

From the margins to the centre: Re-thinking sexual violence education and support at Brock University (October, 2016)

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This report is dedicated to the Brock University students who led the way in an unprecedented range of organizing, activism and protest on the issue of sexual violence in 2016.

Preface

Readers of this report no doubt agree that Brock University has arrived at a decision point regarding how it handles sexual violence on campus and that change is being compelled at all levels, from provincial legislation to a grassroots base of courageous students who are insistent that their concerns be heard. The intent of this research is to amplify those voices for change, particularly from survivors, and to suggest practical recommendations for sexual violence education and support. We offer this research as one component of a broader conversation about how Brock can take leadership on sexual and gender justice. We hope it will be read by senior administration, students, staff and faculty and will contribute to envisioning a common project for change.

This report was commissioned by the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (SVPC) which began meeting in the spring of 2015 in response to Premier Kathleen Wynne's new initiatives to tackle sexual violence and harassment at universities (Bill 132 passed on March 8th, 2016). From November 2015 to August 2016 the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee at Brock engaged in a consultative process to develop the new sexual violence and harassment policy. This included open meetings (with sixty regular participants from the staff, students and faculty) and smaller student consultations. As this report was completed, the new draft policy was circulating to campus unions and the faculty association for further discussion and feedback. We expect the final version will be approved by the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, the Senior Administrative Council and the Board of Trustees by December 2016. As directed by Bill 132, the policy will be reviewed and revised annually through a consultative process. While much work remains to be done to develop survivor-centred processes and procedures and to build shared understandings of sexual violence and harassment with various stakeholders, the initial phase of policy development is near completion.

We know from the literature on sexual violence and harassment that formal reporting policies are just one piece of the puzzle – albeit an important one – in creating safer spaces on campus. One of the most recent reports on sexual violence from research at Carleton, Lakehead and Waterloo notes that most survivors do not choose formal reporting processes and opt instead for informal accommodations, changes in their academic courses and programs, a change in residence, campus safety plans, and/or access to medical and counselling assistance.¹ Consequently, these researchers recommend a greater focus on education for sexual violence prevention, and, for survivors, better service provision and access to informal remedies.

This report starts from these recommendations: *our focus is consulting with Brock students to hear their ideas about accessible and pro-active sexual violence education strategies and support services*. While education has been a sub-theme in all the other sexual violence reports released in Ontario over the past three years (Ottawa, Wilfrid Laurier, Guelph, Ryerson, Toronto, Queen's) none have made this their specific focus. In addition, while these reports have gestured to the importance of intersectional feminist approaches to sexual violence education, none have organized their consultation through this framework. In order to fill this gap, our research aimed to explore how Brock University could better understand the perspectives of students disproportionately affected by sexual violence and harassment.

To do this, we foreground the insights of those who are usually an afterthought in sexual violence research in universities: Indigenous women, racialized women, women with mental health challenges and LGBTQ2+ people (some interviewees would see themselves in multiple categories). These same students are also most likely to face additional barriers when accessing resources or reporting.² By moving those students usually on the periphery of decision making processes to the centre of our analysis we explored how education and support services could be better attuned to the perspectives of those most at risk. This focus seems particularly crucial given that widely promoted campus consent workshops, like the Bystander Program, do not incorporate intersectional analysis in their guiding principles or workshop strategies.³ The core assumption driving this research is that *if we can learn to take the insights of those students disproportionately affected by sexual violence seriously, this process can enable the development of better education and support services for everyone.*

Setting the Scene

Sexual and gender violence and harassment are serious and complex public health problems and have been the focus of feminist activism and scholarship for many decades.⁴ Bill 132 notes that one in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime.⁵ In Canada, the legal definition of sexual assault includes any unwanted sexual touching, rape and sexual violence resulting in physical injury, while sexual harassment includes “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome.”⁶ Most sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, but some people are more likely to experience assault than others.⁷ For example:

- Young women under 35 are five times more likely to be assaulted than others; women 12-19 are at the highest risk.⁸
- Indigenous women are almost three times more likely to be the victim of a violent crime.⁹
- Sexual minority youth reported significantly higher rates of physical victimization than their heterosexual peers, with transgender and gender non-conforming students having the highest risks for sexual violence.¹⁰
- Women with disabilities (including mental health challenges) are three times more likely to be coerced into sexual activity through the use of force or threats.¹¹
- Women of colour are more likely to be targets of sexual violence and less likely than white women to gain the support of the justice system when reporting.¹²

Kimberlé Crenshaw has described intersectional feminist approaches to gendered violence as a mode of analysis that explores how processes of racialization, class, sexuality and other axes of power overlap with gender to shape individual experience and social structures. Sexual violence and harassment happens at these intersections and this complicates the experience of oppression and the legal and institutional responses to it.¹³ Sherene Razack encourages us to explore what is at stake through examining these interlocking relations of power. She suggests that it is only when we investigate how white supremacy is gendered that we can begin to understand the resistance in white dominant institutions to understanding how women are raced.¹⁴ Crenshaw and Razack’s insights are critical to understanding the complex interactions between racialization, gender, sexuality and class and provide a framework for our analysis throughout this study.

Who we talked to

We consulted students through convening eight focus groups with a total of twenty-seven participants and eight interviews with academics and service providers who have expertise in working with these same groups. We met with Indigenous, racialized and LGBTQ2+ students and those with mental health challenges to explore the common experiences of each group. Our focus was to facilitate discussion without pressuring any one individual to make their experiences speak on behalf of an entire marginalized community. We hoped this approach would allow us to benefit from the in-depth information available through listening to interactions between group members.¹⁵ The focus groups were led by three research assistants who were themselves *from the communities being consulted*, and thus were most likely to have the skills, knowledge, and connections needed to engage their peers.

Research assistants drew upon their established connections within their respective communities to find participants and reached out to people who were interested in being part of in-depth discussions. Familiarity with the subject and the research assistants contributed to minimizing emotional risk in light of the difficult subject matter.¹⁶ Participants represented many different social, economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds and included those from every Faculty in the university (Social Sciences, Humanities, Applied Health Sciences, the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, Biological Sciences, the Goodman School of Business and the Faculty of Graduate Studies).¹⁷ It became clear during the focus groups that many participants were survivors, although we did not make this a condition for participation, and asked no questions to illicit personal experiences of sexual violence. Instead, the research assistants invited students to discuss their experiences of educational initiatives on sexual violence, the particular challenges faced by their respective communities, potential impacts of violence and harassment on their university experience, and their ideas for effective sexual violence education, support and prevention. All interviewees chose their own pseudonym and were sent a draft copy of the final report for review to ensure they were comfortable with how they were represented. This study was reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board file number 15-242.

In the interviews with the eight key informants we reached out to academics, health promotion staff, sexual violence response coordinators, equity and diversity staff, Indigenous support workers and the Elder-in-Residence from Six Nations at Brock University. For a complete list of those interviewed see Appendix A.

Complexifying 'Consent' – Insights from the Literature

Universities are situated within a cultural context where gender based violence is widespread and normalized. Andrea Smith has conceptualized this ongoing reality using the term hetero-patriarchy, which describes the ways male dominance works to reinscribe coercive sexual relations and binary gender norms that privilege heterosexuality. Hetero-patriarchy can look different in different situations as it is structured through European colonialism, white supremacy, capitalism, Judeo-Christian values,

access to citizenship, and ideas about competitiveness/productivity/efficiency, all of which determine whose bodies are considered worthy of protection.¹⁸

Recent anti-violence activists and scholars are increasingly using the term “rape culture” to refer to the ways the media’s sexual objectification of women legitimates sexual aggression and violence.¹⁹ Rape culture can also describe the telling silence that surrounds gendered violence, the rationalization of asymmetrical systems of power, and the wide-spread sense of resignation that violence is inevitable.²⁰ These social and cultural underpinnings are critical for understanding the barriers students face when they experience varying forms of sexual violence.

An important instrument in maintaining rape culture is the propagation and acceptance of rape myths. Rape myths are attitudes and false beliefs about sexual violence, survivors, and perpetrators.²¹ Examples of popular rape myths include: “she asked for it”; “it wasn’t really rape”; “he didn’t mean to” and “she lied.”²² Rape myths tend to draw upon and uphold a clear definition of what “real rape” is: namely, forced and violent assaults perpetrated by a stranger despite a woman’s utmost attempts at verbal and physical resistance.²³ However, research shows that this type of assault is rare and does not represent the continuum of sexual coercion and violence that women actually experience.²⁴ Nevertheless, these widely accepted myths “construct a narrative that implies that women are responsible for their own victimization, shifts blame from men to women, and denies or justifies men’s sexual aggression and violence against women.”²⁵ Rape myths persist despite attempts to dispel them and may even be inadvertently perpetuated by some consent campaigns.²⁶ Rape myths also influence institutions, in the form of policies and legislation, those who act on behalf of institutions, such as security, medical professionals, administrators, counsellors, and dons; and of course the students, including those who perpetrate sexual violence, those who excuse it, and those who are victims.²⁷

While many universities are currently responding to the increased pressure to implement campaigns regarding ‘consent’ these initiatives often fail to recognize the complex context in which consent is negotiated. Mainstream ideas about consent often describe it as uncomplicated, through phrases such as “there is no grey area when it comes to consent.” However, these attempts to remove ambiguity can contribute to a binary understanding of sex as “consensual (‘normal’) versus non-consensual (‘rape’), and silence experiences that are more complex.”²⁸ This type of consent discourse is troubling in several ways: it positions women as the negotiators of consent, it fails to acknowledge that consent is a process which is gendered and unequal, and it fails to address the socio-cultural and socio-sexual norms surrounding sex and negotiations of consent.²⁹ This dualistic consent discourse is also reflected in assumptions about what it means to be a “survivor” a label that some reject because of the ways it conjures up a ‘victim’ identity that might set them apart, as forever marked by that experience. When educators neglect to acknowledge and discuss the complex realities of many people’s sexual experiences, this can leave people isolated, wondering if what they’ve experienced “counts,” questioning whether or not it’s reportable, and if there is a purpose or benefit to reporting.³⁰

