

About Sexual Violence
Awareness & Prevention:

Teaching-Staff TOOLKIT

For supporting efforts on campus to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence at McGill.

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McGill is located on the unceded lands which have traditionally served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst diverse Indigenous people. The Kanien'kehà:ka, a founding nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Anishinabeg are recognized as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters in which Tiohtià:ke/Montreal is located. [Learn more](#) about the land you're on and commit to taking action to support the ongoing resistance and thriving of local Indigenous communities.

Recognizing the history of where you are is important and becoming increasingly common practice when posting events and activities across Canada. [Here are a few tips](#) to remember if you want to make a land acknowledgement before a class presentation, in a written document, or when hosting an event.

Executive Summary

Sexual violence remains a critical challenge to all university campuses, and McGill University is no exception. In the fall of 2017, the first version of McGill's Policy against Sexual Violence (The Policy) was adopted by Senate and revised in March 2019 to reflect the needs of our community and changes in provincial legislation. The Policy stipulates that "The University shall take proactive, visible measures to provide education, guidelines and dissemination of information relating to Sexual Violence and varied impacts of Sexual Violence through a variety of means, as appropriate."¹ In November 2017, The Act to Prevent and Fight Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions (Chapter P22.1) was adopted by the province of Québec. The provincial legislation specifies that all higher education institutions in the province of Québec must implement training for all members of their community and commit resources to addressing and preventing sexual violence.

Every community member can help make efforts to shift McGill University's culture in a positive direction. This toolkit is one of many McGill initiatives to raise awareness and increase support for people impacted by sexual violence; it is intended as a resource for Teaching Staff who wish to engage further in changing the culture at our university.

The classroom is a key space where Teaching Staff can foster a more inclusive, supportive and compassionate learning environment. The Toolkit describes a number of strategies that can be used in and outside of the classroom, to prevent different forms of sexual violence on our campuses and to support people impacted. Awareness and action are key to preventing sexual and gender-based violence on university campuses.²

In this Toolkit, **6 strategies** are identified to help address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence in our community.

We appreciate your willingness to engage with this toolkit to help McGill in its efforts to support survivors and reduce sexual and gender-based violence in our community, and to improve the quality of education for all.

We hope you find the suggestions useful and beneficial to your professional practice.

Thank you for a making a difference on campus!



STRATEGY #1

Raise Awareness

There are a number of ways in which Teaching Staff can raise awareness of what constitutes sexual and gender-based violence and articulate that they are unacceptable. It is important to note that 'violence' often manifests in less obvious ways in the classroom, such as through comments, jokes and non-verbal behaviour.³ These behaviours reflect attitudes, beliefs and assumptions that affect the degree to which the classroom environment is experienced as inclusive.⁴ Awareness can also be raised through the use of different media and through direct student engagement.⁵



STRATEGY #2

Lead by Example: Role Model How to Be an Active Bystander

One of the key roles of an active bystander is to interrupt and prevent harmful social norms from being perpetuated. These can emerge during classroom discussions and in online platforms. It is important not to ignore such messages and to address them when they arise. Taking action conveys the message that inappropriate comments and gestures will not be tolerated. Conversely, saying and doing nothing can perpetuate the belief that sexual violence does not exist and is not a problem. There are a number of ways that you can become an active bystander: identify and name the behaviour as problematic; redirect the discussion to another topic; follow-up with the person who made the comment as well as the person(s) to whom the comment was directed. While responding, it is important not to shame or isolate participant(s) involved in the interaction; faculty must take into consideration how public their response should be.



STRATEGY #3

Have a Classroom Commitment

Include a statement regarding inclusion and respect on course outlines and on MyCourses. This statement could explain how inclusion and respect foster a sense of safety, and articulate what the rules of engagement are, particularly when there are diverse opinions. In addition, you may also be able to have a conversation during class about various topics related to sexual violence and include content warnings prior to assigning sensitive material. Content warnings are increasingly used to alert readers, viewers, or participants about potentially distressing material. This gives people impacted by sexual and gender-based violence and others an opportunity to prepare themselves ahead of time and to proceed with caution.



