation workshop in honour of “I Believe You” Day on September 18, 2019. “I Believe You” Day is a day on which we experience the power and healing that can come when we believe survivors. This day aims to encourage supportive responses

to disclosures of sexual violence by letting survivors know that we believe them.

Local artist, Frizz Kid, led participants through an art-based program where they designed affirmations for themselves and future clients of the SVPS Centre.

## “ANTI-OH! LIBERATION IN LOVE + LOVE-MAKING”

Facilitated by Rania El Mugammar on February 14, 2019, one of the SVPSC at U of T Mississauga’s most well-attended events was a non-traditional Anti-VDay participatory workshop that explored the politics of desirability and power dynamics

in intimate and romantic contexts. Using a consent culture framework, this workshop interrogated power dynamics and encouraged social consciousness and critical self-reflection.

## “A DISCUSSION ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE – FACILITATED BY PEER NAVIGATORS WITH A FOCUS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING”

In January 2020, the Centre at U of T Scarborough successfully partnered with East Metro Youth Services to facilitate a community discussion on gender-based violence with a focus on human trafficking.

The event received an overwhelmingly positive response from staff and students, with requests for future conversations about a topic that is not often discussed on campus.

Specialized affirmation cards developed by the Centre in 2017. Photo Credit: Frizz Kid



WHAT WE HAVE DONE



## STUDENT LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

During the reporting period, the SVPS Centre enhanced our student involvement opportunities by hiring a team of work-study students on each of our campuses. These student leaders worked in collaboration with each other and the local Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinators to support awareness, education, and training programs.

- This program is one way the SVPS Centre includes students in the development and implementation of education related to sexual violence prevention
- These student leaders assisted with increasing student engagement with SVPS Centre activities
- Facilitated student peer-to-peer learning

### YIRAN ZHANG WAS A WORK-STUDY STUDENT WITH THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION & SUPPORT CENTRE (SVPSC) BETWEEN JUNE 2019 AND FEBRUARY 2020.

#### **Yiran, what are you studying, and why did you choose to work with the SVPSC?**

I am currently a third-year Ph.D. student in Language and Literacies Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The focus of my studies has been researching ways to better support adult immigrants with refugee experiences. When I saw the work-study opportunity at the SVPS Centre last summer, I decided to apply so that I could learn more about how the coordinators at the Centre approach their work in supporting individuals who have survived traumatic events. What is more, it was inspiring to become a part of an effort to build and enhance the consent culture across university campuses.

#### **What are one or two key things you learned during your work-study experience?**

Through my work at the Centre, I learned to recognize different forms of sexual violence and ways to support those who have experienced such violence. Many seemingly benign behaviours are actually sexual violence. I was able to inform more people from the university community about

the resources available to them, should they feel the need for support.

#### **Having had this experience, do you plan to continue to work in this field and if so, do you know what you would like to do?**

Having had this experience, I have become passionate about consent culture and sexual violence prevention and support work. Though my career path likely will not overlap much with this line of work, I do plan to stay engaged in ways I am capable of. I will volunteer whenever I can and continue to spread awareness of consent.



Photo provided by Yiran Zhang

# METRICS

The data presented offers a snapshot of the Centre’s work between January 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020.

METRIC	PREVIOUS REPORTED METRICS JANUARY 2017 – DECEMBER 2018 (24 MONTHS)	NEW REPORTED METRICS JANUARY 2019 – JUNE 2020 (18 MONTHS)
Education initiatives across all campuses including information fairs, workshops and other programs	154 (Annual Avg: 77)	153 (Annual Avg: 102)
Students, staff and faculty engaged with the University’s sexual violence prevention education online module during this reporting period	4156 (Annual Avg: 2078)	1763 (Annual Avg: 1175)
Reports of sexual violence under the University’s Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment	56 (Annual Avg: 28)	36 (Annual Avg: 24)
Requests for support* from students, librarians, staff, and faculty	506 (Annual Avg: 253)	497 (Annual Avg: 331)

\*Refers to any request for consultation received by the Centre and accounts for first-time interactions with the Centre resulting in a client relationship. It does not include requests for training or education.

*This data illustrates a general increase in annual activity for the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre. In response to increased demand from the community and the capacity provided by the addition of an education-specific role, this reporting period saw an increase in the number of educational initiatives offered by the SVPS Centre compared to the previous reporting period. The increase of requests for support by unique individuals may illustrate an increase in awareness of the Centre and its services amongst the University community. There was a decline in the number of individuals enrolled in the University’s sexual violence prevention education online module. This likely reflects the module’s release during the previous reporting period allowing many community members to have already engaged. On average, the annual number of reports received by the Centre stayed reasonably consistent.*

## WHERE ARE WE GOING

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre aims to continually expand and enhance our efforts to support the U of T community.



To this end, over the next year, the SVPSC will:

- Develop training specific to graduate students at U of T. This training will be designed in consultation with graduate students and the key campus units who provide specialized services to them.
- Enhance the feedback mechanisms for clients of the SVPS Centre, for example by promoting the Centre's [website feedback form](#) and developing client focus groups.
- Establish and build a presence on social media that will offer new ways to promote our work, increase awareness around sexual violence, and connect with our community.
- Follow appropriate University and Public Health guidelines and continue to navigate the challenges posed by COVID-19 while maintaining a solid level of service.





The SVPSC is also committed to a series of long-term goals. We will:

- Continue to provide trauma-informed and client-centred services to support individuals affected by sexual violence and help them learn about their options
- Raise awareness on campus of the services the Centre offers
- Build and strengthen partnerships with the local community, student groups, and campus services to improve our sexual violence prevention and response efforts
- Establish meaningful student involvement opportunities within the Centre
- Expand our educational efforts through collaboration and an intentional strategy that aligns with the Expert Panel on Education and Prevention of Sexual Violence's Guiding Principles

Photo Credit: Matthew Volpe

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SUPPORT CENTRE

**Visit:** [www.svpscentre.utoronto.ca](http://www.svpscentre.utoronto.ca)

**Phone:** 416-978-2266 (all locations)

**Email:** [svpscentre@utoronto.ca](mailto:svpscentre@utoronto.ca)

## **Meet our Team:**

Centre staff include compassionate, skilled Coordinators with years of training and experience supporting individuals and providing education.

- Angela Treglia, Director, Sexual Violence Prevention and Support
- Derrick An, Executive Assistant
- Jenn Flood, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator- Education Lead

## **St. George Campus**

Gerstein Science Information Centre, suite B139

- Devi Mohabir, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator
- Henna Khawja, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator
- Payal Bhole, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator

## **University of Toronto Scarborough**

Davis Building, room 3094G

- Bristy Chakrabarty, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator

## **University of Toronto Mississauga**

Environmental Science & Chemistry Building, room EV141

- Paula Lam, Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator



# THANK YOU

Thank you to our clients for placing their trust in us, past workshop participants for their engagement and allyship in reinforcing and building a culture of consent with us and our campus and community partners who continue to support our Centre's important work. We are looking forward to continuing our collective pursuit of preventing sexual violence.





[WWW.SVPSCENTRE.UTORONTO.CA](http://WWW.SVPSCENTRE.UTORONTO.CA)

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