

# SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY: AN OVERVIEW

This document outlines some of our collective responsibilities under the Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response policy including the basic principles of fostering a survivor-centred and trauma-informed campus community. This includes a recognition that people are impacted differently by sexualized violence depending on where they are socially located within the university environment based on factors that include their sex, gender, sexual identity, age, Indigenous, ethnic, or racial status, family status, socioeconomic status, ability status, and student and/or employment status.

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Make a disclosure directly to the sexualized violence resource office in ECHR, or contact the office for information about the sexualized violence policy, your rights and options under the policy, as well as options for on- and off-campus support.

In case of an emergency, call 911 and then Campus Security.

## SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE RESOURCE OFFICE

SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY

# AN OVERVIEW

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Sexualized violence means any non-consensual, unwanted actual, attempted, or threatened act or behavior that is carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person's sex, sexual identity, or gender identity or expression. This act or behavior may or may not involve physical contact. Sexualized violence includes: sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and the distribution of sexually explicit images without the consent of the people involved.

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## UNIVERSITY COMMITMENTS UNDER THE POLICY

- Implement and actively promote education, awareness, prevention, and training programs, in multiple formats and tailored to multiple audiences, that support survivors and those impacted by sexualized violence in a trauma-informed manner;
- Communicate the support services and the resources available to all members of the university community who may be directly or indirectly impacted by sexualized violence;
- Support survivors and those impacted by sexualized violence through academic, nonacademic, and other supports as required; and
- Coordinate consistent, fair, and transparent responses to sexualized violence disclosures and reports.

## SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all university community members including all students, staff, librarians, and faculty. The university has jurisdiction to investigate reports of sexualized violence that are alleged to have occurred within the university setting, including on the physical property of the university, at an event or activity sponsored by, or under the auspices of the university, or when the person(s) involved are connected by their academic or employment status to the university. There are instances where the policy and its procedures may be superseded by criminal or civil proceedings or by the collective agreements of university employees. Anyone can contact the sexualized violence resource office in EQHR for more information about the scope of the policy.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Under the policy the university has committed to building a campus culture based on the principles and practices of consent and respect. This includes coordinated education and training programs designed to prevent and respond to incidence of sexualized violence. At its core, this education and training will be proactive and sustained, anti-oppressive in its approach, and tailored to be accessible to diverse campus populations including diverse student, staff, and faculty groups. The education and training will therefore be intersectional in its approach, acknowledging not only diverse social locations, but specific barriers to prevention, education, and support options and what supports they wish to receive.

## DISCLOSURES AND REPORTS

Under the policy, people can make disclosures and reports. A disclosure involves someone trusting another person with their story of sexualized violence. Anyone on campus can receive a disclosure. Faculty and staff should ensure that the individual is made aware of the policy, limitations to confidentiality under the policy, and given the option of contacting the sexualized violence resource office in EQHR for additional information and support. When a person discloses they are encouraged under the policy to seek immediate assistance to ensure their safety and to obtain medical care and emotional support. However, no one is obligated to do so. Survivors have a right to determine how and what they disclose/report.

In addition, how a person responds to a disclosure can have a significant impact on how a survivor feels about what happened to them, and what they do next. It is therefore important to treat all survivors in a trauma-informed and survivor-centred way.

*To be survivor-centred means prioritizing the safety of those impacted by sexualized violence and providing them with options and choices about what to do following a disclosure and/or report.*

*To be trauma-informed means understanding that sexualized violence can be a traumatic experience, and that no two people will experience and respond to trauma in the same way. Care must be taken to receive a disclosure in a way that reduces shame and stigma, minimizes re-victimization, and facilitates healing and empowerment.*

Formal reports are made to the sexualized violence resource office in EQHR with the intention of initiating an investigation or community accountability process. This may not be the best choice for a person impacted by sexualized violence at the time they make their disclosure. They can choose at any point in their process to make a report—there are no time limits under the policy.

People making a report, and respondents, have a right to and are welcome to involve a support person of their choice at any point in the process; they may also may also engage a union representative and/or legal counsel.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important to keep the details of a disclosure confidential to create an environment where survivors feel safe to disclose and seek support. While confidentiality is safeguarded wherever possible, there are times when staff and faculty may have an obligation to tell their supervisor or the EQHR office about the disclosure they have received. It is important to inform those disclosing that there are limits to confidentiality under the policy. This should be done before receiving a disclosure, if possible. Instances where there are limits to confidentiality include when:

- a person is at risk of self-harm or of harming others;
- there is an imminent risk of harm to the university community and/or the broader community;
- the disclosure involves sexual harassment in their place of employment;
- a person under the age of 19 is endangered; or
- disclosure is otherwise required by law.

In all these instances, it is important to consider whether the potential harm is foreseeable and imminent. If so, the minimum amount of information needed to meet legal or other obligations should be disclosed. In this case, the survivor should be fully informed and supported at every step in the process, recognizing that a breach of trust can have a significant long term impact on the survivor or others involved. In the case of a formal report of sexualized violence, all parties will be treated with compassion, dignity, and respect and made aware of the processes and options available to them.