



Roundtable on Campus Sexual Violence

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

May 2021
Women's Equality Branch

New  Nouveau
Brunswick

Roundtable on Campus Sexual Violence Report
Women's Equality Branch

Government of New Brunswick

Province of New Brunswick
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Introduction

In December 2020, the provincial government convened a Roundtable to address sexual violence on campus. The Roundtable was facilitated by Tourism, Heritage and Culture Minister Tammy Scott-Wallace, who is also the minister responsible for women's equality, and by Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour Minister Trevor Holder.

The Roundtable included members from public post-secondary institutions (PPSI) administration, students and survivors, student and faculty organizations, and various organizations and service providers helping to address sexual violence on campus throughout New Brunswick.

The goal of the Roundtable was to provide an opportunity, through an engagement process, to hear the voices of survivors of campus sexual violence and to identify prevention and intervention actions to address sexual violence at New Brunswick institutions. It was intended to encourage meaningful change for survivors and help reduce sexual violence in communities.

Roundtable sessions

Several engagements were held by Minister Scott-Wallace and Minister Holder, along with officials from their respective departments as part of the Roundtable process.

Firstly, on January 27, 2021, a forum for survivors of campus sexual violence was hosted and the purpose and objectives of this virtual forum were to:

- hear the voices of survivors and/or their representatives;
- identify actions based on the needs of those with lived experience; and to
- inform the Roundtable of campus administrators, government and service-providers of the issues relating to campus sexual violence.



Secondly, on February 22, 2021, a virtual meeting was held with representatives from student and faculty organizations, campus sexual assault services and Sexual Violence New Brunswick (SVNB) to discuss campus sexual violence.

Lastly, on March 30, 2021, a virtual meeting brought together campus administration of the public post-secondary institutions in New Brunswick.

The institutions represented at this session included: University of New Brunswick (UNB), Université de Moncton (UdeM), St. Thomas University (STU), Mount Allison University (MTA), New Brunswick Community College (NBCC), Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB), New Brunswick College of Craft and Design (NBCCD), and the Maritime College of Forest Technology (MCFT).

General summary

The following sections summarize what was heard according to the main themes that emerged from the roundtable process. They have been organized into five categories: prevention and awareness; education and training; intervention; policy, research and evaluation; and collaboration.

PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

- Campus sexual violence should be a priority issue for institutions.
- Building in safety features to address sexual violence enhances the reputation of the institution.
- PPSIs should be held accountable for the safety of their students. PPSI administration should be looking out for the best interests of the survivors.
- PPSIs have unique realities; some are situated in more rural areas, some do not have residence halls or organized sports, and some serve different demographics i.e. mixed age students and population size.
- Sexual violence is a societal issue that will take significant effort as well as financial and human resources.
- Response to sexual violence is evolving. PPSIs are constantly trying to align with best practices.
- Sexual violence policies should include an awareness and education component.
- Campus Sexual Assault Support Advocates (CSASA) can offer prevention and awareness activities for students on campuses.
- It was recommended that the voices of students and survivors be included in the Roundtable. They are inherent to the process and important when making recommendations.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Sexual violence policies should include a training component.
- Education and training on protocol should be offered to all faculty and staff on how to respond in the event of a sexual violence disclosure and how to protect survivors who report through that process.
- Training should be provided to all campus members: faculty, staff, medical staff, departmental heads, administration, students, associations, resident advisors/dons, sports teams, campus security/police and should include trainings on such topics as trauma-informed practices, sexual assault crisis intervention training, bystander training, consent training, sexual violence policy training – receiving reports, investigation and adjudication.



- Mandating education and training to incoming students.
- Education and training are crucial for prevention, behavioural changes, and changes in attitude.
- Training on consent is an important issue for young people.
- CSASAs and community agencies can offer prevention and awareness activities for students on campuses.
- Peer to peer training is vital.

INTERVENTION

- Lack of support, services and resources put the futures of survivors at risk.
- Sexual violence exists outside of physical spaces and boundaries of the campus- yet can impact the institution anyway.
- Survivors of campus sexual violence expect institutions to provide timely, effective responses to disclosures and timely, accessible services.
- Complaints to PPSIs need improved handling, i.e. timely investigations and adjudication processes.
- There should be appropriate sanctions for perpetrators. Long delays in justice system processes result in perpetrators leaving the campus due to graduation, dropping out or changing campuses before receiving any institutional sanctions.
- Perpetrators are not tracked. There is no indication of sexual violence incidents on their student record.
- Perpetrators of sexual violence should be required to adjust their lives rather than survivor (i.e. change classes or residences rather than the complainant).
- Coherent and transparent complaint processes should be in place.
- Legal and judicial ramifications for the institution are complex.
- A parallel process of campus and civil reporting would be beneficial to survivors.
- Parallel police and campus investigations are of concern. Campus investigations are, in some cases, stopped if there is a current or pending investigation by police.
- Balancing the rights of perpetrators and the rights and needs of survivors is a concern.
- Some misconceptions still exist such as the need for a formal complaint for an investigation to take place on campus. This has discouraged some survivors to report.
- There is a duty of care, to be trauma informed and to provide care instead of damaging the person further when receiving a disclosure and report.
- There needs to be support and training provided from a trauma-informed and survivor-centric approach, with continuous improvement.
- Incidents of sexual violence can be extremely difficult for institutions. It can be a lengthy process and take up significant time and resources.
- Some PPSIs felt that there were not enough human and financial resources to support students adequately.