STRATEGY #4

Training and Participation

Supporting people impacted by sexual violence is one of the main components of an effective sexual violence prevention strategy for university and college campuses.⁶ The Act to Prevent and Fight Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions in Quebec (Law P22.1) specifies that all members of the university community participate in mandatory training. [It Takes All of Us: Creating a Campus Community Free of Sexual Violence](#) is an online learning program at McGill that strives to increase awareness of sexual violence. The training is mandatory for everyone at McGill. To learn more about the program, visit www.mcgill.ca/sv-education. Further education is available through McGill's Office for Sexual Violence, Response, Support, and Education (see the [OSVRSE website](#)). The OSVRSE offers workshops and trainings on topics such as how to support those who disclose and becoming an active bystander. These sessions can be tailored to meet the needs of departments, faculties, research centres/institutes, and classrooms.



STRATEGY #5

Support Students Who Disclose

Choosing to disclose a personal experience of sexual violence is never an easy decision. There are many barriers that exist when deciding to come forward about an experience of sexual violence. Some of the main barriers are **not being believed, not being taken seriously, and being blamed for the harm**. Another barrier is the increased risk of stigmatization, especially for racialized people, Indigenous women and girls, people with disabilities, trans women, and men who disclose sexual violence. This section highlights the possible impacts of sexual violence, common reactions experienced by people who receive a disclosure of sexual violence, key ways to show support, things to avoid, information on filing a report, and resources available to survivors and their support people.



STRATEGY #6

Understand the Regulations Governing Student-Staff Relationships

McGill's [Policy Against Sexual Violence](#) prohibits Teaching Staff from entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with students over whom they have authority or influence; relationships where the member of the Teaching Staff is in the student's Faculty or where they may have authority or influence over the student are governed by the Regulation on Conflict of Interest⁷. In the latter case, members of the Teaching Staff have a duty to disclose that relationship immediately to the head of their academic unit (see guidelines on [McGill Secretariat's website](#)). Failure to do so constitutes cause for discipline. This section highlights Teaching Staff obligations and how to file a conflict of interest.

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Is Sexual and Gender-Based Violence a Concern at McGill?

McGill University's Policy on Sexual Violence defines sexual violence as follows:

"Sexual Violence" means sexual act or acts targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression that is committed, threatened, or attempted against a person without the person's consent and may occur in person, in writing, by phone, or by any means of communication, including online and social media. Sexual Violence includes:

- i) sexual assault, meaning sexual contact with another person without that person's consent;
- ii) sexual harassment, meaning Conduct of a Sexual Nature (A) whereby sexual activity: 1. is made an explicit or implicit term or condition of an individual's employment or status in a course, program, or activity; or 2. is used as a basis for an employment or educational decision affecting an individual; or (B) the effect of which is to impair that person's work or educational performance where it is known or ought to be known that the conduct is unwelcome[...]"⁸

Sexual and gender-based violence can affect anyone. However, statistics show that gender non-conforming persons, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, and racialized individuals are more likely to experience sexual and gender-based violence.⁹ First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and girls, women who are new to Canada, sex workers, trans women, women with mental health conditions, and women with disabilities experience higher rates of sexual violence.¹⁰

Men also experience sexual violence and can encounter numerous barriers when deciding to come forward and seek support.¹¹

Sexual violence is also influenced by intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination, including but not limited to sexism, racism, heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism, and classism. These forms of oppression can compound the effects of sexual violence and further isolate survivors/victims from accessing and receiving support and being believed.

On North American campuses, there is a higher risk of sexual violence during the first eight weeks of classes.¹²

The impacts of sexual violence can include, but are not limited to, recurring thoughts and nightmares, hypervigilance, withdrawing from social situations, declining academic performance, difficulty concentrating in classrooms, and increased intentions or decisions to leave university.^{13 14 15}

Given these general statistics, we expect that this reality is reflected in our community at McGill.

HOW CAN TEACHING STAFF MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Changing the campus climate is a substantial endeavor and requires the support of everyone in our community. You can help make a difference by committing to create inclusive spaces at McGill, where acts of sexual and gender-based violence will not be tolerated.