While the need for explicit, verbal consent continues to be the dominant message in sexual assault prevention campaigns, research in this area shows that people negotiate consent largely through non-

verbal communication.³¹ For example, in their interviews with young university women, Burkett and Hamilton found a contradiction between women's perceptions of consent and their recollections of their own sexual encounters.³² While women's responses emphasized that it was their responsibility to verbally assert their own boundaries their responses also showed that verbal communication of any sort during sexual relations was rare and not considered "normal".³³ Given this context it is critical to draw upon the lived experiences of those engaged in heteronormative socio-sexual culture, instead of relying strictly on legal definitions of consent. Though scholarship in this area is growing, there remains a lack of research regarding *how* people actually negotiate consent through non-verbal and other forms of communication.³⁴

Burkett and Hamilton also highlight that sexual violence prevention campaigns operate in a postfeminist context where neoliberal ideas of autonomy and freedom shape and assume young women's presumed freedom to "just say no".³⁵ Indeed, when negotiating their (hetero) sexual relationships, women "are expected to be able to transcend any socio-structural barriers that inhibit their individual freedoms and choices".³⁶ However, research on this subject has consistently shown that it is unrealistic to expect that the implicit pressures generated through unequal gendered social norms would be absent from the negotiations of consent.³⁷ Overly simplified consent discourse that relies on dualistic concepts of "yes" and "no" ignores the "persistence of gendered sexual pressures, which in turn reframes coercive sexual encounters as the result of a woman's lack of assertiveness."³⁸ This contributes to a culture that encourages a "compulsory sexual agency," positioning women as though they have the agency to "just say no," while maintaining gendered sexual norms that frame women's submission as not only good, but actually empowering.³⁹

Dualistic definitions of consent become more inadequate when they preclude conversations regarding drinking and consent. Mary Whyte argues that simply advising students to "abstain from alcohol *or* abstain from sexual activities" is not conducive to honest discourse when addressing sexual assault on campus.⁴⁰ Messages that simplify consent, both through the binaries yes/no, or sober/drunk, "ostracize an entire community who engages in this behaviour, whether it is 'risky' or not."⁴¹ In addition, this type of definitive consent discourse can cause people who are sexually assaulted to internalize blame, in a context where society and the law also engage in victim blaming.⁴²

All of these factors contribute to barriers in reporting sexual violence in university. As Moore et. al. concluded based on their study of sexual violence reporting practices at three Ontario Universities, structural barriers were bolstered by internalized blame, difficulty naming experiences as sexual violence, lack of awareness of services, unsatisfactory services, and further victimization during the process of reporting and accessing services.⁴³ A common concern in this research was that the risks of reporting were high and not worth the potential outcomes.⁴⁴ Thus it seems that not only are there multi-layered barriers to reporting, but also that many survivors believe that reporting will not bring appropriate and meaningful results.⁴⁵ With this brief sketch of some of the key context and debates in the literature on sexual violence in the university context we now turn to the analysis emerging from interviews with students and key informants on this same subject.

Students and their Allies Define the Intersections of Sexual Violence and Harassment

Students interviewed for this project provided a wealth of real-world examples of what sexual violence and harassment looks like in their everyday lives. Their analysis highlights the importance of university administrators, service providers and faculty becoming more knowledgeable about the ways broader vectors of power shape gendered experience.

Indigenous women endure the highest rates of sexual violence of any group in North America and this violence has been organized through key social institutions, including education, child welfare agencies and churches, across many generations.⁴⁶ As a settler colonial state, Canada profoundly shapes Indigenous peoples exercise of sovereignty over their land *and* the possibilities for bodily integrity and safety. Lyla, one of the Indigenous students interviewed for this project, highlighted the impact of these links, saying: “Indigenous women are made vulnerable in many ways because of the impacts of colonization. And so the idea that your bodies aren’t even your bodies, they are so heavily regulated by the state, affects you in a lot of different ways. Even if you don’t necessarily have the ability to put it into words...” Hayley Moody (Métis) the Sexual Violence Counsellor and Advocate at Wilfrid Laurier University⁴⁷ also highlighted this struggle explaining that while the mainstream anti-violence movement is focused on defining a ‘baseline for consent’ Indigenous activist’s question the very definition of these terms. Indeed, Moody argues that if we focus only on sex when defining a ‘baseline’ then “what you really mean is White consent.” Instead, groups like the *Native Youth Sexual Health Network* are exploring how terms like ‘survivor’ and ‘consent’ can be used to re-think the impact of colonization on Indigenous people’s relationship to their bodies, the land, economic survival and environmental destruction. Sherri Vansickle (Haudenosaunee) an alumnus of Brock and now a faculty member at the *Tecumseh Centre for Aboriginal Research and Education* notes that this analysis suggests it is difficult to “separate sexual violence and gender based violence away from the larger structural problems...” The result, Vansickle suggests, is:

When we look at people who are in our communities, it’s hard to find someone who hasn’t experienced some type of violence. Like, really hard. Because unfortunately, it’s the norm. And obviously that relates back to the continued colonization to this day.

The Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen argues that colonial ideas of male dominance and the inter-generational legacies of dispossession, displacement and impoverishment have all contributed to Indigenous women facing increased levels of interpersonal gendered violence.⁴⁸ This violence comes, in part, from non-Indigenous men who understand that Indigenous women can be harassed, assaulted and often killed with impunity, as well as from Indigenous men, who are *also* dealing with the aftermath of colonial violence, sexual abuse and trauma.⁴⁹

In light of this legacy, Vansickle suggests that “we’re easy targets for a lot of things, and with that comes shame... [and the need to] re-evaluate how we look at ourselves, because we’re so used to getting these awful messages about what it’s like to be a Native woman.” In her interview, Vansickle recounted an anecdote to illustrate this idea: when the Jian Gimeshi story went to press she was at a dinner with a

group of Indigenous women in professional positions, many of whom were talking about the story and drawing parallels with their own experience, but were “struggling to identify what happened to them as sexual assault.” This struggle to name sexual coercion is echoed by many women who experience a significant mismatch between what is usually considered “real rape” and the continuum of actual occurrences of sexual violence that include coercion, harassment and assault, often by those who are known to us including friends, partners, family and kin, as well as strangers. In this context, Indigenous interviewees stressed that sexual violence occurs within a framework of high levels of intergenerational trauma and violence overall. As Phil, a Brock undergraduate student noted, “I see intergenerational trauma, [and] the effects of it, not only on myself, but for my friends, and where they are, and how they proceeded through the post-secondary process. But I really see how that cycle continues... [and there are issues of] trust that stem from that.” Sandra Wong (Six Nations), the Aboriginal Academic Support Coordinator/Instructor, added that this reality is also shaped by the history of disproportionate levels of abuse within residential schools which is “going to take years to get over.” Similarly, the Six Nations Elder-in-Residence, Carol Jacobs, also reflected on that legacy, suggesting that “trust is hard to come to for students... we face that racism every day.” This context has real and tangible effects, decreasing the likelihood of Indigenous women disclosing violence in white dominant institutions, and affecting their ability to gain appropriate supports, achieve academic success and find ‘just responses’ to the violence they face on multiple levels.

Racialized women also highlighted the intersection of racism with their experience of sexual violence, especially the ways historically dominant ideas about Black sexuality fetishize their bodies as “animalistic” and “exotic.” For example, Alise, who grew up in the Niagara, region noted that “the guy I lost my virginity to in high school later told his friends that he got his ‘Black belt.’” Similarly, other interviewees described men boasting about getting their ‘yellow belt.’ These racist references highlight how white men consume Black and Asian women as fetishized sexual objects. Variations on this experience were shared by virtually all of our racialized interviewees and would consume a considerable portion of this report if they were to be narrated in full. Kattawe Henry, the research assistant for these focus groups, astutely observed that this theme illustrated the “simultaneous hyper-sexualization and de-sexualization” of racialized women, who were supposedly desired because of their race, and at the same time de-sexualized as they could be replaced by any other woman who fit that racial category. As another interviewee, Khaleesi elaborated:

Especially on campus, so many people want to f*** Black girls; Black women’s bodies are always seen as ready for consumption. If you go to a party they assume that a) you can dance, b) you want to dance with everybody, and c) you want to do sexual things with them... And it’s like, no, just because I’m Black and I’m dancing does not mean that I want to go and ride your d*** in the back.... So nobody is addressing how as a Black woman, sexism and racism are never mutually exclusive. The sexism that you face is racially motivated. And the racism that you face is usually sexist.

This gendered racism is especially frustrating given the ways it erases racialized women’s high levels of school achievement. Statistics Canada reports that: “as a group, all visible minority women of core

working age were more likely than women who were (white) to have obtained a university degree. The comparison is 40 per cent versus 27 per cent.”⁵⁰ As April noted: “it’s so frustrating the idea that no matter what we’ve been through.... no matter our achievements, no matter how independent... our perseverance... you’re going to focus on sexualization.” This experience crossed racial lines and had distinctive features for mixed-race women. As April noted, “not only is it common, it’s common in our community, and it’s common at Brock. At the drop of a hat you’re supposed to be doing everything and anything and if you’re not, you’re not Black enough. Just that idea that you’re going to tell me how Black I’m supposed to be?”

Another interviewee, Zawadi, highlighted the difficult mix of alcohol and drugs which “just hypes it up to a whole new level” and often left women feeling fearful. For example, Azad illustrated how her attempts to assert sexual limits in the context of the bar scene in St. Catharines were frequently ignored.

I do raise my voice, I do say no to guys, when they want to dance and I don’t want to, or I don’t want to be touched, but I was already touched. And I raise my voice to that. And I decided to walk away, and the guy pulled my hair by my ponytail... I was so mad, I turned around, and there was like a circle of guys, and his friend started touching my butt, while I’m yelling to his face. And I’m like, ‘Okay, I’m done.’

