SVSPO Intervention and Prevention Education Plan
2019-2020

Introduction

The Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office’s (SVSPO) educational approach seeks to develop a comprehensive strategy that equips students, faculty and staff with the awareness, knowledge and skills required to make social change towards ending sexual violence and misconduct. Students, staff and faculty are invited to participate in learning opportunities that address the following topics:

a) active bystander intervention & empowering actions;

b) consent, healthy relationships, communities & boundaries;

c) responding to disclosures of sexual violence & supporting survivors;

d) understanding the root causes of sexual violence.

Working in collaboration with key university and community partners, the SVSPO will identify specific projects and initiatives to address the learning needs of SFU’s diverse community members. One of the critical keys to sexual violence prevention is education, which starts with creating an awareness and understanding of the issues in a variety of ways that are accessible for all audiences that are a part of our University Community.

The SVSPO is responsible for the development of a holistic and comprehensive University-wide approach to sexual violence intervention, prevention and support spanning SFU’s Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey campuses along with community members based out of Great Northern Way. The SVSPO is committed to an evidence-based approach to intervention, prevention and support as outlined in this plan. The University’s long-term education plan will be developed over the fall 2019 and spring 2020 and will be based on evidence-based research as well as through a thorough community engagement process that will involve campus
Survivors, experts in the field, campus and community partners and interested University Community members. To help us shape the foundations upon which the future plan will be built and to aid us in planning for the year ahead, a plan for the 2019/20 academic year has been developed.

**Definitions**

To begin, we would like to start by outlining the definitions of a number of key terms used in this document. The purpose of providing the definitions below is to provide a general understanding, rather than a comprehensive account of Canadian law and the university’s policy on sexual violence and misconduct. This is by no means an exhaustive list of definitions.

**Sexual violence and misconduct** is an umbrella term that encompasses a continuum of sexual violence and many aspects of sexual violence intersect. It means a sexual act or an act targeting a person’s sexuality, gender identity or gender expression that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person’s Consent. Such behavior may or may not involve physical contact. It includes but is not limited to: sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and the distribution of sexually explicit photographs or videos of a person without their Consent.

**Consent** means clear, ongoing and voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activities. Consent is informed, freely given, and actively communicated as demonstrated by words or conduct objectively assessed. For clarity, Consent:

a. is a freely given “yes”;  
b. cannot be given by someone who is incapacitated, including for example a person who is asleep or unconscious;  
c. can never be obtained through threats, coercion or other pressure tactics;  
d. can be revoked at any time, regardless of whether other sexual activities or agreements have taken place;  
e. cannot be obtained if someone abuses a position of trust, power or authority over another person; and  
f. cannot be assumed from previous consent to the same or similar activities.

**Gender-based violence** is any act of violence (physical, sexual, economic, emotional, spiritual, social) based on a person’s gender identity, perceived gender identity and/or gender expression.
Sexual assault is defined in the Criminal Code of Canada, sections 265(1) and (2), and 271-273. It is important to note that some of these definitions include reference to terms that are fully defined by the Criminal Code of Canada, which all members of the University community are legally obligated to abide by.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the working, learning or living environment for the person directly subjected to the harassment. Sexual harassment can include cat calling, repeatedly asking someone for a date when they have said no, sexual jokes, making sexual gestures or displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures in a space or online without someone’s consent.

Survivor is an individual who identifies as someone who has experienced sexual violence and misconduct. SFU recognizes that an individual may not wish to use the term Survivor and will respect an individual’s preferred term of self-identification.

People of all ages, genders and identities can experience sexual violence and misconduct. Sexual violence and misconduct can be perpetrated by students, faculty, staff or others, and an individual from any of these groups can be a Survivor of sexual violence and misconduct. It is important to know that most people know the person who assaulted them. It can be someone the Survivor knows a little, such as a first date, or very well, such as a good friend or partner. Many people do not tell anyone of their experience or even realize that what they experienced was sexual violence or misconduct until months or years later.

Please refer to the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Prevention, Education and Support Policy (GP 44) for a more detailed list of definitions, available online https://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/general/gp44.html.

Desired outcomes

Working closely with university and community partners we will strive to meet the following outcomes:

1. Develop evaluative tools to begin to gauge benchmark understandings of the awareness of sexual violence intervention, prevention and support at SFU. Develop and distribute a mixed method survey to gauge student, faculty and staff understanding and awareness of experiences with sexual violence and misconduct within the University Community.

2. Build awareness of the Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office (SVSPO), SFU’s policy GP 44 and an understanding of the definitions above.
3. Ensure that students, faculty and staff are equipped to respond appropriately to disclosures of sexual violence and misconduct. Provide University Community members access to a variety of resources to ensure that they are equipped to respond in a supportive, appropriate and confident way.

