



**SEXUAL VIOLENCE
PREVENTION &
SUPPORT CENTRE**

**2020-2021
ANNUAL REPORT**



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

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 the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre (the SVPS Centre) is a tri-campus resource that assists and supports University of Toronto students, staff, faculty, and librarians who have been affected by sexual violence or sexual harassment.

The SVPS Centre provides support to the U of T community and accepts disclosures and reports of sexual violence from the community under the University's [Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#).

The SVPS Centre is also deeply invested in education initiatives and continues to raise awareness through workshops, training, programs, and campaigns.

This report provides a snapshot of the SVPS Centre's work over a 12-month period aligning with the academic calendar year: July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

2. LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The 2020-2021 academic year presented many changes for our community. It also reinforced the vital nature of our work.

In Canada, the lockdown measures necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic led to increased isolation, loneliness, and a [rise in the risk of gender-based violence at home and online](#). Members of our community faced new challenges, including how to safely reach out for support, and how to deal with the changing nature of sexual violence.

Throughout this period, I have been constantly amazed by the courage of those we support, and grateful for our community's efforts to address issues of sexual and gender-based violence.

Like many on-campus services, our team adapted quickly to a changing work environment. Thanks to the skill and dedication of our staff, we made this transition with minimal disruption. The SVPS Centre maintained both the quality and accessibility of our services through virtual platforms.



We also experienced a shift in our reporting structure. As of July 2020, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support portfolio reports to the Vice-Provost, Students (primary) and to the Division of People Strategy, Equity & Culture (PSEC).

Even with these significant adjustments, the SVPS Centre has grown our tri-campus education portfolio, increasing public awareness of our services; expanding programming for Black, Indigenous, and racialized survivors; and making improvements to our structures and processes.

We could not have accomplished all this without our incredible partners on- and off-campus. Thank you for your ongoing collaboration. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead as we continue to strive for a strong and lasting culture of consent and care on our campuses.



Angela Treglia
Director, Sexual Violence
Prevention and Support

“One of the many strengths of the SVPS Centre’s approach is its deep commitment to listening, and to providing information, supports, or guidance tailored to an individual’s needs. This culture of listening creates spaces for our students and other members of the U of T community to feel safe sharing information or asking difficult questions. The SVPS Centre’s focus on individualized support ensures people feel respected.”

“The SVPS Centre’s two pillars of prevention and support speak to its strategic role in the U of T community. Through education and outreach, the Centre encourages a practice of consent in all our interactions. As the University works towards its goal of eradicating sexual violence from our three campuses, this foundational work is essential not only to creating a culture of consent, but also to creating a framework of accountability.”

Sandy Welsh
Vice-Provost, Students

Kelly Hannah-Moffat,
Vice-President, People Strategy,
Equity & Culture



3. 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 our services;
- 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 so; and
- Know that your decision will be respected.

4. A COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is a significant 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 by men against women, especially women who experience the intersection of multiple identities.

At the University of Toronto, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre is working to create a campus environment where all members of our community can study, work, and live free from sexual violence. The SVPS 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.

5. 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 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:

- 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 sexual imagery without consent
- 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 our campuses is normalizing the practice of checking in with each other before we act. These actions might be small and seemingly innocuous or they might be actions with more obvious links to sexual violence.

6. WHAT WE DO

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

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we remained open and available to support members of our community by providing our services remotely through phone or video conferencing. We also ensured our services continued to be accessible to all.



SUPPORT

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

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

violence can contact the SVPS Centre for support. It does not matter when or where the sexual violence happened, or whether or not the individual chooses to make a formal report.

The SVPS Centre is a resource for all those affected by sexual violence, helping them determine their next steps, and supporting any decision they make.



DISCLOSING AND REPORTING

The SVPS 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 SVPS 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 for someone to receive support, services, or accommodations from the University.

The SVPS Centre can assist someone with submitting a report to the University under the [Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#). The SVPS Centre does not oversee the assessment, investigation, or outcome decisions related to a report. Those activities are undertaken by other offices at the University and are outlined in the Policy. The SVPS Centre remains available to provide support to individuals going through the reporting process.



7. WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED



EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The SVPS Centre’s educational initiatives encourage interaction and discussion, enhancing our community’s ability to understand, respond to, and prevent sexual violence. With the University’s transition to virtual work in March 2020, we maintained this interactive focus as we redesigned our training initiatives. The new virtual platforms expanded our reach, engaging the tri-campus community in sessions that formerly required more limited, in-person attendance on a specific campus.

We also launched a series of scheduled online training sessions via U of T’s Learning Management System (LMS). These sessions presented content from our popular workshop “Skills for Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence: Using a Trauma-Informed Approach,” enabling staff, faculty, and librarians to access the training individually for the first time.