The following **6 strategies** outline possible techniques, tools and resources to help you address sexual and gender-based violence. **You may choose to apply one or all suggested steps in your place of work.** The steps are not meant to be used in any particular order or sequence. While several of these strategies apply to all forms of harm, violence, and discrimination, for the purpose of this toolkit, we will be focusing specifically on sexual and gender-based violence. For additional information or comments regarding this document, please contact the Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education (OSVRSE) osvrse@mcgill.ca or visit their website at www.mcgill.ca/osvrse.



STRATEGY #1 Raise Awareness

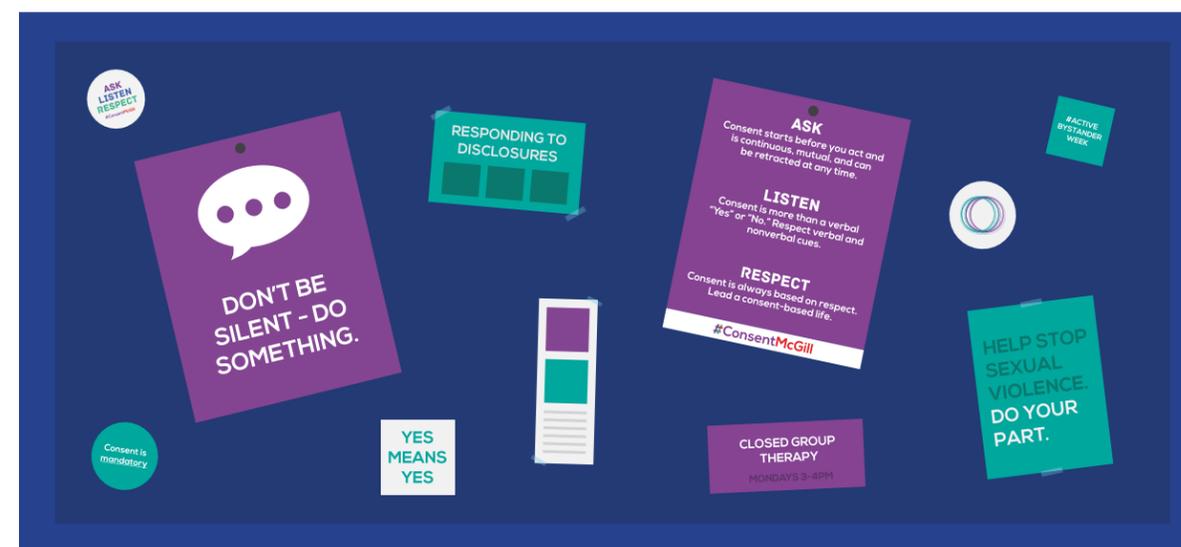
There are a number of ways in which Teaching Staff can raise awareness of what constitutes sexual and gender-based violence and articulate that they are unacceptable. It is important to note that 'violence' often manifests in less obvious ways in-person and online classrooms, such as through comments, jokes and nonverbal behaviour.¹⁶ These behaviours reflect attitudes, beliefs and assumptions that affect the degree to which the classroom environment is experienced as inclusive.¹⁷ Awareness can also be raised through the use of different media and through direct student engagement.¹⁸

IMPORTANT MESSAGING:

- Put up posters and stickers in your office and on departmental/faculty bulletin boards.
- Pin poster images and resource lists to online discussion boards.
- Free awareness raising and promotional material are available through the Office for Sexual Violence Response Support and Education (OSVRSE) and the Sexual Assault Center of the McGill Students' Society (SACOMSS).
- Include the [Toolkit PowerPoint slides](#) in your class presentation to discuss the topic and raise awareness (see the Appendix for resources).
- Include contact information for [available support resources](#) in your course syllabus and/or in MyCourses.
- Promote training opportunities for your students and colleagues (see Training section for some of the available options).
- Diversify your feed and connect with social media accounts that address sexual and gender-based violence and content related to decolonization, anti-racism, and anti-oppression.

