



Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Annual Report

1 May 2021-30 April 2022

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Introduction:

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator (SVPR) provides education and prevention programming to the University; including information on sexual and intimate partner violence, how to respond to disclosures, reducing violence on campus, rape culture, *Step In Step Up: UR Against Gender-Based Violence* bystander program, and consent. SVPR is also responsible for ensuring that individuals that have or are experiencing violence are supported, empowered, and offered services in a trauma-informed, person-centered, and compassionate manner.

Effects of COVID-19 on Gender-Based Violence:

- COVID-19 negatively affected the rates of gender-based violence both in Canada and worldwide. There has been a 400% increase in calls made to Domestic Violence hot lines in Canada during COVID-19 (Oxfam).
- Social/physical isolation measures, employment interruptions, and financial pressures lead to increase in conflict with no way to escape. People were trapped with partners or others who are abusive or violent.
- Inability to access medical, police, court, and crisis services increased exposure to violence and/or delayed access to supports (*Western Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children*).

Current statistics on sexual violence in Regina:

- Regina Police Services (RPS) indicated that there has been a 70% increase in reported sexual assaults since 2012; and a 7% increase in reports made in 2021.

Highlights 2021-2022:

91 students/85 survivors of violence utilized SVPR services: an **increase of 23%** over last year.

Step In Step Up: UR Action Against Gender-Based Violence offered first training in October, 2021.

72 informative sessions offered with 1,084 staff, faculty, and students participating

Step In Step Up:

20 staff completed introductory training.

6 staff completed advanced training.

Step In Step Up:

37 students completed introductory training.

5 students completed advanced training.

In 2021-2022, SVPR office changed the way it responded to the needs of the University community by offering services, information, and supports on-line. *Zoom for Healthcare* was utilized as a safe and confidential means of connecting with those that have experienced violence as well as offering support groups, webinars, and trainings.

An unexpected positive outcome to the on-line platform is that individuals appreciated the ease, simplicity, and privacy of participating in either educational or supportive services through zoom. Moving forward, it will be important to offer individuals the opportunity to access supports and educational programming both on-line and in-person.

There was a 23% increase, 91 students/85 survivors, in individuals utilizing SVPR services over the last year. Those that responded to a client survey indicated that they were extremely satisfied with services with one person writing that they were “grateful for the support” and another saying that it “impacted their life for the better! A LOT”. Most individuals that sought supports experienced either sexual assault or intimate partner violence and wanted emotional support, information on resources, and active listening.

SVPR also offered 72 training/awareness sessions with 1,084 staff/faculty/students participating. *Step In Step Up: UR Action Against Gender-Based Violence* offered its first *Introductory Training* in October and *Advanced Training* sessions for both staff/faculty and students. Staff surveyed indicated that they “greatly appreciated the training”, finding it “engaging and interesting” with “The actual experiences they talked about hit home for me”.

It is also important to acknowledge the efforts of the University community in a number of initiatives and their support throughout the year; it takes cooperation and teamwork to create a safe and violence free environment, especially during difficult times.

Definitions:

Gender-based violence is violence perpetrated because of a person’s gender and is rooted in gender inequality. It is usually directed towards women/girls and people from LGBTQSA2 communities (World Health Organization, 2021).

Sexual violence/misconduct is any sexual act or act targeting a person’s sexuality, gender identity or gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature that is committed, threatened, or attempted against a person without the person’s consent. It includes but not limited to sexual assault; sexual stealing; sexual harassment; indecent or sexualized exposure; public masturbation; voyeurism; and knowingly publishing, distributing, , transmitting, selling, making available or advertising an intimate image of a person without their consent.

Sexual assault is intentional sexual contact or touching of another person with any object or body part without consent, or by force. It can include unwanted kissing, fondling, oral, anal sexual intercourse, or any other unwanted act of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature that is offensive, unsolicited, or unwelcome act of a sexual nature.

Activity Summary:

Prevention

This activity summary depicts the number of awareness programs offered since May 1, 2021, as well as the *Step In Step Up: UR Action Against Gender-Based Violence Training* (SISU) program that was developed this year. There was an unexpected increase in students choosing to participate in training or support groups when it was offered on-line.