Several of the interviewees shared similar stories of being sexually harassed and touched without consent. Azad reflected on the implications of this: “That’s really traumatizing, because even your refusal is taken as a joke. And it’s also sexualized. It’s like, ‘Oh, I like that! You’re confident!’ It’s like, No. I am saying No. It’s hard for women to stand up for themselves.” Azad’s narrative highlights Asian Canadian women’s distinctive experiences, where stereotypes about them as passive and compliant playthings who are “easy to have sex with” serve to erase their agency and can mock their efforts at sexual self-determination.⁵¹

All of these students also talked about the ways male students deflected any critique of this behavior, highlighting the potentially important role of men as allies in any movement to challenge rape culture, as well as their frequent disappointment in men’s unwillingness to step into that task. As Alise noted:

You always hear, ‘well I’m a nice guy, I’m not like that.’ Okay, nice guy, when your friend was making rape jokes and you were laughing, [this makes you] just as bad in my eyes. So, I mean when your friend’s talking about how he had sex with a girl who was drunk and he was sober, and you say ‘Oh good job!’ Just because you didn’t do it doesn’t mean that it’s okay. So, I think if men were able to just not feel so awkward actually sticking up for women, especially Black women... It doesn’t have to be the long lecture... you need to just say, ‘Dude that’s not funny, that’s disrespectful, don’t say that.’ But they still laugh... So I think that’s huge.

Finally, just as sexual violence is shaped by gendered racism, these students also highlighted the ways racialized men also face troubling assumptions regarding masculinity. In Azad’s words:

... at the core of most of these issues is masculinity... they should be able to openly talk about... how they are implicated in masculinity in this culture. Cause it's also an issue for racialized men [who are] trying to live up to this masculine stereotype that is also placed on them, just as it's placed on racialized women... it's a complicated intersection of hegemonic masculinity and how they have to live up to that image.

In the absence of real conversations with men about masculinities, Azad stressed that women of colour are left in a no-win situation when they consider their options:

It's like, do I approach the white man to save me from other racialized men? Do I want to do that? Or should I stand up for my racialized man, who assaulted me ... And you're stuck in that really complicated space, and you don't know whether you want to seek out help from a white man... just because he has that privilege of being security, you know? It's really, really complicated. But this just goes to show that there are different needs for racialized women, and when they experience sexual assault... we have to take that extra step, to think "Okay, who's going to be on my side? And what will happen if I do take it to the authority that is predominately white? What will happen to them?"

Farrah Khan, the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator at Ryerson, also emphasized this point, arguing that use of security and police is viewed very differently by communities of colour: "...the solutions that come from [the feminist] movement, have been built on very specific ideas of whose bodies we're protecting.... for racialized students [one thing] that doesn't get talked about enough, is the fact that they are asked to implicate men in their communities." Kattawe elaborated on this problematic context, in light of police murders of Black men in the United States, police violence towards racialized men here in Canada, and the disproportionate criminalization of Indigenous and Black men. Consequently, as she commented, many women ask themselves: "do I want to rat them out... because I'm like, 'What if this bouncer is really racist... and he decides that he wants to take it out on this guy 'cause I brought it to his attention that he was harassing me? And then another hashtag, you know.'"

LGBTQ2+ student interviewees focused on the climate of heteronormativity and transphobia they experienced at Brock. Kara, for example, surveyed the Brock website when choosing a university and was persuaded that "this is my place. I am going to find my niche here, it's going to be amazing, it's going to be great. And then I came here and it was like... not." In particular, LGBTQ2+ students talked about the problems associated with being alienated from or rejected by their families precisely because they identify as a gender or sexual minority, with the consequence that they often cannot 'go home' like other students. This is a common concern amongst LGBTQ2+ youth.⁵² As Tiffany noted, "my Mom hasn't talked to me in two years now... [and] my Dad and his family don't want me around." This widespread context of familial rejection and the related experiences of poverty and housing insecurity make LGBTQ2+ students more vulnerable to sexual and gender violence from a young age. Hence, it is particularly important that these students are connected to appropriate student peers and knowledgeable mental health resources. However, many students felt this didn't happen for them until very late in their university career. As Tiffany said:

I needed to find something to keep me here and make me feel something. So I started there [with the SJC and then Brock Pride] and I met her and she had a huge, huge impact on my life. [tears]. So finding one resource, one place that you can go to, someone who understands, makes all the difference in the world. So that was my resource. But I didn't find it until 3rd year, and that was after taking a year off school for personal reasons.

Here, Tiffany is commenting on the lack of information geared specifically to gender and sexual minority students who are "deep in the closet" and struggling to find their way. She did not think that Orientation events and residence staff provided an open discussion and support for students from a range of sexual and gender identities; instead the conversation was limited to "being given a free condom and told to use protection." Danny also highlighted these issues saying: "I think the lack of resources is one of the biggest problems that myself and my friends have encountered at Brock."

Perhaps even more of a concern was residence staff whose religious beliefs seemed to take priority over student safety. Prior to finding the peer connections noted above, Tiffany struggled with suicide. In her first year she reached out to her residence Don for LGBTQ2+ specific supports and was told, "Oh, you could have just as much fun if you come to church on Sunday, we have a huge community of people, you can be involved. And I was like, 'Okay, that's great, but that's not what I asked you....'"

As with Indigenous and racialized students, the alienation noted above frequently resulted in students feeling like they were "not part of the school." Indeed, LGBTQ2+ students believe their perspectives are not integrated into services and staffing at Brock, particularly those dealing with the aftermath of sexual violence. As Danny said: "any time I've tried to find those resources I've just been sent to the SJC to pick up some pamphlets. And it's like, 'Okay I already have a ton of these pamphlets.'"

While research assistants did not ask students to share their experiences with sexual violence several students did talk about being sexually assaulted, both prior to coming to university as well as while they were at Brock. In the example below, this student's narrative illustrated the intersection of violence with the isolation felt by those living in a deeply heteronormative society:

So my experience with sexual violence wasn't at Brock, it was when I was nine. I was raped when I was living at my Mom's restaurant. As a result of being nine, I was terrified, and I didn't tell anybody. I didn't tell my Mom, and I didn't tell my Dad. And they just all really thought I was weird growing up, like really quiet and stuff. And then, add on being queer. So it was pretty overwhelming... I've experienced youth, child homelessness. You know, things get taken from you, and you get really used to that.

Students who get used to having things taken from them are students who will likely not find it easy to reach out for resources or support. As Brock University has taken little visible leadership to ensure safer spaces for LGBTQ2+ and racialized students this work falls to student-run groups who have few resources and who may be struggling with various internal tensions. Jennica highlights some of the problems with this:

You can't just list L-G-B-T-Q-etc. and expect that everyone who's not straight/cis to hang out in one group. And have the same priorities, desires, culture and everything [laughter]. But it's kind of how it feels here, like 'Oh, you're not straight/cis and you don't want to go to Isaac's on Friday night? Then you can go on the other night with all the rest of the not-straight people, cause you're all the same.' That's been my experience at Brock Pride as well. I've only tried twice... and both times I heard racist things, homonormative things, transphobic and transnormative things... and I just dropped it.

In-so-far as Brock takes little visible leadership for consistently creating safer spaces for sexual and gender minority students these same groups are likely to be more vulnerable to sexual violence and less likely to feel comfortable and safe enough to learn and pursue academic success.

Finally, students who are dealing with mental health issues cross a wide spectrum. Students interviewed for this study highlighted three key insights:

- Consistent with the research, students who deal with mental health issues are more likely to be *vulnerable* to perpetrators; or as Valerie put it: "I think knowing that [you] are specifically targeted, by perpetrators because you [have these issues] is terrifying. And that's something that you live with every day."
- Secondly, Ginger highlights the *stigma* associated with a wide spectrum of mental health challenges by contrasting PTSD with other illnesses which do not carry the same social judgments: "We don't have to explain what a broken leg looks like; we don't have to explain what blindness is... or deafness. Why should we have to explain this?... [but] the shame of being molested, it's always 'you're the one that's got the problem,' you know?"
- Thirdly, students who struggle with mental health issues are also less likely to talk to fellow students, making them more *isolated*. In the words of another student: "part of the reason I don't want my classmates to know about my personal struggles is because I know that it would be used against me... and when the violence does occur there is that stigma, and you're less likely to be believed..."

As a result of this *vulnerability, stigma and isolation*, students with mental health concerns are less likely to report incidents of sexual violence to any university authority. As Brock is centrally concerned with students' academic success, one issue of particular concern is students' ability to gain appropriate supports and accommodations in the aftermath of sexual trauma to ensure they can complete course assignments. However, the current process of registering as a 'student with a disability' in order to obtain accommodations is also more difficult for those dealing with mental health struggles. Jennica highlighted some of these double-binds: "You need a certain level of ability in order to access disability services. It can be very difficult because they have a lot of assumptions on your ability to go through these motions.... I know a lot of people who aren't registered with a disability precisely because of their disability, and their inability to go through that whole process."

While some students can gain informal accommodations by speaking with their TA or professor if they are struggling with PTSD or other symptoms, many of our interviewees expressed extreme reluctance to do so. Given the importance of these comments about the double-binds of seeking supports and accommodations, particularly for students who struggle with mental health issues, we have dedicated two sections to the mental health implications of sexual violence and appropriate supports and accommodations starting on page 23. We now turn to summarizing some of the key learning's from the overall themes of this section.

First, Indigenous students, staff and faculty invited us to recognize that gendered violence starts with our relationship to the territory that Brock University is located on and asked us to re-think 'consent' within a land-based framework. In particular, Indigenous interviewees challenged the racial and colonial hierarchies that remain unspoken in virtually all mainstream sexual violence programming, not just at Brock, but throughout Canada. The inter-generational legacy of multiple forms of violence (historic, systemic, inter-personal) has been so normalized that sexual violence is just one element of a broader experience of surviving contemporary colonial rule in Canada.

Racialized and LGBTQ2+ students emphasized the impact of gendered racism and hetero-patriarchal forms of power in their everyday experiences at Brock. From the racist fetishization of Black and Asian women's bodies, to the difficulties that LGBTQ2+ students had finding spaces where they could get queer-knowledgeable supports, they all emphasized significant challenges in 'feeling part of the school.' Indeed, while racialized students recognized that they might be featured prominently on Brock's masthead, they did *not* see themselves represented in the faculty and staff complement at Brock. Consequently it is much more difficult for them to imagine they will find safer spaces in which to talk about sexual and gendered violence or harassment, or to trust that they could seek and obtain just resolution for a complaint.