Partnerships with external facilitators and community organizations provided excellent opportunities to deliver training to students as well as to staff, faculty, and librarians. Our programming included new content from experts on workplace sexual harassment, Indigenous wellness, racial and sexual violence, and more. As well, upon request, we offered tailored group training to students, staff, faculty, librarians, and academic divisions on a broad range of topics, including:

- 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
- Building Consent Culture



PROGRAMMING AND EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

The SVPS Centre expanded its programming and events for the University community in 2020-2021.

Building upon our relationships with partners at U of T and beyond, we offered responsive programming that helped members of our community deal with issues emerging over this pandemic year. We

redoubled our ongoing efforts to promote a culture of consent, tailoring some sessions to students and families. We also marked annual days of recognition, enhancing our community's awareness about sexual and gender-based violence as well as sexual violence support and prevention.

RESTORATIVE & RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS

In a year when a global pandemic and incidents in Canada and the United States exposed systemic inequities, it became particularly crucial for the SVPS Centre to develop restorative and responsive

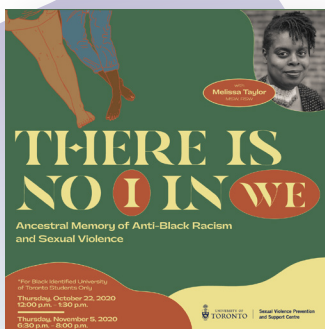
programs. The Centre established intentional spaces for conversation and healing to support Black, Indigenous, and racialized survivors of sexual violence.



Healing Through the Intersections

In response to community conversations about anti-Black racism, racial injustice, and related trauma, the SVPS Centre hosted a three-part series on race, Black identity, and sexual violence. Drawing upon the

expertise of trauma-informed facilitators, these sessions established safe spaces for Black-identified students, staff, and faculty on campus.



October 22 & November 5, 2020: “Ancestral Memory of Anti-Black Racism with Melissa Taylor, M.S.W., R.S.W.”

Topics explored:

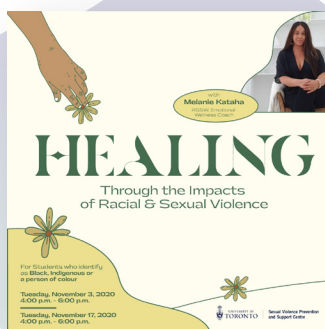
- Defining ancestral memory
- How to recognize that a traumatic experience is being re-lived
- How to regulate one’s nervous system
- The importance of collective care



October 27, 2020: “Healing from Anti-Black Racialized and Sexualized Trauma with Tenniel Brown”

Topics explored:

- The continuum of anti-Black racism in Canada
- Racialized post-traumatic stress
- The impact of sexual violence on the Black community
- Truth-telling on resilience and resistance
- Tools for healing from anti-Black racism and racial trauma



November 3 & November 17, 2020: “Healing Through the Impacts of Racial and Sexual Violence with Melanie Kataha”

Topics explored:

- Understanding the impacts of trauma from racial and sexual violence
- Regaining physical and emotional safety and control
- Healing coping strategies and self-care
- Increasing self-awareness skills and connecting to inner peace

***Kisîwâtisôwin*: Self-Compassion Workshop Series for Indigiqueers**

Anchored in an Indigenous perspective, this virtual workshop series for Indigenous-identifying LGBTQ2S+ students encouraged Indigiqueers to deepen their relationship to self, community, and creation. Indigenous Wellness Counsellor Faith Chaput and the SVPS Centre’s Education Lead, Jenn Flood, facilitated the tri-campus series, which explored a decolonial approach to self-compassion and addressed how to handle difficult emotions with greater ease, how to self-motivate with encouragement rather than criticism, and mindfulness. The three sessions, informed by traditional teachings about *Kisîwâtisôwin* (a Michif word meaning kindness), marked a unique collaboration between the SVPS Centre and [Health and Wellness at St. George](#).

Sessions included:

- **February 23, 2021:**
“*Kisîwâtisôwin*: The Physiology of Self-Criticism and Self-Compassion”
- **March 3, 2021:**
“*Kisîwâtisôwin*: Mindfulness & Letting Go of Resistance”
- **April 7, 2021:**
“*Kisîwâtisôwin*: Self-Compassion & Shame”



Sign created in response to hate-motivated attacks in March 2021

Confronting Anti-Asian Racism: Reflection. Restoration. Action

Following the recent hate-motivated attacks in Atlanta, Georgia in March 2021, the SVPS Centre partnered with the Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office on a series of collective healing spaces to denounce anti-Asian racism, misogyny, and all forms of racial and gender-based violence. Sexual Violence Support & Response Coordinator Jia Yao facilitated community dialogue alongside yoga and meditation teacher Anne Chen for the session entitled “Purposeful Resilience: Restoration through Dialogue and Meditation.” Additionally, members of the SVPS Centre team supported with a keynote presentation and vigil, entitled “Shared Unity, Shared Action: Dismantling Anti-Asian Racism.”

