



The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education Progress Report

May 1, 2021 to April 30, 2022

Overview

York University created the Sexual Violence Response Office in 2017 to provide sexual violence prevention support and resources to the York community (staff, students and faculty). In 2018, in response to feedback from community consultations, the University created a standalone centre as a single point of contact for integrated and holistic sexual violence response, support, advising, counselling, advocacy and case management services.

The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education (“The Centre”) opened in July 2018. Guided by York University’s Sexual Violence Policy, the main principle of The Centre is to provide support for survivors at their own pace and in ways suitable for them, which enables them to make informed decisions. The Centre’s supports and educational/ training initiatives operate from a feminist and anti-oppressive lens.

York U’s Sexual Violence Advisory Committee provides advice and recommendations with respect to York University’s efforts to prevent sexual violence, support survivors and address reports of sexual violence.

The Centre is staffed with highly-qualified subject matter experts who operate with strict confidentiality and deep empathy. Supports offered include the coordination of academic accommodations, medical services, workplace accommodations, information about reporting options, safety planning, emergency financial assistance and access to safe houses for those escaping imminent situations.

The Centre Staff

Director

Receptionist

Service & Supports Coordinator
2 positions

Peer Trainer
2 contract positions (1 which is bilingual)

Training & Education Specialist



About The Centre



We're Here for You



◀ Established the Sexual Violence Response Office in 2017.



◀ Staffed with highly-qualified subject matter experts who operate with strict confidentiality and deep empathy.

H.E.R.E

◀ H.E.R.E to Help, Educate, Respond to and Empower survivors and the York community at large.



◀ York University's Sexual Violence Advisory Committee provides advice and recommendations.



◀ Established The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education (The Centre) in 2018.



◀ Provide supports for survivors in ways suitable for them.



Training and Education



94 certificates generated

The Centre offers training modules focusing on policies and procedures pertaining to sexual violence response at York for students, staff and faculty.

▲ *Training Module 1: Sexual Violence Response & Awareness* is an introductory course that provides information about policies and procedures.



242 certificates generated

▲ *Training Module 2: Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence* uses scenario-based interactive learning to evaluate effective responses to disclosures of sexual violence.



Building Awareness for Faculty, Staff and Students



◀ The Building Safer Spaces Toolkit supports York's students when organizing online events. It serves as a tool to ensure all mechanisms of support are considered.

5,200+

▲ Staff, students and faculty participated in presentations by The Centre.



◀ Consent Week in the Fall and Winter builds awareness of all the resources and supports available, starting with referrals to the Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education.



◀ A partnership with the York Federation of Students led to all club leaders having the opportunity to be trained in the Active Bystander Program.

Training & Education

York University and the Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education are committed to educating and training the York community about sexual violence.

The Centre offers training and education aimed at preventing sexual violence and improving supports to survivors. This includes:

- Building awareness on the Sexual Violence Policy among members of the governing board, senior administrators, faculty, staff, contractors and students, including discussing processes for responding to and addressing sexual violence.
- Providing educational initiatives for the University community to promote a change in the attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate sexual violence and to create a more supportive environment for survivors. These initiatives take an intersectional and anti-oppressive approach to addressing the issue of sexual violence and recognizing different experiences of violence. Programming addresses systemic issues contributing to sexual violence and challenge rape culture and other forms of discrimination and hate.

The Centre offers two training modules focusing on policies and procedures pertaining to sexual violence response at York, for students and staff and faculty:

Training Module 1: Sexual Violence Response & Awareness is an introductory course that provides information about policies and procedures. This module is accessible through The Centre's website.

94 participants completed this training

Training Module 2: Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence uses scenario-based interactive learning, engaging the participant in identifying and evaluating effective responses to disclosures of sexual violence.

242 participants completed this training

Training Module 3, currently in the final stage of development, will be launched in Fall 2022 on The Centre's website. This training will help faculty, staff and students understand and learn how to be an active bystander and contribute in a positive way to building a culture of consent at York University. There are two versions of this module: one for students and one designed specifically for faculty and staff. Certificates of completion are provided to participants.

The Centre also delivered presentations that reached more than 5,200 staff, students and faculty. These presentations took place during the pandemic, which required The Centre to pivot all training to online formats and ensure that interactive and engaging sessions were provided. All Zoom sessions were facilitator-led presentations with interactive components, providing opportunities to synthesize information and have deeper discussions.

The Centre held several events and conducted unique training sessions in classrooms, for departments, for student groups and various staff.

Statistical Information

The following is a breakdown of incidents of sexual violence reported through the Policy on Sexual Violence during this reporting period. Please note that the number of unique individuals that The Centre supports does not represent the frequency of services offered. On average, The Centre staff meet with the same individual five to six times and provide several services and supports over several months or even years.

