

Sexual Violence Prevention

Changing the Culture of Acceptance

Changing the Culture of Acceptance, is the result of the work by the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee. The report includes recommendations that are intended to shift the culture in which sexual violence exists, and to support Nova Scotia universities in advancing their efforts to prevent sexual violence on campus.

The committee explored the many complexities of sexual violence in the development of their recommendations.

They acknowledged that the issue of sexual violence cannot be fully understood, or addressed without also addressing the many systems of oppression – including gender inequality, racism, colonialism, heterosexism, and ableism.

They also explored the roles of government and universities in helping to shape attitudes and behaviours, and in promoting the prevention of sexual violence on university campuses.

The committee's recommendations are:

- 1.** Work with the universities to ensure they communicate and demonstrate commitments to action in sexual violence prevention on campus to students, faculty, staff, and administration. This communication should acknowledge the gendered nature of sexual violence and its disproportionate impacts on marginalized groups.
- 2.** Work with the universities to develop a standard of behaviours specific to sexual violence prevention which encompasses the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration. These standards should outline values, beliefs, and behaviours, and provide links to the university's code of conduct and/or policies related to sexual violence and discrimination and harassment.
- 3.** Encourage the universities to collaborate in developing a Nova Scotia specific bystander education program. Once developed and evaluated, this program should be recognized as a best practice for use at Nova Scotia university campuses.
- 4.** Work with the universities to reframe their communication about the risks associated with alcohol consumption. This communication should acknowledge the link between the consumption of alcohol and the perpetration of sexual violence.
- 5.** Work with the universities to ensure the delivery of consent education for the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration – with an aim to identify key elements that can be used to inform development and consistent delivery.
- 6.** Work with the universities to ensure the development and delivery of anti-oppression education for leaders on campus.

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7. Work with the universities to ensure the development and delivery of training on how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence for the campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administration – who are most likely to receive disclosures.
8. Share this report with the following Provincial Government departments and agency – Community Services, Education and Early Childhood Development, Health and Wellness, Justice, and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women – to assist these departments and the Advisory Council with their work on sexual violence prevention.
9. Convene a provincial sexual violence prevention committee to support the development of new, or the revision of existing, stand-alone sexual violence policies. Common guidelines and reporting structures should be developed with input from each Nova Scotia University (including elected student representatives and faculty), the Nova Scotia Community College, and community leaders with expertise in sexual violence prevention.
10. Encourage each university to establish a sexual violence prevention advisory committee or utilize a similar existing committee to support sexual violence prevention. The Committee’s membership should include elected student representatives. The purpose of the sexual violence prevention advisory committee will be to:
 - ◆ develop an implementation plan for the recommendations contained within this report; and
 - ◆ share information on the institution’s progress in preventing sexual violence on campus, including the effectiveness of its institutional strategies in preventing sexual violence.

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