ONGOING PROGRAMMING

Each year, the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre offers programming that promotes a culture of consent across our campuses. Growing consent culture on campus means looking at our everyday

interactions with our colleagues and friends, and our students, staff, and faculty.

Highlights of our 2020-2021 programming included workshops for students and families.



Building A Consent Culture: Orientation Framework

In addition to being available for bookable workshops and training, the SVPS Centre re-envisioned our orientation package this year, combining live keynote presentations with Karen B.K. Chan, our [#CheckInForConsent campaign](#), and several asynchronous, virtual options into an accessible guide for all those planning orientation activities. Orientation is a foundational 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.



[“11 Things that Contribute to Consent Culture”](#)

New elements included:

- A pre-recorded session from facilitator Karen B.K. Chan, [“11 Things that Contribute to Consent Culture”](#)
- An informational [awareness video](#) about the SVPS Centre's work
- Virtual offerings of our live orientation keynote with Karen B.K. Chan, thanks to the support of U of T's Learning Space Management Team
- A follow-up series of more intimate conversations with Karen B.K. Chan:
 - In addition to the keynote presentation, Karen B.K. Chan facilitated three well-attended sessions throughout the fall semester: “Rejection Resilience,” “Pleasure, Arousal, and Consent,” and “Guilt-Free Boundaries”



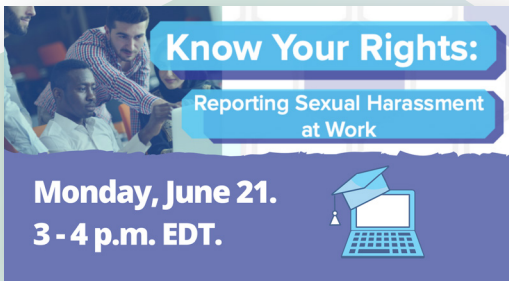
[#CheckInForConsent campaign](#)

Consent for Families Workshop

On January 28, 2021, the SVPS Centre hosted the workshop “Consent for Families” with Dr. Nadine Thornhill, in partnership with the Family Care Office at U of T. This workshop complemented a series of fun, comprehensive videos produced for use by the SVPS Centre and the Family Care Office in 2020. They addressed how to talk about consent with [teens](#), [tweens](#), and [children](#).



[“Teaching Teens About Consent”](#)
[with Dr. Natalie Thornhill](#)



“Know Your Rights”
workshop poster

SHARE Presentations

In partnership with the [Sexual Harassment and Assault Resource Exchange](#), the SVPS Centre hosted two workshops for students on consent and workplace harassment in June 2021: “A Matter of Consent: Understanding Consent in Law and Culture” and “Know Your Rights: Reporting Sexual Harassment at Work.”

ANNUAL DAYS OF RECOGNITION & COMMEMORATION

Each year, the SVPS Centre encourages the U of T community to acknowledge and reflect upon days of recognition or commemoration that address issues

around sexual and gender-based violence. In addition to the two initiatives below, the SVPS Centre contributed to activities marking Trans Day of Remembrance.

I Believe You Day

Inspired by Alberta's "I Believe You" campaign, first launched in 2015, I Believe You Day now garners support from schools and universities nationwide. The SVPS Centre marked I Believe You Day on September 18, 2020 to share the power and healing that can come when we believe survivors of sexual violence. The SVPS Centre created inclusive spaces to explore some of the complexities of sexual violence from a holistic perspective, offering two virtual drop-in sessions open to students, staff, and faculty with guest facilitators. Heather Beamish, a spoken word artist and activist, and Kris Hamilton, a queer somatic psychotherapist, facilitated as participants learned ways to process sensations and emotions through writing, art, and emotional maintenance.



"I Believe You Day"
event poster



Actions within the Intersections: Past, Present, and Future

Recognized on the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre at École Polytechnique on December 6, 1989, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women calls for remembering, reflection, and action. This year, the SVPS Centre partnered with Hart House and the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering to co-host a 90-minute tri-campus virtual event, *Actions within the Intersections: Past, Present, and Future*. Held on December 4, 2020, it addressed gender-based violence through a discussion with U of T students, staff, and faculty.

METRICS

The data presented below offers a snapshot of the SVPS Centre’s work between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 and compares data with the previous reporting period’s annual averages.