In 2021-2022, there were 72 training opportunities offered by SVPR, up 5% from last year, with 1,084 student/staff/ faculty participating in a wide range of educational opportunities. The information sessions offered focused on disclosures, healthy relationships, consent, understanding sexual/intimate partner violence, SVPR

office, Sexual Violence Policy and Processes, and technology- based violence. There was also an increase in collaborative projects between the SVPR office and the University community; including URInternational, Residence Life, ESL, ta-tawâw Student Centre, and MAP.

SISU is a collaboration between SVPR and the Conduct Office which focuses on providing participants with information and skills needed to create a community that is free from all forms of gender-based violence. Informed by current research and promising violence prevention practices, SISU addresses rape culture and myths, consent, intervention styles, how to respond to disclosures, and community resources.

SISU offers both *Introductory* (1 hr) and *Advanced* training (6 hr) to students, staff and faculty with certificates and stickers provided to everyone that participates. The intent is to develop both awareness and a visual symbol of commitment towards creating a safe University environment. Future plans include developing a train the trainer curriculum for those students that are interested in facilitating programing and participating in promotional activities.

In October the first *SISU Introductory Training* was facilitated and since then 5 student (37 students) and 2 staff/faculty (20 staff/faculty) sessions and 2 *SISU Advanced Trainings* for students (5 students) and staff/faculty (6 staff) were offered. We received positive feedback from participants interested in being volunteers for the peer to peer program. One student wrote:

“I loved seeing women from all different academic backgrounds coming together and empowering one another on a topic so heavy such as gender-based violence.”

We also facilitated **SISU Week: Casual Conversations about Gender-based Violence** hosted by Residence Life focusing on gender roles, consent, and ending with a quiz game. It was well attended and comprised interesting conversations in a fun manner. The plan is to make it an annual fall event and eventually expanding it to other areas at the University.



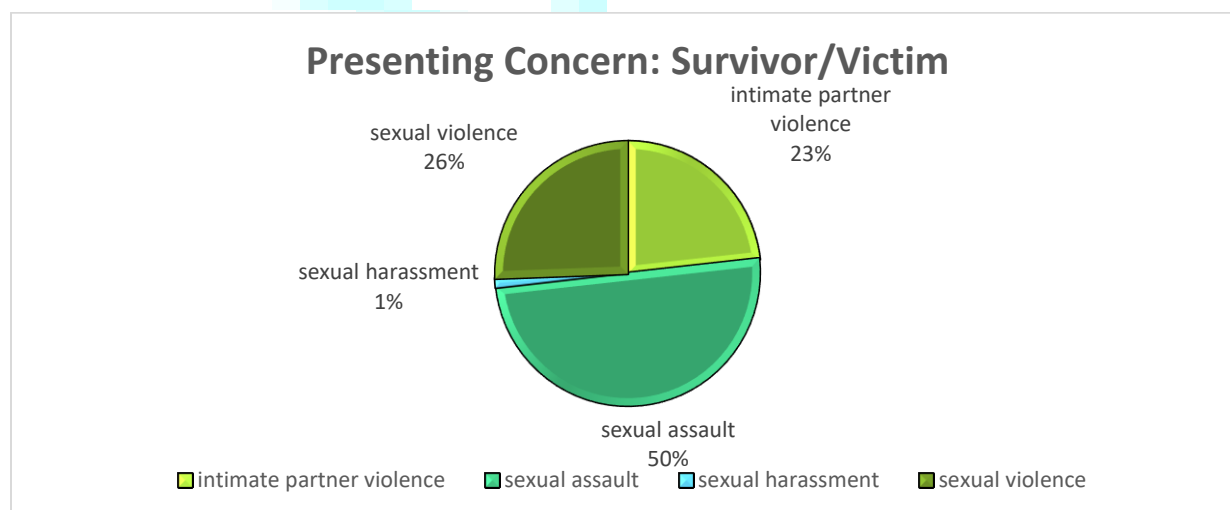
Response

The activity summary table indicates the number of individuals that have directly utilized the services of the SVPR: 91 individuals' utilized services (increase of 22%), 86 survivors/victims of violence and 5 others that were either supporting someone or students involved in alternative resolutions.