Culture of Silence

As noted above, all universities operate in a broader context of 'rape culture' or the pervasive belief that gendered violence and harassment, and gendered and colonial racism are 'just the way things are' so that violence is ignored, trivialized, normalized or made into jokes. The testimony by students in the previous section highlighted numerous illustrations of 'rape culture' at Brock University.

In a context where gendered and sexual violence is normalized, institutions that want to challenge those beliefs must do so clearly and consistently and at all levels. Students consulted in these interviews did not see Brock University taking leadership on these issues. Indeed, a key theme in these interviews was the institutional silence about sexual violence and harassment. Students saw evidence of this in the *lack of pro-active educational campaigns* supported by the university administration. Most non-classroom educational initiatives on sexual violence are led by student groups. For example, in 2015-2016 *Students Against Sexual Assault* hosted film screenings, workshops, and special events and *A Safer Brock* provided training, peer support and counselling. However, students are well aware that these initiatives are primarily organized through voluntary student labour that is only partially funded by their ancillary fees.

Hence, they conclude that the primary people taking leadership to challenge 'rape culture' at Brock – are students.

A variety of interviewees took up this theme, contending that leadership should come from the top. Lyla, an Indigenous student, furthered that sentiment:

I think it's ridiculous that students pay a levy to an organization in order to get access to services related to sexual violence. To me, the institution should be providing those services. Especially because... the university speaks as though [*A Safer Brock* is] a university initiative and it's not. And that's a huge problem to me. I think that this is something that needs to be addressed at the university level, and that the burden should not be passed on to students.

While the impact of institutional silence and erasure is significant for all students the multiple levels of struggle were sharply articulated by Azad, in relationship to racialized women's experience:

For women of colour, I think it's different because when they do experience sexual assault, they're already experiencing day-to-day aggressions from the system that's set up on campus, so ... it becomes very internalized and you start to feel like you don't belong here. 'Cause like I said, if you are from a different country or a different cultural background it might be harder for you to approach your own family and best friends and talk openly about these issues.... [so] the burden and those thoughts will continue to stay in your head, and will rot you, slowly. Because you feel that fear, and you feel that invisibility when you're walking around campus, and seeing that there's nobody that you can really connect with and open up to. And when your experiences are not dealt with, then they will eat you, internally, you know?

When Azad speaks about there being 'nobody you can really connect to' she is drawing attention to the perception that the residence, counselling, health, security and student services for survivors on campus are *not* racially and culturally diverse, nor are they knowledgeable about the situations faced by racialized communities. Her comments about the internalization of silence, 'which rots you, slowly' also highlight the mental health impacts of this erasure in a white dominant institution.

Indigenous students also spoke about the additional barriers they face breaking the silence about this topic, but stressed their unique history and context:

If you've listened to family members talking about what they've gone through, and you've seen the pain that puts them through, then if you go through something yourself [an experience of sexual violence], you're not going to want to share it with them and put them through that pain again, right? So I think it kind of compounds the problem and makes it even worse. And often times you don't trust people from outside your communities.

Thus both Indigenous and racialized women face a multi-layered set of experiences which intensify silence and invisibility. And both name the increased difficulties they face in a white dominant

educational institution where there may be very little knowledge about gendered racism, and the impact of the violence implicit in transnational migration, colonization and intergenerational trauma.

Gender and sexual minority students added to this analysis with a critique of faculty pedagogical practices that seem to assume that students who deal with transphobia, racism and gendered violence are not *already* in the classroom. For example:

I think it's B.S. that for me and many of my friends, our lived experience has essentially been presented as a thought experiment in lecture... [The professor] did this thing where he created a thought experiment using Storm... whose parents chose to raise them without imposing any gender norms on them. And then, having my cisgendered classmates tear apart why that's terrible... and being the only trans person in the room...

Danny reinforced this point saying that faculty and teaching assistants should be mindful that: "there are going to be trans people in class... There's going to be sex workers in their class. So many people in university do sex work. And our lives are not hypothetical discussions. We're not rhetoric. And casually debating violence against us is really, really hurtful." Kara gave a similar example of a professor teaching about multiculturalism and failing to field racist comments from students: "I remember just leaving that classroom wanting to cry and being really upset... It was another moment where I was really aware of people just not understanding... If she [the professor] said *something* during that seminar, I would not have felt as isolated... especially being the only person of colour..."

The general atmosphere of erasure and invisibility were also relevant to student's knowledge about sexual violence policy on campus. Only two students in these interviews were familiar with Brock's policies or procedures in the area of sexual violence, and the overwhelming majority did not know where to look for information, nor were they confident about accessing supports. Most were convinced there were no services for them, as Tiffany comments:

I know what's happened to me, and I've understood that, but I don't know how that fits into the puzzle. Sexual violence is, to me, a big puzzle. And there's different pieces that complete the picture. And I don't know how my piece fits in... Like, it's still really confusing. And there's nothing to help with that, I guess that's the point I'm making.

Some student survivors were able to get accommodations because teaching assistants, noticing that they stopped going to classes, reached out to them and offered support. But students were still unsure about whether anything could be done, particularly when the assault didn't happen on campus. Sloan also noted the complexity added when the violence was not within a heterosexual framework: "I also wasn't disclosing... it was difficult because I wasn't necessarily completely out. And then, disclosing [would mean talking] about how [the assault] was with another queer person."

Other students noted that when they reached out to teaching assistants for help, the TA's themselves didn't know how to proceed because the policy was shrouded or unclear; and still others were turned down when they asked to be accommodated in part because they waited too long due to confusion

about how to proceed. This was contrasted with the institutional protocol in the cases of student illness or a death in the family, where the format for requesting assistance is clearly laid out in the course syllabi.

Overall our interviewees emphasized a context where Brock has provided little leadership to challenge the culture of silence regarding sexual and gender violence, existing health and counselling services are not seen to be knowledgeable about LGBTQ2+ issues, gendered racism and colonialism, and there is a lack of awareness regarding relevant policy or supports. This context creates a snowball effect, ensuring that fewer students will report. As Khaleesi noted:

So if you're in an institution [where] you don't see yourself, there's no support, and something happens to you, the chances of you speaking up are very low... And there is even more chance of people hurting you, because they know [the chances] that nothing's going to happen to them are very, very high. So that just drives you even more to just stay quiet.

While students were aware that Brock was developing a new policy on sexual violence, they also knew that this process had been propelled first by provincial government requirements and more recently became widely visible as a result of the publicity from national and local media coverage of a case of sexual violence by a faculty member towards a student. Indeed, the university handling of this recent case, while not raised by research assistant's, was frequently raised by students. Angelica, an Indigenous student, noted that "the institution tries to cover it up, to protect their reputation. But really, what is that doing? ... that case with that teacher, it took months and months and months, and then the woman had to go to the news to get heard... that's *not* right."

Students in every focus group highlighted Brock's lack of credibility on this issue, and their sense that the university engages in deliberate silencing tactics, does not follow its own policies, and is unwilling to be accountable to those who are most affected by sexual violence. Another Indigenous student, Nicole, argued: "you need to have the top people actually sympathize with the victims. Not telling them to be quiet and not say anything like they did with the last case." Alise also spoke about this perception:

I think that when Brock says that they have a policy they need to actually stand behind it... Because we've had enough instances here, whether it is with students or with outside community members, or with faculty in our school, where this kind of stuff is happening and it's not being addressed and it's not being taken care of. And for some reason it always comes back to, well Brock did everything they could to make sure it was Okay. And Brock did this, and Brock did that, and we're never going to talk about the survivor, and we're never going to talk about the perpetrator. But we are going to talk about how we still look good, and we did what we could have done, and that was the best we could have done.

Zawadi elaborated, saying: "that really taints the image of Brock. Just by telling them not to go and talk to the media... So I think transparency is really important, you know." April summed up similar themes in conversation with others in her focus group, saying that the university response "made no sense... It's not a policy. It's P.R.!"

Only one student, Danny, spoke about the formal complaint process, after they supported a friend who was sexually assaulted by an employee of the university in the winter/spring of 2016. They emphasized problems with the reporting process itself:

The statement that Campus Security wrote on my friend's behalf, from my friend's verbal statement that they then transcribed, was factually incorrect. My friend was very fortunate, in that they were able to read the statement over and correct it. But...it was frankly disrespectful that they would get it that wrong.

Danny also emphasized the importance of being informed, prior to a formal reporting process, of the potential outcomes. They noted that their friend

only ended up reporting through Campus Security... because they were referred there by the police. And that was only because the police were present for their sexual assault evidence kit at the hospital. So, they didn't really know their options. They were just sort of going through the motions of "this is what I'm supposed to do" without having any idea what the repercussions would be, or any idea of what the outcome would be. And I think that should be made absolutely clear to students before reporting.

This feedback then, is crucial in considering the importance of appropriate training for staff to implement the new sexual violence policy, as well as the importance of developing a better understanding of the connections between sexual violence and a wider range of equity issues on campus. But the work of rebuilding institutional credibility and developing intersectional educational initiatives requires funding and support – something which has been, until the spring of 2016, extremely scarce. To emphasize this point, we wrap up this section with commentary from Indigenous students who were key leaders in the unprecedented wave of student protests that developed in the spring of 2016 and which played a pivotal role in actually challenging the culture of silence that is a major theme in this research. Here Ann emphasizes the importance of media coverage and student involvement in shifting institutional priorities:

I have been part of the sexual violence prevention committee since last summer... I've been lobbying for this new coordinator position since I started, and I'm part of all the sub-committees, so I've talked about it in every sub-committee. [But] it wasn't until the CBC article⁵³ came out about the case [and the student protests that followed], that we're now finally getting some funding...

It seems clear, then, that those who are disproportionately affected by sexual violence are sharply critical of what they see as Brock's lack of leadership to address the culture of silence that supports sexual violence and harassment on campus. To develop more credibility and trust with students and foster a climate where those most at risk see themselves in institutional efforts to challenge sexual coercion, we will need to ensure a multi-pronged approach to sexual violence education, which includes leadership from the top, as well as professional and consistent support at every level. In addition, these

interviewees stressed the importance of a team of diverse and knowledgeable staff who are specifically trained in sexual violence support and response.