Disclosures

299 unique cases of care and support occurred during this time period



- This number does not capture community members that receive ongoing support and were captured in the 2020/2021 reporting.
- This number predominantly represents support required for incidents that are of a historical nature, meaning that the incident of sexual violence pre-dates the survivor being a member of the York U community.

Complaints

39 total complaints

17 complaints at investigation

22 complaints resolved

Breakdown of Complaints

Complaints at investigation

17 Student Complainants

0 Staff Complainants

0 Faculty Complainants

5 Student Respondents

1 Staff Respondent

1 Faculty Respondent (multiple complainants, but only 1 respondent)

Complaints resolved

17 Student Complainants

1 Staff Complainants

0 Faculty Complainants

4 Non-community Complainants

13 Student Respondents

3 Staff Respondents

0 Faculty Respondents

0 Non-community Respondents

6 Not Enough Information/Dismissed

Information About Ongoing and Continuous Education and Awareness Building

Active Bystander Program

The Active Bystander Program aims to educate community members to intervene when witnessing any form of sexual violence. The goal of these training programs and initiatives is to create a community that is educated on what sexual violence is, how consent can be incorporated into each person's daily lives, and empower individuals to say or do something when witnessing forms of sexual violence. Sexual violence may appear in the media often, however incidents of sexual violence are highly underreported. Numerous barriers exist that make it difficult for survivors to openly seek support or report their experiences with sexual violence. This training fosters the ability to disrupt conversations that engage in rape culture, and participants receive resources/support for individuals needing support. This training equips the York community with the necessary tools to be active bystanders. These sessions are offered for students, staff and faculty.

In partnership with the York Federation of Students this year, all club leaders had the opportunity to

be trained in the Active Bystander Program, with a specific focus on scenarios club executives may face.

The Centre trained over 500 student leaders at *Orient the Leader*, as well as held training for varsity athletes and all students living in residence at the Keele and Glendon campuses.

Consent Talks Play

Created in collaboration with Vanier College Productions, *Consent Talks* is a short play about sex and consent, which focuses on the university experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some themes include virtual hook-ups, sexual violence, online harassment, and the impact of social media and physical distancing rules.

Format

1 hour: presentation, play, Q&A

This film was offered to all first-year students, students in clubs, varsity athletes, student leaders and all students living in residence life.



Highlights from April 30, 2021 to May 1, 2022

Events and campaigns launched between May 2021 and April 2022 addressed matters related to sexual violence and gender-based violence through an intersectional lens, with particular focus on how these issues impact Black and Indigenous community members.

Momming Through the Pandemic: Mothering and Motherhood Support Group

Mothers were the frontline workers during this pandemic. Mothers adapted to managing a household during lockdowns and taking on many additional roles, such as teaching their children curriculum-based schooling on Zoom or attending to young children while trying to navigate working from home and/or juggling their own essential work schedule. It has been a very challenging time for all, and especially difficult for moms around the world. In collaboration with Dr. Andrea O'Reilly, the Mothering and Motherhood Support Group provided a safer space for moms to share and support each other and discuss coping strategies. This was a place for sharing and an opportunity to build a community quilt of connection.

The Centre and this group were featured in the May 5, 2021 publication of *She Does The City*, an online magazine publication.

Staff Art Therapy

Through a series of process-focused art and mindfulness practices, *The Art of Letting Go* workshop focused on stress management and encouraged participants to explore creative ways to release stress that they can continue to utilize in their daily lives. No prior art experience was required to join this workshop.

The Centre offered four sessions to students in Spring 2021. Due to its popularity, four additional sessions were offered in Fall 2021.

York Pride

June 21-25, 2021

In collaboration with the SexGen Collective and many other partners across campus, Pride Week included many important and dynamic events and speakers.

Pride has always existed at the intersection of art and activism, which was the theme adopted for the 2021 Pride Week. In celebration of the space where expression meets social change, it brought together visionaries and changemakers across the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities for five exciting days of talks.

Artists & Activism was brought to the community by SexGen York, with support from The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education, the Division of Students and the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion.

Student Counselling, Health & Well-being offered daily support following each day of speakers.

Student Orientation 2021

The Centre was involved in training all student leaders on the Active Bystander Program and consent. Both training sessions were offered to all students, student clubs, varsity athletes and student officials.

Consent Week

Oct. 4-8, 2021

During Consent Week, The Centre hosted a series of panels, sessions and events online to raise awareness, facilitate discussions and offer resources about consent as York community members settled into a new academic year. By bringing in experts to provide insight, knowledge and resources focused on consent, Consent Week raised awareness about the supports and services offered through The Centre and other partners throughout the Division of Students.