Metric	Category	Previously Reported Metrics (2019-2020 Annual Avg)	New Metrics (2020-2021 Annual Avg)
Education initiatives across all campuses, including training & workshops, events, and other programs	Education	102	98
Reports of sexual violence under the University’s <i>Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment</i>	Report	24	19
Requests for support* from students, faculty, librarians, and staff *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.	Support	331	301

Overall, this data illustrates a consistent state of activity for the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre. Reduced campus activity during the pandemic may account for the slight decline in the number of requests for support and reports of sexual violence received under the *Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment*. At the same time, the SVPS Centre reached the community in new ways through virtual engagement opportunities. Nearly 5,000 individuals participated in the Centre’s 98 education initiatives.

8. NEW ROLE PROFILE: EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR — KATE HAWKINS

In response to our goal of increasing awareness of the SVPS Centre’s services, the Centre created a new position in 2020 to build our digital presence through social media, solidify our brand identity, and support the Education Lead with curriculum development and execution. Since beginning the role in May 2020, the Education and Communications Coordinator has developed a guiding brand document, launched our social media channels, actively supported education visioning, and led the roll-out of workshops, trainings, and programs.

What are the key responsibilities of your new role?

I’m responsible for leading the SVPS Centre’s digital strategy and supporting the education portfolio. In the last year, having a strong virtual presence has been vital. For the SVPS Centre to continue delivering accessible, high-quality services to those who need them, the U of T community has to be aware of the important work happening through this tri-campus resource. My job is to establish a public voice, look, and feel for the SVPS Centre, allowing us to reach more students, staff, and faculty who may need our support. Expanding the reach of our educational initiatives will help to build a lasting culture of consent on our campuses.

What have been the biggest successes or areas of progress since you started in the role?

In my first few months with the SVPS Centre, I have worked with partners to establish a clear, consistent, and welcoming brand that is both clearly affiliated with the parent U of T brand, and unique in its tone and presentation. Additionally, the SVPS Centre has launched social media channels and planned programming offerings for this

upcoming year. I’m proud of our collective progress on this front, especially as we head into a new academic year!

What do you hope to achieve in the first year of your role?

In the year to come, I hope to build our social media following, launch an e-newsletter, refresh our website, and coordinate meaningful ways to engage with the milestones we mark annually—I Believe You Day, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, Consent Action Week, and others. I also look forward to finding ways to partner on projects with other members of the Ontario Universities Sexual Violence Network. Increasing awareness of our services, strengthening partnerships, maintaining our educational initiatives, and establishing efficient administrative processes for both our communications and education portfolios are my key goals.



Kate Hawkins
Education and
Communications
Coordinator

9. WHERE WE ARE GOING

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre will continue to expand and enhance our efforts to support the U of T community. In the past year, we have made significant strides towards our 2020-2021 goals by:

- Establishing and building a presence on social media that offers new ways to promote our work, increase awareness around sexual violence, and connect with the community;
- Following appropriate University and Public Health guidelines and navigating the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19 while maintaining a solid level of service; and
- Enhancing the feedback mechanisms for clients of the SVPS Centre by promoting a customized feedback form.

In the year to come, we will expand training specific to graduate students at U of T and establish client focus groups to enhance our feedback mechanisms.

Additionally, we will:

- Establish regular community healing groups for survivors of all genders to ensure they have a space to experience a sense of community care, learn about sexual violence prevention and intervention, and engage in wellness and self-care activities; and
- Increase our public engagement through digital communications tools, including a refreshed website and email list.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SUPPORT CENTRE



Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre staff photo

CONTACT INFORMATION

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U of T Mississauga:

Davis Building, room 3094G

U of T Scarborough:

Environmental Science & Chemistry
Building, room EV141



10. THANK YOU

Thank you to our clients for placing your trust in us; to our past workshop participants for your engagement and commitment to reinforcing and building a culture of consent; and to our campus and community partners, who continue to support the SVPS Centre's important work. We remain committed to our collective pursuit of ending sexual violence for all.

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover: Preston Browning

Page 2-3: Ken Jones

Page 4-5: Diana Tyszko

Page 5 portrait: Matthew Volpe

Page 6-7: Nick Iwanyshyn

Page 8-9: Ken Jones

Page 10: Matthew Volpe

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Page 12: Chris Montgomery

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Page 14: Nick Iwanyshyn

Page 15: Event posters designed by Bianca Chamberlain

Page 16: Jason Leung

Page 17: Diana Tyszko

Page 18: Screenshot from “11 Things that Contribute to Consent Culture”

Page 18: Campaign posters designed by Luke Lopez

Page 19: Screenshot from “Teaching Teens About Consent”

Page 19: Event poster designed by Kate Hawkins

Page 20: Event poster designed by Will Campbell

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