Education and Support

One of the places where Student Life Staff have taken leadership to highlight ‘consent’ education and healthy relationships has been in Orientation week. There is no doubt that these can be useful initiatives and set the tone for the coming year, and there was a particularly strong event at Brock in the fall of 2016 by Kim Katrin Milan and Tiq Millan. As a stand-alone effort, though, research tells us that one-off events have limited effectiveness as students seem to retain little of the information acquired in this week.⁵⁴ Indeed, Sarah DeGue, writing in *Lessons from Research and Practice*, for the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2014) tells us:

Brief, one-session educational programs focused on increasing awareness or changing beliefs and attitudes are not effective at changing behaviour in the long-term. These approaches may be useful as one component of a comprehensive strategy. However, they are not likely to have any impact on rates of violence if implemented as a stand-alone strategy or as a primary component of a prevention plan.⁵⁵

DeGue recently completed a systematic review of 140 studies examining the effectiveness of primary prevention strategies for sexual violence perpetration and she highlighted the best available evidence for prevention. She found that evidence-based research provides numerous options for what *does* work, and that “effective prevention strategies are comprehensive—addressing multiple levels of influence” including both individual behaviour and systemic, cultural and institutional factors which shape the social ecology.⁵⁶ While institutions often fall-back on the ‘one workshop’ model for financial reasons, best-practice research suggests that “multiple skill-based sessions—have the greatest potential in reducing rates of sexual violence.”⁵⁷ In her report, DeGue maps out that an evidence-based approach would include *all* of the following elements:

- a) building bystander intervention and healthy relationship skills and establishing positive norms about gender, sexualities, and violence with interactive, multi-session interventions, especially for incoming students;
- b) professional and peer training for key student leaders on campus (including athletes) and for those working and living in residence;
- c) senior administrative leaders who promote a culture of safety and respect;
- d) social media campaigns that draw attention to, and challenge, norms regarding sexual violence;
- e) hot spot mapping which highlights particularly dangerous spaces and times of year;
- f) community initiatives to reduce excessive alcohol use, and promote alternatives (i.e. Alt-orientation week);
- g) strengthened support services, enforcement, and clear policies on reporting and response.⁵⁸

Drawing on the interviews with students and key informants and the insights from the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee over the past year, we now highlight additional perspectives that would significantly strengthen a multi-pronged educational approach that is tailored to the Brock campus.

First, multi-level approaches to sexual violence prevention need to acknowledge the organizational history at Brock where there has been a significant lack of leadership, staff and programming on sexuality and consent from the founding of the university in 1964 to the present-day. The university first began to put staff resources towards “harassment prevention” in 2004 with one staff person, and a second was hired in 2008, by which time their office was called Human Rights and Equity Services. However from 2011-2014 this unit was progressively de-funded of resources for outreach and education and both staff left in 2014-2015 and were not replaced. Between January 2015 and November 2015 equity related complaints were handled by an employee of Human Resources in addition to their existing workload. This lack of appropriate staffing and resources resulted, for example, in difficulties responding to very public breaches, such as the incident of male students holding up a “honk if you’re droppin’ off your daughters” sign during residence check-in at the start of the 2014 school year. While the sign was removed when staff were notified, the university commented that “this doesn’t reflect on our students” rather than leading a public discussion of the impact of rape culture on campus and confirming our commitment to challenge those norms and ensure the safety of women who attend Brock.⁵⁹ A Human Rights and Equity Advisor, was hired in November 2015 and has been very active in policy development and handling new reported cases of sexual assault, and a Sexual Violence Response and Education Coordinator was hired in September 2016, however there is significant work to do in ‘catching up’ with other universities and ensuring the institution can become compliant with Bill 132. For example, George Brown College, which has twenty-two thousand students (compared to 18,000 at Brock), has an equity office staffed with five full time staff and a wide range of pro-active equity education initiatives. Consequently, we recommend that:

1. *Brock make a significant investment in leadership on sexual and gender justice by hiring at least two new permanent staff to the Human Rights and Equity Office to ensure that this area is appropriately resourced with a diverse team providing pro-active and accessible education and support services on sexual violence in ways that are commensurate with our student population.*

Secondly, interviewees consulted for this study agreed that in order for sexual violence education and support services to reach those disproportionately at risk of violence and harassment we must develop a staff team that is significantly more diverse, namely: multi-racial and inclusive of LGBTQ2+ people. This is critical, because as Khaleesi said, “representation is important” or as Azad commented, “the whole area of cultural differences, it’s crucial.” Similarly Alise commented: “no representation [means] it is almost as if you just don’t exist in these roles... if you’re sitting somewhere in a classroom with people who don’t look like you, and the person that’s teaching doesn’t look like you, and there’s certain aspects of privilege that go along with that, it’s definitely discomfoting...it doesn’t mean that every Black person has the same experience, obviously, but there still is something that we share, that we don’t share with non-racialized people.”

Any assessment of the leadership at Brock University (including staff, administration and faculty) would be compelled to conclude we are a white and male dominant institution. Taking seriously the feedback from our interviewees about the impact of that climate for students dealing with sexual violence as it intersects with racism, colonialism, heteronormativity, and ableism, we recommend that:

2. *Brock develop and implement an employment equity hiring policy that would ensure that staff hiring across the university (but especially in HRES, Health Services, Counselling, Residence, Campus Security and Student Accessibility Services) prioritize hiring qualified candidates from equity seeking groups, especially those from Indigenous, racialized and LGBTQ2+ communities.*

Third, as we develop our own program and curriculum for pro-active sexual violence education we need to incorporate the principles of intersectional analysis in order for our work to be accessible to those most seriously targeted by violence and harassment. As the participants in this research have so eloquently made clear, racial, colonial and sexual tensions in feminist movements to challenge violence often undermine their effectiveness. Khaleesi underlined the racial tensions, noting that “White women... will talk about sexual violence, but about racism they will keep quiet. Nobody wants to talk about race...” Kattawe added to that analysis:

I think incorporating [analysis of racism] into education [is crucial], like getting people, especially white people, to understand what we’re conditioned to think from a very young age. If at 12 he can tell you he doesn’t like chocolate, think about how that’s ingrained into children’s minds... So all those things that the white girl has to worry about, we’re worried about that s*** too, plus the fact that it’s related to the fact that we’re Black.

In order, then, to avoid replicating what Hayley Moody called ‘white versions of consent’ in our education campaigns we recommend that:

3. *Brock develop sexuality, consent, bystander and first responder programs and curriculum that are fully intersectional and incorporate the perspectives of those who are disproportionately affected by sexual violence: Indigenous women, racialized women, LGBTQ2+ people and those who struggle with mental health issues.*

It should be noted that some resources already exist in this area: for example, curricular and video material from the *Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children* on responding to disclosures of violence, available at: <http://www.learningtoendabuse.ca/responding-disclosures-sexual-violence>; and a series of YouTube video on rape myths from the University of Alberta, which provide a complicated analysis of the relationship between consent and alcohol;⁶⁰ and online and artistic work from the US based *Stop Telling Women to Smile* project at: <http://stoptellingwomentosmile.com/>; and the work of Farrah Khan, the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator at Ryerson University at: <http://www.farrahkhan.ca/>

Fourth, in keeping with the overall commitment of the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee to peer-led models of education, and in recognition of the work of students who have been, until the fall of

2016, the primary people taking leadership in sexual violence education at Brock (outside of the classroom), we recommend that:

4. *Brock develop a diverse team of student peer educators (multi-racial, Indigenous, LGBTQ2+) who are trained to deliver intersectional sexuality, consent, and bystander education; and that this team be recognized with respectful remuneration.*

The model of peer education would allow staff and more experienced students to mentor others, and facilitate the use of a diverse range of pedagogical initiatives including workshops in large context credit courses, seminar course presentations, small group discussions, online activism, artistic projects (displayed online or in the public spaces at Brock) and Indigenous knowledge practices, which might include engagement with art, ceremony and spiritual practice. Participants in the focus groups emphasized the importance of respecting student leadership in shifting the university culture as well as their overall value to the institution. As Lyla commented: “peer supports can be really helpful, but we also really need to find ways to compensate those people.”

Fifth, students in all focus groups were clear that men needed to be involved in sexuality, consent and bystander training at all levels. The vast majority of consent campaigns do not build-in leadership from men (cisgendered, transgender and queer) and hence reinforce the idea that negotiating for consent is primarily ‘women’s work’ – thus *they* are responsible when it goes awry. In contrast, students in this study were adamant that men could and must be allies. As Khaleesi says, “men talking to men” could explore the intersections of dominant masculinities, racism, and heteronormative gender expectations that shape sexual violence – and this learning would be crucial for real alliances. Farrah Khan also emphasized this point, arguing that in a context where men of colour and Indigenous men are encountering real barriers accessing university, there is even more reason to think carefully about “how we hold them accountable, and how we actually do intergenerational healing work...that is decolonial work.” Hence we recommend that:

5. *Brock’s education programs incorporate the leadership and participation of men (cisgendered, transgender and queer) and an analysis of masculinities as a key element in sexuality, consent and bystander education.*

Sixth, students emphasized the importance of having a *defined, visible, safer space* on campus. Many participants, but especially those with mental health struggles, talked about their discomfort navigating public spaces, the exhaustion of constantly being on guard (heightened by the impact of sexual violence), and their sense of ‘not feeling a part of the school’ or ‘fitting in’ within the dominant norms (cultural, sexual, social) of the university. A physical space for students to gather would provide both a place to meet, organize and feel safe, and also a place to breathe, especially for people who are often ‘holding their breath’ – thus encouraging a more inclusive culture on campus. Thus we recommend that:

6. *Brock set aside space, within its main campus, for a Women’s and Trans Centre, or some similar organization, run by and for students, possibly under the auspices of the HRES. The intent of this*

space would be inclusionary, not simply for marginalized students to find each other, but to act as a “call-in” to the whole university community, and to open up space for alliance building and activism.