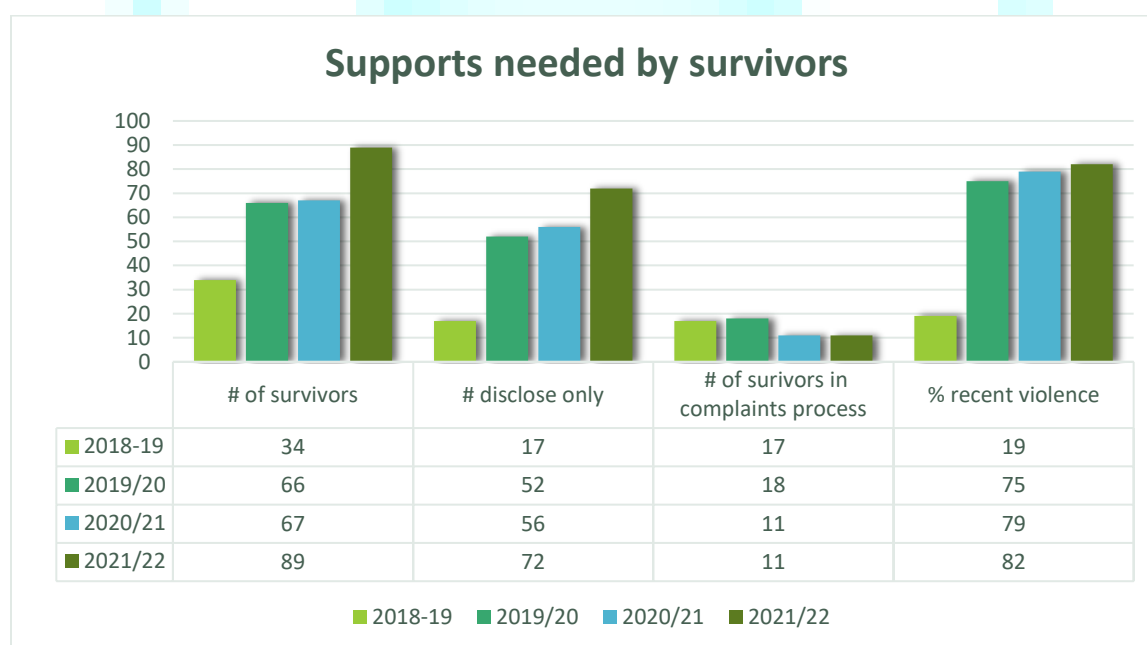
The key intervention concerns for survivors/victims were sexual assault (50%), intimate partner violence (21%), sexual violence (25%), and sexual harassment (1%). Intimate partner violence (ipv) /sexual assault were the leading reasons for service comprising 75% of all interventions with 93% of those individuals opting to disclose their experiences without reporting. 80% survivors of ipv/sexual assault disclosed recent violence and were requiring emotional supports, active listening, resources and referrals, and 9 needed accommodation letters. 2 individuals asked for support as they went through legal processes and testifying in court. One student indicated that she found the SVPR "helps me move on with events that happened and learn how to deal with them".

Survivors:

Intervention concern:	# of students
Intimate partner violence (IPV)	20
Sexual assault (SA)	43
Stalking	0
Sexual harassment	1
Sexual violence	22



SVPR office saw a significant shift with individuals disclosing recent violence with the expressed need for support in healing. The growing number of students with complex trauma required significantly more assistance than in past years. On average survivors/victims attended 14 or more appointments, this does not include practical supports such as meetings, accommodations, accompaniment to appointments, advocating for services etc. Statistics suggest that survivors/victims are accessing supports sooner in the healing process, sometimes within weeks, with complex needs. Therefore the increase in students that are seeking supports just after either experiencing violence or leaving their abuser tends to support faster healing.