POLICY, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

- Campus sexual violence policies are relatively new and still have areas that are difficult for students to navigate in finding resources and support.
- Most PPSIs have a stand-alone sexual violence policy, including all universities.
- Sexual violence policies do not provide safety, and may deter reporting.
- PPSIs should be actively involved in sexual violence policy development, implementation and monitoring. Developing a standard policy across institutions would simplify sharing of resources.
- Sexual violence policies should be trauma-informed, clear and transparent, align with national and provincial best practices, consistently applied, objective to all parties, and regularly reviewed by an objective third party.
- Clear policies and procedures with promotion, implementation and enforcement strategies are needed.
- Some PPSIs present annual public reports to demonstrate transparency.
- Most PPSIs complete regular reviews of their sexual violence policies.
- Methods used by PPSIs in order to address sexual violence on their campuses include: hiring external consultation firms or a third-party to review their policies and provide feedback, consulting with other experts in the field, engaging with and hiring community agencies to provide support, producing incident-based reports, creating prevention groups on campus, ad hoc committees, and Presidential advisory committees.
- The Fredericton tri-campus policy was identified as a best practice, using an approach based on collaboration and partnerships. As well, this approach reinforces consistent operation. Smaller campuses in Fredericton also rely on the tri-campus arrangement, as well on police and community agencies for support.
- There has been leadership up to this point by PPSIs in addressing campus sexual violence.
- We need to have diverse perspectives in this work as it is nuanced, and unconscious biases exist within this system.
- There needs to be more research done on trauma-informed trainings and how to measure competencies, frequency, coherence, and appropriate levels of action.
- Background documents and models can inform the work: i.e. *Courage to Act: Addressing & Preventing Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada*, and *Students' Experiences Of Unwanted Sexualized Behaviours And Students' Experiences Of Unwanted Sexualized Behaviours And Sexual Assault At Postsecondary Schools In The Canadian Provinces (2019)*, Western University documents, and the Nova Scotia model. Best practices can be distilled from these documents.

COLLABORATION

- Collaboration is key, as are shared services, resources, and learnings.
- CSASAs and intervenor/counselling positions that are independent from the institution need to be in place to address campus sexual violence. An increase of these positions at each institution was recommended.
- Community agencies are a resource for institutions. Arms-length agencies can offer some objectivity.
- Partnerships between these agencies and the institutions create opportunities for enhancing and cost-sharing services, sharing resources and training, and offering safe spaces for survivors to disclose and heal.
- CSASAs are important as they help survivors navigate the different reporting processes and systems.
- Important to address the rural sector. For example, access to the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program is not available in certain rural sectors, i.e. Sackville.
- Consultation reviews and interim reports prepared by PPSIs can inform the Roundtable.
- The Government of New Brunswick could facilitate conversations and connections between PPSIs with law enforcement, support and community agencies. PPSIs have a responsibility as well to address this issue.



Ideas for moving forward

The following section summarizes the general ideas that emerged from the various roundtable discussions.

- Survivors play a key part in informing future collaborative work.
- Trauma-informed support persons, advocates and law experts can inform future work.
- CSASAs and the New Brunswick Student Alliance would like to be more involved in the work of the Roundtable, as well as have the opportunity to meet with PPSI administration.
- Increasing the number of CSASAs and intervenor/counselling positions that are independent from the institution.
- Sexual violence policies that are clear, transparent and consistently applied and reviewed regularly by an independent body.
- Mandatory trainings provided to the campus community to improve reporting procedures and disclosures and to prevent and respond to sexual violence.
- Prevention and awareness initiatives promote consent, behavioural and change in attitude.
- Establish an anonymous reporting process or eliminate the requirement in current reporting policies of naming the survivor.
- Accessible, trauma-informed and LGBTQ2+ friendly healthcare, reproductive health care, abortion services, mental health services, community-based SANE programs.
- Increased access to the SANE program is an important action for all communities.
- Extend SVNBS reach to all PPSIs as an objective community agency and with expertise on the issue.
- Host an event where ideas, materials and best practices could be shared.
- Appropriate government departments discuss policy and legislation related to reporting processes.
- Collaboration is essential between all PPSIs. Economies of scale would help the smaller institutions.
- Finding additional resources and funding.
- PPSIs requested support of experts to validate policies and procedures. Someone objective from government would be helpful.
- Expand the Fredericton tri-campus community to include NBCCD and MCFT, to support the smaller institutions.
- Annual public reporting on campus violence.

Next Steps

The establishment of a working group was agreed upon as a next step to addressing this issue collaboratively. The working group will:

- be established this Spring to identify key issues, develop a 3-year action plan to address those issues and begin implementation by November 2021; and develop a plan to address recommendations and actions from the Roundtable process to address campus sexual violence;
- be comprised of members from government, public post-secondary institutions and stakeholders representing survivors, students, faculty and sexual violence service providers;
- include a process to engage survivors of campus sexual violence;
- review the summary reports from the Roundtable process; and,
- review any relevant materials to understand the scope of the issue.