Seventh unionized staff members who are members of the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee emphasized the commitment of all campus unions to receive ‘first responder’ training. Students also believe that this cross-sectoral approach would be crucial for the creation of a safer campus and noted the importance of training to ensure better pedagogical practice and access to accommodations. Therefore we recommend that:

- 7. Brock authorize that time be set aside within staff work hours to attend first responder training to aid in the creation of a safer and more responsive campus for sexual violence survivors.*

Eighth, students and key informants emphasized the importance of educational work that takes seriously power differentials on campus, particularly between faculty and students. In particular they highlighted problems with an abuse of power when Faculty have dual relationships (namely where a faculty member is responsible for supervising and/or grading a student and is also involved in a sexual relationship with that same student). Opportunities for training were seen to be particularly important in a context where graduate students often rely on faculty for close supervision and letters of reference for their future career and hence can be more vulnerable to a faculty abuse of power. Given that these problems have been highlighted in several cases we recommend that:

- 8. Faculty members participate in consent, bystander and first responder training, and discuss the implications of this analysis for dual relationships, their role as bystanders, and their pedagogical practice.*

Ninth, several participants and expert interviewees highlighted the unique challenges facing international students. For example, Sarah, an international student from the United States, whose first language is English, remarked that “students who don’t speak English as a first language get treated very poorly... in addition to that; they may be misunderstood when they try to raise a complaint.” In addition, she highlighted that international students may be unfamiliar with the legal context and/or uncomfortable consulting with police. And given international students relative isolation on campus, they may not know about a whole range of services on campus and in the community, and those services may not have the linguistic and cultural capacity to offer international students meaningful supports. Given these challenges, we recommend that:

- 9. International students have access to proactive information regarding sexual violence policies and services; culturally appropriate educational initiatives and information about relevant academic accommodations that could better enable their academic success.*

Supports, Services and Counselling

There is a deep need to value students, not through the lens of labeling them with problems... It's a resource issue: students are resources first and foremost, and not a burden on the

system.... It's a valuing of the quieter voices, quieter voices not because they're not bold and powerful, but quieter voices because they've been silenced. We must make those shifts if we're going to shift this university.

Shannon Moore, Faculty, Child and Youth Studies

In the next two sections of this report we present the analysis of students and key informants in relation to the mental health implications of sexual violence and the importance of developing health services, counselling and accommodation policies that are genuinely responsive to all students, particularly those who are disproportionately targeted for violence and harassment. We start with analysis from Equity and Sexual Violence Response staff at other universities and colleges in order to provide some context for the issues that students, staff and faculty are discussing at Brock.

Vivek Shraya, a Diversity, Equity and Human Rights staff person at George Brown College noted that students, like the general population, remain confused and uncertain about what constitutes sexual violence, and this has real implications for their access to supports and services. Shraya notes that over her twelve years in the Equity Office:

the number one question I get asked is: I don't know if I was raped, I don't know if I was sexually assaulted... So obviously they come in, they're shaken, they're upset. But they didn't even know where to go, [and]...when they come to see me they don't even know if what's happened to them is sexual assault. So feeling lost within the institution, and then being confused or lost within the framework of her own body.

Farrah Khan, the Sexual Violence Response Coordinator at Ryerson, elaborated on this from a different perspective, highlighting racialized differences in the range of student experiences and their implications for support services:

When racialized students have come to my office seeking support after sexual violence they ask for accommodation letters, support with faculty or navigating finances, but rarely do they seek long term supports. They see the act of violence they have experienced as part of a continuum of oppression and 'just another barrier.' Whereas when white young women come to my office from more privileged backgrounds, for some of them it's the first time something like this has happened in their lives. In my observations I see them as being more comfortable advocating for resources and counselling.

This sense of dislocation within one's body and dislocation within the institution, and the experience of encountering 'just another barrier' were also evident in the responses of student interviewees at Brock.

As students negotiate the aftermath of violence at Brock they may ask for assistance from Student Health Services, or Personal Counselling, or from Student Accessibility Services, or any combination of the three. (In the spring of 2016 these three units were merged into the Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre. However, interviewee comments relate to the previous model). Students who reported speaking to Health Services noted that they often received a very formulaic response. Michelle

described her experience in these terms: “they get you to fill out some depression quiz, and then they’re saying ‘you have depression, here’s cipralex.’ I’m like, ‘Okay that was very fast, so, what just happened?’ You know, just automatically assuming that medication will be the best route for you... And not asking enough questions.” Jennica had a similar experience: “they hand you a sheet and say: ‘here’s your 30 questions, we’ll be back in five minutes.’ And then they come back and look at it and say: ‘Oh, you got 27/30, here’s the prescription.’” Shannon Moore notes that this process – “you go in for an appointment, you get a diagnosis, and you’re sent for medication” — is the classic model, where there is little exploration of the *events or context* that could have provoked the symptoms. The lack of proper protocols for physicians to *ask* about sexual trauma is also a strong theme in the mental health literature.⁶¹ Indeed, in a context where students do not know they have other options (counselling or academic accommodations), Health Services may be disproportionately responsible for dealing with mental health issues that they are not trained to address.

Other students consulted in this study approached staff at Personal Counselling. One of the common themes in student feedback concerned the lack of information about counsellors’ areas of expertise and community affiliations, and the lack of choice in being assigned to a counsellor. As Michelle noted: “They don’t match you with people... they don’t ask you what your preferences are.” This lack of information and choice may be related to the organization of counselling services at Brock. Currently, Brock has just one personal counsellor, who was hired in the spring of 2016. All other counselling services are contracted out to Lidkea Staub and Associates, a social work agency in the Niagara region. Julie Fennell, a health promotion staff person at Brock clarified this system, explaining that counselling staff from Lidkea Staub are available on-campus from 8:30-4:30pm. However to make an appointment students must call an internal number, connecting them to a receptionist downtown, who books appointments for the counsellors on campus.

Shannon Moore contrasted this with the systems at other universities and workplaces. For example, at the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria information about the expertise, interests and life experiences of counselling staff is readily available in a comfortable and accessible office space (and online). These systems provide a more transparent process for students to choose a counsellor based on their assessment of the person’s knowledge of issues specific to racialized, LGBTQ2+ or Indigenous communities, or their familiarity with and interest in sexual violence, eating disorders, PTSD, or related coping strategies. Valerie drew parallels with the ways psychotherapists advertise in the wider community, suggesting that a better system would be to have counsellors list their profile online, where they could say: ‘I’m part of the [LGBTQ2+] community’ or ‘these are my experiences.’ This strategy for providing information about counselling options would allow students to do some screening in advance and decide who they would, ideally, like to speak with. This suggestion came up repeatedly and was consistently endorsed as a better system.

The fact that our current protocol does not allow students to have any information about or choice regarding who they see for counselling, as well as the perceived lack of diversity in counselling staff overall, resulted in multiple complaints. These include problems with staff not being knowledgeable about issues specific to LGBTQ2+ communities, such as transition and gender pronouns; and the lack of

familiarity with problems facing racialized women, who, for example, often struggle with the expectation that they have to be 'strong Black women' and thus find it difficult to gain support for their mental health struggles. Alise highlighted their sense of exhaustion at always having to explain their specific circumstances across a racial divide: "I think talking with people you can identify with, takes out a whole aspect of being exhausted too. Because it's so nice when you talk to somebody who can identify with you... and you can see each other nodding... and you can tell that they get it." Zawadi also stressed the importance of diversifying the counselling resources available, by increasing the number of staff that have a "broad experience of cultural differences... it's almost like a third eye, you know, when it comes to dealing with problems of women of colour, right? So having someone who has a broad experience... it's better."

Several other students stressed the importance of services for men who harm women and other men. As Azad commented: "It's not just about the victim, it's also about somebody perpetrating... Because it's likely that you're not the only victim... then at least have a counsellor talk to that guy, or to hear their perspective as well, and to give them some counselling and options to deal with their issues."

Students and experts also highlighted problems with having to wait for long periods for appointments, and with the brief psychotherapy model which seems to be the norm at Brock. Julie Fennel reported that counselling is generally organized through a goal-oriented method, where students have a limited number of sessions (six to eight) to work through a specific set of issues. For those dealing with the aftermath of sexual and gender violence and struggling with mental illness, this may not be enough support. As Fennel notes, "for somebody who is dealing with mental illness, it takes hours of work, it's an ongoing process..." This sentiment was echoed by Alise, who was also critical of the brief psychotherapy model.

I know there's counselling for free for Brock students, but the only setback is that they're very quick meetings [limited number of sessions]. And it's not like when I go to my therapist, [which is] fairly regular. Whereas [with the Brock counselling], you go a few times and then your problems are supposed to go away. And when you have mental illness it doesn't work like that.

While counselling staff may, on a case-by-case basis, extend the number of sessions they spend with clients, as long as the brief psychotherapy model is the norm, students will not know if they can get sustained support. Hence, they may not talk about the full range of issues they are facing to avoid opening up problems that cannot be addressed within a limited number of sessions.

Here Brock is struggling with problems that are echoed across the country, as is clear from a recent report from the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services, which collaborated with the American College Health Association to survey more than 43,000 Canadian students in the spring of 2016.⁶² Their results suggest a significant number of students are dealing with anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation. For example, in Ontario amongst students surveyed "65 per cent of reported experiencing overwhelming anxiety in the previous year; 46 per cent reported feeling so depressed in the previous year it was difficult to function; and 13 per cent had seriously considered

suicide in the previous year."⁶³ Representatives from the Ontario University and College Health Association noted that staff members are increasingly trying to support significant diagnoses, trauma counselling and crises "most often without the appropriate resources or time to spend with students."⁶⁴ Indeed, the new counsellor working at Student Wellness and Accessibility at Brock has also noted that she sees complex mental health issues on a daily basis that cannot be dealt with through the brief psychotherapy model.⁶⁵

In addition, students spoke about the lack of coordination between services at the university and those in the community. For example, Ann described

being referred to resource after resource and none of them connecting with each other. You go to one place for PTSD, and you go to a different place like CARSA for a ten-session thing specifically about sexual violence. You go somewhere else for safe beds just to get somewhere to sleep. Nowhere does it seem like there is one area where someone [can coordinate]... all these other places.