Trans Awareness Week and Trans Day of Remembrance Nov. 16, 2021

This event was hosted by SexGen York, in partnership with the Trans Feminist Action Caucus (CUPE 3903), the Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education, the School of Social Work, and the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion.

In remembrance of those who have died due to violence towards 2Spirit, trans and gender non-conforming people, this event was open to all York faculty, staff and students, as well as community members and allies beyond the York community.

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women Dec. 6, 2021

On Dec. 6, York University honoured those that lost their lives at Polytechnique Montreal on Dec. 6, 1989, and reflected on renewing York's commitment to act on ending gender-based violence. Now more than ever, communities need to come together and take action to support those experiencing violence and refer them to appropriate services. Dec. 6 serves not only to honour those who lost their lives, but signifies continued and growing support from the York community for those who require help today.

This year's event was made possible through the collaboration between The Centre, the York Federation of Students, the Community Safety Department, the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion, the Centre for Indigenous Student Services, Glendon College Student Union, Student Counselling, Health & Well-being and the Lassonde School of Engineering.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

The global theme of 2021 for [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#):

Orange the world: End violence against women now!

In support of this civil society initiative, the [United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women campaign](#) (UNiTE campaign) calls for global actions to increase awareness, galvanize advocacy efforts, and share knowledge and innovations.

The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education partnered with McMaster University, Nipissing University, Queens University and the University of Ottawa to collaboratively host events across institutions during the 16 days. All events were open to the public.

Participating in community events and conversations such as these helps to eliminate gendered violence.

Consent Action Week Jan. 24-28, 2022

The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education at York University created a Sexual Violence Response/Consent Week in January.

In addition, The Centre partnered to create a cross-institutional event coordinated by the Ontario University Sexual Violence Network with two notable authors and facilitators, Roxane Gay and Eternity Martis. The speakers discussed how society puts shame, blame and fear on survivors, which is often internalized. This conversation was an opportunity to think about how to reclaim the narrative and push to create space for healing and justice.

For Consent Action Week 2022, The Centre organized a week of events that were held virtually that included partners from the Violence Against Women sector. These events shared valuable resources and highlighted important issues related to consent, sexual violence and gender-based violence through an intersectional and anti-oppressive lens.

International Women's Day

March 8, 2022

The theme of this year's event:

Connection Across Communities

The Centre held an important discussion to celebrate, honour and reflect on the various journeys panelists have encountered, and how their resilience has moved them forward in healing. The panelists, an incredible group of women, presented their narratives of what they have experienced and how they are working across many different spaces to address gender-based violence. The brilliant keynote speakers (Meggie Cywink, Nneka MacGregor and Zahra Nader) shared their perspectives as Black, Indigenous and women of colour navigating crisis, sexual violence and the world around them.

Cywink was special advisor to the Ministry of the Attorney General and from 2016-19. She provided support to families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), and was appointed special advisor following the disappearance and murder of her younger sister, Sonya Nadine Mae, in 1994. A member of the Whitefish River First Nation, Cywink is currently researching and authoring a book, *First Nations and All Our Relations*, that traces the collective ancestry of the Anishnaabe people back

to 1673, including the exodus from Michigan into Manitoulin Island.

MacGregor is a lawyer, co-founder, and executive director of the Women's Centre for Social Justice known as WomenatthecentrE, a non-profit organization created by and for women survivors of gender-based violence globally that ensures policies and practice are responsive to survivors' needs through social justice and activism. In 2006, she was selected by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario as one of 13 experts tasked to review the range of services provided to women and children in the province, identify gaps and make recommendations. In June 2016, she was appointed by the Canadian government to the Advisory Council on the Federal Strategy Against Gender-Based Violence.

Nader is a former reporter for the *New York Times* in Afghanistan. She is a contributing reporter for the Fuller Project, a non-profit newsroom dedicated to women's stories. Nader has worked as a journalist for almost seven years in Kabul, working for local and international media. She has been published in the *Times magazine*, *The Guardian*, *the Foreign Policy Magazine*, *ABC News*, *Deutsche Welle*, *Huffington Post*, *BBC Persian* and *Open Canada*. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Gender, Feminist & Women's Studies at York University.

Other Supports and Services

The Centre continues to partner with organizations to offer unique and innovative ways to support survivors through trauma-informed yoga, support groups and various modalities using art therapy.



We're here for you.

If you require support or information,
please reach out to us.

Phone: 416-736-5211 (Available 24/7)

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Email: thecentre@yorku.ca