Nature of Intervention: Report or Disclosure

There were three options for individuals utilizing the office of SVPR; disclose only, informal investigation, or formal investigation.

The role of SVPR office is to support and advocate for survivor/victim in a trauma-informed and client-centered approach. This perspective recognizes not only the right but also the benefits of individuals having control over their own healing journey, which may or may not include reporting their violence. Consequently, individuals have the choice as to whether to disclose or report gender-based violence. See policy for exceptions.

Individuals that wanted to disclose without making a report often want emotional support, accompaniment to appointments, information, understanding, and/or accommodations.

87% survivors/victims accessing services disclosed only.

93% survivors of sexual assault or ipv chose to disclose only.

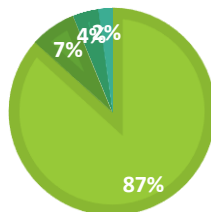
Many individuals who experience gender-based violence choose not to participate in the reporting processes. This is largely due to the nature of gender-based violence, societal pressures to stay silent, distrust of systems or processes, and desire to “move past” their violence. Changing attitudes and beliefs around gender-based violence and increase in awareness of reporting options may translate into an increase in reporting. However, survivor/victim reporting hesitancy is a societal problem rather than something that only occurs in Post-Secondary Institutions with 92% of all survivors/victims refusing to make police reports. Therefore, making reporting easier and more trauma-informed, promoting the processes are important while still recognizing a survivors/victims often choose not to report.

Conduct Coordinator and an Investigative Team complete *Formal Investigations* involving students with outcomes commonly determined by the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and depending on the incident possibly an Adjudication Panel. Conduct Coordinator can also complete *Formal Investigations: Informal Process with Alternative Resolution Outcome* when a complainant and respondent agree upon a solution, this typically does not occur in cases of sexual assault. *Alternative Resolutions* may also occur when the complainant initially makes a report and then decides not to continue with the formal investigative processes. Respectful University Services can also complete *Formal or Informal Investigations* involving staff/faculty/students with outcomes determined through their processes. SVPR’s role in investigations is as a support and advocate for the complainant.

Formal Investigations completed at the University this year, 6 *Formal Investigations*: 2 sexual violence cases found to be unsubstantiated, 1 sexual assault case where complainant declined to proceed, 1 intimate partner violence case substantiated, 1 sexual harassment case substantiated and 1 sexual violence case in progress. 5 of the formal investigations were completed by the Conduct Coordinator and 1 by the Respectful University Coordinator. There were 4 *Formal Investigation: Alternative Resolution Outcome* this year, 3 sexual harassment and 1 sexual violence. There was also 2 informal consults with students both concerning sexual harassment and in both cases support provision was offered.

NATURE OF THE INTERVENTION

■ Disclosures ■ Formal Investigation
■ Alternative Resolution ■ Informal resolution



A significant number of the survivor/victims that utilized the SVPR office did not experience the violence on-campus. However, the effects of off-campus violence appear on-campus when survivors/victims struggle to succeed academically (inability to concentrate, triggered in class, depression, anxiety...), abusers attempt to contact them on-campus, academic accommodations, safety planning, support services are needed (court system, medical systems...).

The types of supports and information given in 2020-2021 (including but not limited to):

- Emotional support.
- Information regarding on and off campus supports.
- Psychoeducational information- especially making sense of trauma and their experiences.
- Concrete aid; helping to complete police statements, taking students to police station, explaining legal papers, attending court with survivor, contacting shelters, finding basic hygiene products...
- Assistance during reporting and interviewing processes.
- Academic accommodations.
- Advocacy.
- Information regarding university and criminal processes and their reporting options.

Consults:

SVPR and the Sexual Violence Policy encourage staff and faculty to contact the office when they have received a disclosure. The purpose of this contact is threefold; support and advice to the individual that has received the disclosure; assures that resources are offered to the victim/survivor; finally, it provides the University with a limited but important portrayal of sexual violence issues and concerns affecting the campus community. Staff and faculty are also encouraged to contact the office if they have any questions or concerns regarding gender-based violence. SVPR consulted with 63 staff/faculty seeking information and/or advice in matters concerning gender-based violence. There was a significant growth (increase of 20%) in the number in individuals utilizing SVPR for consultations, support, advice and/or information. Counselling Services, Student Conduct Office, Security, Respectful University Services, Student Success Centre, staff/ faculty, Residence and ta-tawâw Student Centre all utilized SVPR services.