In addition to the lack of information and choice about counsellors, the lack assurance that they could get sustained support and the absence of a coordinated approach with multiple services, Indigenous students face even bigger problems, including the fact that some of them rely on band councils for their university funding. As Lyla explained:

It can be complicated if you're getting funding through band councils, right?... often times band councils will make you send in things to prove that you're attending a certain percentage of your courses. So if you've been triggered... because of an essay that you're writing on something based on sexual violence, and you have to miss two weeks of courses, that could put your funding in jeopardy. And there is a lot more securitization of funding that comes in that way, than even through OSAP...

It should be noted that the structure, staffing and policies which provide a framework for student health, counselling and accessibility services are now in transition as a result of these units being merged into Student Wellness and Accessibility Services in the spring of 2016. In recognition of this transition, we offer for consideration the following recommendations regarding student health and counselling services in order to better respond to the mental health implications of sexual violence.

10. *That Health services develop appropriate protocols to ensure nurses and/or physicians can inquire about the context and events that might have led to students psychological symptoms – instead of students simply checking off a box on a form; and that this protocol also ensure students are offered a variety of referral options for counselling, accommodations, and peer support.*
11. *That Brock make a significant investment in hiring at least two new permanent staff to Counselling services to ensure that this area is appropriately resourced (commensurate with our student population) with a diverse team to respond to the complex and serious mental health needs that students are already presenting.*

12. *That Counselling services offer accessible (print and online) information about counsellors including areas of professional interest, expertise and experience. In addition, that Brock negotiate to ensure this same information be made available from counsellors at Lidkea Staub.*
13. *In recognition of the serious and complex nature of many of the mental health problems presented by students, that Counselling services consider re-evaluating their use of the brief psychotherapy model as the operational standard to ensure that students who are dealing with the aftermath of trauma know that they have access to sustained counselling support.*

Accommodations

Earlier in this report we highlighted that students rarely use the current process of registering for accommodations to deal with the aftermath of sexual violence. Perhaps the most obvious reason for this is that they are not aware of its availability, as the Student Accessibility Service website does not mention sexual violence or the related aftermath. Instead, the site describes their services as available to students with a 'registered disability.'

The second option for students is to request a medical note from Health Services. As the feedback in the previous section highlighted, some students use this option, but the formulaic process for diagnosis does not always create a comfortable environment for students to disclose sexual violence.

The third option for students is the informal recourse of talking to their teaching assistant or professor directly to ask for an extension. Indeed, in the absence of knowing what other possibilities might be available, most students saw an informal request for an extension as the only possible option. However, students rarely attempted this and we know of no faculty who list this in their syllabi, as there are no policy guidelines in this area. A student who dealt with a sexual assault by their partner commented on this directly: "everybody was always talking about [how to get an extension] if you're sick, or someone passes away, how to go about it.... But it was never made clear to me... if any sort of gendered or sexual violence came against me, how I would go through that process."

As Brock has just hired a Sexual Violence Response and Education Coordinator (SVREC), it is now possible that requests for accommodation could, in future, be handled by this staff person, and they would mediate conversations with faculty. However, structural barriers to students accessing accommodations will continue. Hence, in this section of the report we discuss student feedback on accommodations in the hope that this could lead to more sustained discussion about future policy change in this area.

To contextualize this discussion, we start with feedback from Equity staff in our expert interviews who note that there is a widespread belief amongst faculty across different universities that requests for student accommodation indicate students are 'taking advantage of the system.' As one Equity staff person outside of Brock, who wished to remain anonymous, put it:

I would say that accommodations across the board are a problem, in that they are our number one complaint in the Human Rights Office. Lack of accommodations, or teachers not wanting to accommodate students because that's not how it is in the 'real world'... It's a very broad problem where teachers feel that accommodations are a form of special treatment...

This same staff member has also been a sessional instructor, and recognized that some requests for accommodations come at the very last minute and can involve complicated additional labour. Nevertheless, she argued that last minute requests would be less likely if there were clear protocols for students and faculty and clear agreement that the "job of the teacher is to make learning as accessible as possible."

It seems reasonable to assume that Brock faculty may have some of the same questions about accommodations as those at other universities, particularly given a context where there has been a dramatic upswing in the number of students registered with a disability over the past several years. Equally important, additional changes are now on the horizon with a new AODA policy, which specifically recognizes that Brock University has a duty to accommodate "the distinct disadvantages people with mental health and other non-evident disabilities and... to ensure distinct and systemic barriers to equal participation are removed and not replaced."⁶⁶ Assuming, then, that the whole area of accommodations will, over the next year, undergo considerable change, we offer a summary of student commentary in relation to accommodations for sexual violence in the hope that this analysis can be incorporated into a wider range of shifts pending in this area.

We start with feedback from students about the reasons why so few talk directly to their teaching assistant or professor to informally ask for accommodation if they are dealing with the aftermath of sexual violence. Aside from the lack of any policy framework that would provide a context for this conversation, our interviewees also highlighted a raft of related problems.

First, students in virtually all focus groups talked about being unaware that they could ask for extensions and consequently they were frightened to make this request. For example, Nicole, an Indigenous undergraduate noted, "there was nothing advertised for that... I just went and took zeros for class 'cause I was scared to go back to school." Racialized students also mentioned that if an assault had not happened on campus, they feared it would not be seen as an 'acceptable' reason for requesting an extension. While this was a common perception, Kattawe also argued that university policy should recognize that the aftermath of sexual violence – wherever and whenever it happens – will affect student's ability to learn. As she put it:

The repercussions are going to happen on campus. And having a panic attack is probably going to happen on campus. When you're having flashbacks, it's going to be on campus, when you can't complete your exam, it's on campus, you know what I mean? So they need to make those steps available... 'cause it wouldn't have happened if we weren't both students at your school...

Secondly, students spoke about their sense of shame that they didn't fit the profile of a 'regular student' and the consequent difficulties in having to expose themselves in making a request for an extension. As

Jennica put it: “it’s like shame on top of shame. You’re already feeling a certain way, then you have to expose yourself again, and risk additional shame. I definitely find just asking for an extension, produces so much anxiety.”

Thirdly, as students have internalized ‘legitimate’ reasons to ask for an extension, and this is not listed as one of them, they don’t ask. This problem can originate in a cascading set of issues that may start with sexual violence (before or while at university), but become more complicated as the aftermath of that violence unfolds. As Valerie noted: “to tell someone that: ‘Hey, I’ve had some really serious issues with medications and I haven’t slept in four days, I’m having a lot of problems right now; or, I can’t use my computer because of my disability, which is not registered with the school.’ So... you don’t even believe me. You don’t get an extension for that.”

Fourth, students have sometimes attempted to talk to their professors about the aftermath of sexual violence, and received troubling responses. Kara described an example that brought together many of the issues highlighted by students above, but also highlighted new problems:

Basically I figured out a bunch of stuff happened to me when I was a kid... Still I had to finish my assignments, and deal with all these things while feeling like... no, *knowing* that I wasn’t okay... I remember going to my professor, trying to explain the situation without explaining the situation. And I distinctly remember him saying, “I can’t help you unless you tell me what it is that stopped you [from completing the assignment].” And I remember thinking, do I say this and try and save my grade? Or do I sacrifice the grade, because this is too hard to talk about? And I remember being in his office, and he shared an office with someone else, and... [that person was] right there. And I’m thinking, [do I] have both these people know? Or, I get zero for this assignment that was worth 25%? And I chose to get a zero, because I didn’t want to deal with that.

Kara had a clear sense that the professor’s question – posed in a shared office, with no attempt to offer her a private space for discussion – had violated her right to confidentiality, and hence, she felt “really unsafe really quickly.” Nevertheless, in the absence of any policy framework, she saw no avenue of appeal, and took the zero on the course assignment.

All of these examples highlight the importance of attending to the power dynamics at play between professors and students – and the ways these interact with rape myths. As professors are seen as ‘gatekeepers’ to knowledge, grades, and accommodations this puts them in a position of considerable power. As the research on sexual violence reminds us, students may be unsure if what they’ve experienced is ‘real rape’ or may not feel confident speaking to anyone – professor, TA, doctor, or counsellor about their experience. Indeed, most survivors only tell a friend, family member or peer about the experience, not professionals. Alternatively, some students may feel confident naming their experience to themselves, but be aware that many others blame victims, and misunderstand what constitutes sexual violence, and consequently they don’t want to risk having to explain and justify their experience – indeed, this was the sentiment of most of our interviewees. We illustrate this perspective with the words of Tiffany:

I don't want to go around and talk to professors about it. I don't want them to treat me differently. I'm an equal, you know. And I feel like once you start saying that kind of stuff, people don't treat you like you're an equal anymore. They treat you like you're less. You're queer... you're raped...you have mental illness, you're less... I want to be proud [gestures to her "Brock pride" t-shirt], you know? I want to be proud of myself. I want to be proud of my identity, the things that have affected me.

In sum, students highlighted that they did not ask for accommodations because, in the absence of a policy framework, they were afraid, felt shamed, had internalized that sexual violence was not a 'legitimate' reason to ask for extra time, or they tried to talk with a professor and found the process unsafe.

This feedback invites further analysis. In a context where there may be a general reluctance to offer accommodations by faculty across universities because of a fear that students are 'milking the system,' the feedback from our interviews indicates that students are extremely reluctant to talk about their experience, precisely because they don't want to be viewed in this way. Indeed, in order not to have to expose themselves to the perception that they are asking for special treatment, the student interviewees typically took a failure in a course, rather than ask for accommodations.

This gap in perception indicates a real need for change. Consequently, we recommend that:

14. A protocol be developed, to be listed in all course syllabi, and announced in classes, to inform students that the university is committed to accommodating students who are dealing with the aftermath of sexual violence, and that students may request accommodations through the Sexual Violence Response and Education Coordinator, and have access to assignment extensions, free counselling and other support services, as needed.