4. Connect Survivors of sexual violence and misconduct to appropriate supports and resources, ensure that they feel supported and that they have opportunities to understand the different support and reporting options available to them.

5. Promote a culture of bystander intervention across all university communities. Leverage bystander intervention as a way to promote the important role that active bystanders can play in creating safe(r) and respectful communities; connect current and potential active bystanders to related resources and opportunities where they can learn more; and foster a greater understanding of acquaintance sexual violence and misconduct.

6. Promote healthy, respectful and consensual relationships and communities - increase an understanding of how to build healthy relationships, healthy communities and healthy boundaries within diverse communities at the university; increase understanding of consent; build the capacity to engage with and develop safer party plans; understand the impact of alcohol and drugs and their relationship to sexual violence and misconduct; and explorations of power, privilege and colonization as they intersect with sexual violence and misconduct.

7. Support the creation of a safe(r) and respectful university environment - increase an understanding of the root causes of sexual violence; build capacity to engage critically with social media and popular culture; build the capacity to recognize and understand the impact of rape culture; and enhance the capacity of key student, staff and faculty to address systemic causes of sexual violence.

In order for intervention and prevention strategies to be well rounded and create meaningful social change towards ending sexual violence and misconduct, our aim is to incorporate different types of programming, strategies and outreach methods into our educational activities. In the first year of the SVSPO, the Office will employ a number of programs and initiatives in partnership with university community members, units and groups as we work to achieve these outcomes.
Framework

The framework supporting SFU’s sexual violence support, intervention and prevention education is informed by a social-ecological approach to health promotion and sexual violence prevention (Banyard, V.L. 2014; Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; DeGue, S., 2014). Research on preventative programs regarding other issues – such as HIV transmission, bullying, drunk driving, and more – show that the most efficient way to creating lasting change is through a multilevel or “ecological” approach (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009). These theories recognize that there are a multitude of factors that reciprocally shape human behaviour. Casey and Lindhorst (2009) argue that “[in particular, [...] developing peer and community-level intervention strategies that are offered in conjunction with approaches that address individual rape-related risk factors offers new opportunities for decreasing rates of sexual assault” (p. 92). This approach considers the factors beyond the individual to explore the multiple determinants within which the determinants of health exist (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011). The application of this model to address sexual violence intervention, prevention and support education in higher education is well supported (ACPA, 2015; EAB, 2015; ACHA, 2016). Approaching sexual violence intervention, prevention and support education within this lens acknowledges the complex roots of rape culture, social norms, power dynamics, multiple forms of oppression while seeking to prevent individual instances of sexual violence and misconduct while working to create a culture free of sexual violence and misconduct, one that encourages positive behaviours and community accountability.
Strategies may include:

The education strategies within this approach require comprehensive education planning that is developmentally sequenced and integrated throughout the student, faculty and staff experience (ACPA, 2015). Research suggests that programming must be targeted to meet all audiences, students, staff and faculty, where they are in relation to their readiness for change (ACPA, 2015). EAB’s (2015) guide outlining effective approaches to sexual violence prevention programming highlights the importance of developmentally appropriate programming for all populations. For example, for undergraduate students, education may focus more specially on procedures and responsibilities, support services, as well as a basic introduction to other concepts. Programming later in a student’s experience can become progressively more comprehensive and in-depth with a focus on applying concepts, values and
world views to their own behaviour and influence them to engage with social change. EAB (2015, p.6) further articulates that an effective pedagogical approach is one that includes content and delivery that is:

1. Sequenced developmentally,
2. Integrated throughout the learner’s experience,
3. Presented in varying formats,
4. Messaged consistently and tailored for specific communities, and
5. Inclusive of multiple and intersecting identities.

Key examples of SFU programming, outreach, partnerships and initiatives for 2019/20 include:

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Guiding Principles

The educational initiatives supported by the SVSPO shall follow the following guiding principles:

1. Grounded approaches to education through evidence-based practices and research.

2. Privilege and empower Survivors to access supports and resources relevant to their needs and experiences.

3. Promote positive messaging and education surrounding consent, relationships, sexual health and sexualities.

4. Encourage a broader University Community engagement in making sexual violence and misconduct intervention and prevention a priority.

5. Resources and learning opportunities will reflect and respect the multi-faceted and diverse nature of SFU’s university communities.

6. Commit to respectful collaboration with university and community partners, including students, staff and faculty, in program development and in achieving our collective goals.

Future Priority

Over the next academic year, the SVSPO will be engage in the development of a long-term strategic plan for the University’s educational programming. This will involve a robust consultation with the University Community (Lichty, Campbell & Schuiteman; 2008) to assess impact and engagement of already developed programming and to identify areas for growth and development. This collaborative strategic planning process will address how to build capacity across the institution so that more community members have the knowledge, skill set and approach needed to engage with sexual violence intervention, prevention and support education within their various units and communities.
References