The types of supports and information given in 2020-21 (including but not limited to):

- Information regarding on and off campus supports.
- Information regarding university and criminal processes including reporting options.
- Information regarding sexual assault and intimate partner violence, connections to shelters, legal information, technology safety/ spyware etc.
- Support and advice on how to respond to a disclosure.

Community Building:

SVPR works within the partnership model, seeking and nurturing collaborative relationships with internal and external community agencies and groups. Through partnerships promising practices can be explored and deepened.

SVPR Advisory Committee was created with the primary objective of aiding in the design and implementation of the awareness plan for the University. Members of the Advisory Committee include representatives from Student Success, (ta-tawâw Student Centre, Residence, Student Success, Accessibility, Counselling Services), URSU (Women's Centre, URPrize), Respectful University Services, Security and students.

SISU Working Group consists of representatives from Conduct Office, Respectful University Services, Student Success, URSU, Residence, students and staff/faculty. The five year plan includes developing a curriculum, branding, volunteers, and opportunities to offer unique programming for specific groups/faculty/teams etc.

SVPR has also been able to support a number of initiatives within the city of Regina. SVPR, Regina City Police and the Regina Sexual Assault Centre complete VACR (Violence Against Women Case Review) which are quarterly file reviews of all sexual assault files where no charges are laid. This initiative is funded in part by the government and is being used as a prototype for other Saskatchewan communities. The intention is to support police in creating promising practices in investigative processes of sexual violence files and to create a system that works better for survivors. SVPR also maintains a strong connection with YWCA, a respected organization that offers supports to women that have experienced intimate partner violence and homelessness. The office also has strong connections with Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan (PATHS) and Regina Sexual Assault Center.

SVPR is involved in a number of provincial and national initiatives that have the potential to deepen the work done by the University. The office is a member of the Western Provinces Community of Practice for PSI with a focus on offering support and education on promising practices, including universities throughout BC, Alberta and Manitoba. Finally, SVPR has completed their work with *Seeds of Possibilities: Courage to Act*. This is a nationwide organization that brought together experts in the field to both create and inform promising practices.

Trends:

- There has been an increase in occurrences of intimate partner violence in Canada and worldwide over the last two years which has been made worse by the isolation of COVID-19.
- There has also been an increase in sexual assaults reported to the Regina Police Services as a result of the Me Too# movement, awareness activities/events, and public calls for social change.
- Recent Statistics Canada report on the *Experiences of Unwanted Sexualized Behaviours and Sexual Assault at Postsecondary Schools in Canadian Provinces, 2019* revealed that students, especially female identifying, experience high rates of sexual assault and sexualized violence while attending Post-Secondary Institutions. It also reported that most sexual violence occurs at least partially in the public realm.
- Canadian research suggests significant unwanted sexualized behaviours occur at postsecondary schools that are not necessarily criminal in nature but impact both the environment and experience of those attending the institution. Examples include sexualized/sexist jokes, catcalls, unwanted sexual comments, actions or advances.
- The impact of sexualized violence on Post- Secondary Institutions is that it creates an unsafe and hostile work/study environment for many students.

- The Statistics Canada study illustrates the need and importance of bystander programming and the necessity of developing both skills and knowledge around gender-based violence and how to create safe environment for students/staff/faculty.

Issues:

The focus of SVPR in 2021/2022 has been on supporting students/faculty/staff as they cope with gender-based violence during COVID-19.