Finally, as staff in the Accessibility office work to revise their policy, procedures and website to become compliant with their responsibilities according to the AODA, we recommend that they consider the difficulties that students with mental health struggles have with the current process of registering as a 'student with a disability.' As Jennica noted earlier in this report, students need a certain level of 'ability' – including patience, trust, and mobility – to go through the process of registering, and for some there are also financial barriers. She continued this analysis:

I feel like a lot of the steps that you have to go through aren't there to actually help you better or assist you or protect you... they are there to make sure that the people who get through actually 'deserve' to get through. There's this entitlement to information. Like, 'if we're going to give you these exceptions you're going to have to give me a good reason and a full account of why.' This entitlement to your story and your history, I think that's a really big problem. It's an institutional entitlement, I think.

As of September 2016, the Ontario Human Rights Commission has determined a new policy regarding accommodating students with mental health disabilities. This should provide clear guidance in

responding to the concerns highlighted above as it specifies that: a) disclosure of a diagnosis is not required to receive accommodations, and b) students may request interim accommodations in cases where a diagnosis is unclear, amongst other things.⁶⁷ Given this change in the policy framework for dealing with mental health disabilities – some of which may arise in the aftermath of sexual violence – and the need to ensure that Accessibility Services is accessible to these students, we recommend that:

15. The Human Rights and Equity Services staff members continue to meet with staff in Accessibility Services regarding the feedback in this report to consult about ensuring accessibility and coordination of services between their two offices.

Moving beyond accommodations, we invite readers of this report to keep the key themes of this research in mind as we move towards making the university a more equitable and accessible space for all students. These include:

- Consent is a complex discussion. Educational campaigns and support services must articulate this complexity, and advocate for survivors while also supporting their sexual self-determination and agency.
- Those who experience sexual violence often feel that their bodies are not their own, or that other's will not believe them if they disclose. The lack of institutional leadership for challenging rape culture intensifies the alienation and erasure felt by survivors.
- The struggle to name sexual violence is not simply personal. Sexual violence happens in the context of structural violence – which is colonial, racial, intergenerational, economic, embodied, ableist, and gendered. Institutional transformation, including leadership for educational campaigns and support services, must articulate and navigate the intersection of personal and structural violence.
- Dominant masculinity and heteronormativity are key pillars of sexual violence. Men (cisgender, transgender and queer) are also absolutely necessary allies and potential leaders in challenging violence.
- As survivors have said so eloquently in these interviews: “our lives are not hypothetical discussions. We’re not rhetoric. And casually debating violence against us is really, really hurtful.” Survivors are already in our classrooms, already attempting to gain supports and accommodations, already asking us to listen.

How Brock University makes learning accessible to students who are dealing with the aftermath of sexual violence will say a lot about us, as an institution committed to creating an equitable and accessible learning environment, as a university which seeks to enable students to succeed, and as a community committed to challenging rape culture through sexual violence education and support. In all of this, those who are disproportionately vulnerable to sexual violence have a lot to teach us.

Not a Conclusion: Towards Survivance

What if we took our inspiration for shifting the systemic, cultural, and individual factors which normalize sexual violence from the critical insights available to us from Indigenous studies? Gerald Vizenor, the Anishinaabec cultural theorist who first popularized the idea of ‘survivance’ (variously, survival + resistance + endurance), has repeatedly asserted the importance of Indigenous narratives for illustrating the possibilities of renouncing “dominance, tragedy and victimry,” and for re-imagining communal survival without the “social and personal indulgence of victimization.”⁶⁸

What if the new educational and support initiatives we develop at Brock explicitly positioned local and transnational Indigenous stories – about gender, sex, and the body -- as the starting point to learn about the possibilities of resistance to dominant masculinities, heteronormativity and gendered racism by re-storying relationships between the land, our bodies and unequally positioned cultures?

What if we saw Indigenous, racialized and LGBTQ2+ youth, and those with mental health struggles, as leaders with important insights and resources for change in this process of re-storying the university? What if our educational and support initiatives facilitated inter-generational partnerships to mentor that leadership so that new curricular initiatives re-imagined Bystander and Upstander programs through the lens of those who are usually on the periphery of consent programming?

What if we re-thought ‘trauma informed’ approaches to working with survivors not simply as individual therapeutic interventions? Instead, what if we saw these as one tool in an arsenal of many – including feminist anti-violence activism, survivance literatures, anti-racist struggle, DIY media and artistic interventions, queer cultural production, Indigenous ceremony, and survivor centered policy change – that together might begin to chip away at systemic sexual violence and alienation?

What if we evaluated our movement towards institutional and community change not simply through checking off boxes on forms at the end of workshops and submitting annual reports? Instead, what if Brock University started to take leadership and invest in new partnerships for sexual and gender justice? What if we, together, contributed towards building diverse student/community movements that might continue to ask new questions: about the many possibilities for sexual laughter and pleasure beyond the binaries of consent, about the ways so many of us are complicit in hierarchies of violence, locally and transnationally, and, finally, about sustaining communities that can make academic learning possible?

Endnotes

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- ¹⁴ Sherene Razack, *Looking White People in the Eye: Gender, Race, and Culture in Courtrooms and Classrooms*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998, 14.
- ¹⁵ I want to acknowledge Sarah Mann, a former MA student in Geography at Brock, who was critical to articulating this methodology.
- ¹⁶ The research assistants (RAs) reached out to students through Facebook invitations and within their respective networks. None of the RAs for this project were part of the team of student activists who lead the protests against the university's handling of sexual violence in March 2016. Instead, the RAs were leaders within their own communities, i.e. with Indigenous, racialized, LGBTQ2+ people, and each had informal connections with students who both crossed these categories and who struggle with mental health concerns. All RAs received a full day of training in sexual violence response from the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton (SACHA) prior to hosting the focus groups.
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- ⁶² http://www.cacuss.ca/_Library/Provincial_Reports/NCHA-II_SPRING_2016_CANADIAN_REFERENCE_GROUP_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf.
- ⁶³ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/mental-health-ontario-campus-crisis-1.3771682>.
- ⁶⁴ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/mental-health-ontario-campus-crisis-1.3771682>.
- ⁶⁵ Personal correspondence from Carrie Heilbron, Oct. 2, 2016.
- ⁶⁶ Accessible Brock University (AODA) Policy, Draft, August 2016.
- ⁶⁷ <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-mental-health-health-disabilities-and-addictions>.
- ⁶⁸ Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*, Lincoln: Nebraska, 1999, vii.

Appendix A: List of expert interviewees

Julie Fennell, Health Promotion, Health Services, Brock University

Carol Jacobs, Elder-in-Residence, Aboriginal Student Services, Brock University

Farrah Khan, Sexual Violence Response Coordinator, Ryerson University

Hayley Moody, Sexual Violence Response Coordinator at Wilfrid Laurier University

Shannon Moore, Associate Professor, Child and Youth Studies, Brock University

Vivek Shraya, Diversity, Equity and Human Rights staff at George Brown College

Sherri Vansickle, Lecturer, Tecumseh Centre for Aboriginal Research and Education, Brock University

Sandra Wong, Aboriginal Academic Support Program Coordinator/Instructor, Aboriginal Student Services, Brock University

Appendix B: List of Recommendations

1. Brock make a significant investment in leadership on sexual and gender justice by hiring at least two new permanent staff to the Human Rights and Equity Office to ensure that this area is appropriately resourced with a diverse team providing pro-active and accessible education and support services on sexual violence in ways that are commensurate with our student population.
2. Brock develop and implement an employment equity hiring policy that would ensure that staff hiring across the university (but especially in HRES, Health Services, Counselling, Residence, Campus Security and Student Accessibility Services) prioritize hiring qualified candidates from equity seeking groups, especially those from Indigenous, racialized and LGBTQ2+ communities.
3. Brock develop sexuality, consent, bystander and first responder programs and curriculum that are fully intersectional and incorporate the perspectives of those who are disproportionately affected by sexual violence: Indigenous women, racialized women, LGBTQ2+ people and those who struggle with mental health issues.
4. Brock develop a diverse team of student peer educators (multi-racial, Indigenous, LGBTQ2+) who are trained to deliver intersectional sexuality, consent, and bystander education; and that this team be recognized with respectful remuneration.
5. Brock's education programs incorporate the leadership and participation of men (cisgendered, transgender and queer) and an analysis of masculinities as a key element in sexuality, consent and bystander education.
6. Brock set aside space, within its main campus, for a Women's and Trans Centre, or some similar organization, run by and for students, possibly under the auspices of the HRES. The intent of this space would be inclusionary, not simply for marginalized students to find each other, but to act as a "call-in" to the whole university community, and to open up space for alliance building and activism.
7. Brock authorize that time be set aside within staff work hours to attend first responder training to aid in the creation of a safer and more responsive campus for sexual violence survivors.
8. Faculty members participate in consent, bystander and first responder training, and discuss the implications of this analysis for dual relationships, their role as bystanders, and their pedagogical practice.
9. International students have access to proactive information regarding sexual violence policies and services; culturally appropriate educational initiatives and information about relevant academic accommodations that could better enable their academic success.
10. That Health services develop appropriate protocols to ensure nurses and/or physicians can inquire about the context and events that might have led to students psychological symptoms – instead of

students simply checking off a box on a form; and that this protocol also ensure students are offered a variety of referral options for counselling, accommodations, and peer support.

11. That Brock make a significant investment in hiring at least two new permanent staff to Counselling services to ensure that this area is appropriately resourced (commensurate with our student population) with a diverse team to respond to the complex and serious mental health needs that students are already presenting.
12. That Counselling services offer accessible (print and online) information about counsellors including areas of professional interest, expertise and experience. In addition, that Brock negotiate to ensure this same information be made available from counsellors at Lidkea Staub.
13. In recognition of the serious and complex nature of many of the mental health problems presented by students, that Counselling services consider re-evaluating their use of the brief psychotherapy model as the operational standard to ensure that students who are dealing with the aftermath of trauma know that they have access to sustained counselling support.
14. A protocol be developed, to be listed in all course syllabi, and announced in classes, to inform students that the university is committed to accommodating students who are dealing with the aftermath of sexual violence, and that students may request accommodations through the Sexual Violence Response and Education Coordinator, and have access to assignment extensions, free counselling and other support services, as needed.
15. The Human Rights and Equity Services staff members continue to meet with staff in Accessibility Services regarding the feedback in this report to consult about ensuring accessibility and coordination of services between their two offices.