- Students/staff/faculty have been isolated over the last year, those that have accessed supports are often living at home with parents, alone, or living with their abuser. Each of these circumstances have their own set of difficulties and barriers to service. As more and more students return to campus there is a possibility that SVPR will see an increase in those accessing services.
- Some individuals are accessing services with more complex trauma because they have been waiting to access in-person supports or they finally feel safe to begin their healing journey
- Social media continues to have a profound effect on the experiences of students and how they understand their experiences. Technology-based violence, pornography, and social media platforms have changed how individuals both communicate and define their experiences. Over the last year, SVPR has been speaking with individuals that have experienced threatening, bullying, and abusive behaviours on-line. Creating safety plans with a component on social media and technology-based violence is particularly critical.
- There has been an increased awareness in the issue of gender-based violence which has led to more people speaking out and an increase in interest on the topic. Therefore, SVPR office has seen an increase in people/groups utilizing services and supports.

Future:

The SVPR office was established 4 years ago and since then has been working towards building accessible services, awareness programming, collaborations, and visibility within the University community.

COVID-19 has been both a challenge and an opportunity for the University and SVPR office in particular. Creating opportunities to connect with students/ staff/faculties has meant exploring and altering service delivery. Many individuals expressed appreciation for offering on-line webinars, awareness opportunities, and individual supports. SVPR has been able to offer more services to those that could not have access to supports in the past, including those outside of

Regina, people with disabilities, and/or those that did not feel comfortable attending programming/supports in person.

Strength and Self-Care is a support group that focuses on building capacity for survivors/victims in the first phase of healing. Students appreciated the on-line groups because they were private, individuals could participate from the safety of their homes, and it was accessible to those outside of Regina. Moving forward, SVPR will expand the group both in-person and on-line as way to meeting the needs of more students.

Members of the SVPR Advisory Committee will meet twice a year in order to insure promising practices in prevention programming are being created and/or continued. It also ensures that collaborations are continued and deepened.

SVPR will continue to build and maintain collaborative relationships with faculties, departments and offices.

Accessing sexual violence supports and processes, such as investigations and accommodations should be easy for the survivor/victim. Collaborations and consultations are an important means of creating and maintaining trauma-informed processes that are easy to access and open to all. SVPR has created and will continue to deepen close and collaborative working relationships with a number of areas within the University, including the Conduct and Respectful University Services.

SISU will be expanded over the next few years, to include more visuals, trainings, and advocacy projects. There is a plan to build a train the trainer program with the aim of creating peer to peer program for students.

The goal of SISU is to shift societal norms and create an environment that is safe and free of gender-based violence. An initial environmental scan will be completed in the fall and then regular implementation of the scans, every 2-3 years, should be implemented. Ethics approval has been given to the project so an environment scan will be completed in the fall of 2022 with a focus on peer norms, campus climate, consent, and bystander invention.

It is important that the SVPR office has a visual presence and is accessible to all students/staff/faculty. Designing opportunities to meet and build relationships with students outside of the office will enhance SVPR visibility and access to services. This can include offering casual conversations, learning opportunities, events, and office hours in a variety of locations.

The Sexual Violence/Misconduct Policy is being revisited and modifications made recognizing best practices are being considered. In collaboration with Student Conduct and Respectful University Services an environmental scan of other policies in Canada has been completed. As a result it was determined that addressing the need for language that speaks specifically to the risks of engaging in relationships where there is a power imbalance should be included in the revisions. There should also be changes to the Conflict of Interest form that clearly outlines the risks involved in being in a relationship where power imbalances exist.

Year in Summary:

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office focused on building awareness programming and response services that can be offered both on-line and in person. Staff/students/faculty appreciated services made available in a manner that best suited their needs, comfort, and safety. The adaptations made lead to an increase in individuals utilizing support services, awareness opportunities, and events. There was also a deepening in collaboration, partnerships, and acceptance of the office by the University community. SVPR also focused on building a brand for both the office and SISU which have the potential of making both visually recognizable which will be used when students are on campus. Moving forward, SVPR will build more opportunities to communicate with the campus community and expand SISU program. This year SVPR concentrated on making services more accessible, visible, and focused on the particular needs of University partners. Furthermore, it continued to focus on offering trauma-informed supports to those that have experienced gender-based violence. The intention of the office is to create a campus community that is aware of gender-based violence, is committed to its prevention through cultural change, and support those that seek supports.