Get Your Students Involved

- When possible and if appropriate for your class and the class content, provide students with an opportunity to engage with topics focusing on sexual and gender-based violence through assignments that critically address/discuss this topic in your discipline.
- Promote out-of-the-classroom learning opportunities where students can attend lectures, workshops/symposia, theatre productions, comedy shows, etc. that focus on different forms of oppression and harm.
- Promote journals, podcasts, TV shows and movies that are part of the conversation on sexual and gender-based violence awareness and prevention.
- If appropriate, engage your students in a class activity to discuss the realities of sexual violence, how to become an active bystander and respond appropriately to disclosures.





STRATEGY #2

Lead by example

ROLE MODEL HOW TO BE AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

An **active bystander** takes the initiative to help in situations concern and makes a positive difference before, during and after the event and situation takes place. Taking action also opens up a space for others to get involved and/or help and make a difference.

Being an active bystander applies to in-person and online interactions. If you witness any behaviour or situation that suggests someone may be uncomfortable or experiencing harm or violence, take a moment to assess the situation and decide whether and how you can interrupt the flow. If an intervention is not possible at that moment, check in with the person(s) involved afterwards to:

1. address the problematic behaviour or comment
2. enquire how those impacted are doing
3. let them know that there is [support and resources](#) for them

Taking action conveys the message that inappropriate comments and gestures will not be tolerated. Conversely, saying and doing nothing perpetuates the belief that sexual and gendered violence does not exist and is not a problem.¹⁹

HOW TO BECOME AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER: ADAPTED 5 STEP DECISION-MAKING MODEL

1. Notice the Event

- Whether in-person or online, it's important to be aware of your surroundings.
- Online, be aware of comments, statements, background images/interactions, information and images being shared.

2. Interpret the Event as a problem

- Gauge what is happening: Can someone use your assistance to address or leave a particular situation?
- Is someone behaving in a way that feels inappropriate, coercive, or harrassing?

- Is someone making offensive jokes, comments, or sharing non-consensual or harmful images?
- Even if no one else is intervening, it does not mean that you shouldn't!

3. Take personal responsibility to intervene

- While it can sometimes be difficult and uncomfortable to intervene, it is important to take action during or right after the event occurs.

4. If appropriate/possible, decide how you are going to interrupt the situation at that moment (use one of the 3Ds below)

- Take a moment to think about the best ways to safely and effectively interrupt and, if necessary, remove someone from a situation.
- Do not put yourself in danger or at risk.
- If intervening in the Event is not possible, follow up with the person(s) involved after.

5. Intervene

- See our next section for different steps you can take.

CAN YOU INTERRUPT THE SITUATION?

Select the option that best suits the moment and that ensures your own safety.



Direct: Directly intervene in the moment to prevent a problematic situation from happening, such as someone making harmful or inappropriate comments during class.



Delegate: Seek help from another individual. This could range from another faculty member, a friend or a department chair to a campus official such as a member of Security Services.



Distract: Interrupt the situation without directly confronting the offender. Examples include asking the person being targeted if you know them from somewhere, if they've been enjoying your class or if they know what time it is.

When in doubt or when you cannot intervene in the moment, **do something**. This can include: following up with the person impacted to see how they are doing, asking them if they would like you to intervene, and/or following up with the person who engaged in the harmful action. You can also contact your Departmental Chair, your Associate Dean (Student Affairs), and/or the OSVRSE for additional support at any time.

BEING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

Here are a few examples that could require an Active Bystander response. For all of the following situations, decide if, when and how you will intervene: publicly or privately with the person causing harm and/or with the individual affected. Consider the impact the situation might have on the person affected and those around them who overheard the harmful statement(s) or witnessed the harmful behaviour.

- You witness increased withdrawal, avoidance or nervousness in a student, colleague or friend.
- You hear statements ridiculing, demeaning or belittling others in your classroom or within your workspace
- You notice a student association poster promoting an event that is demeaning or sexist in nature.
- You see someone engaging in aggressive, intimidating, or threatening behaviour.
- You overhear a conversation about a colleague's relationship with a student.
- You overhear the comment or stance that power-based sexual violence is "none of my business".
- A co-worker starts talking about a recent high-profile sexual violence or intimate partner violence case and blames the victim for what happened.
- You think a student or colleague is in an abusive or unhealthy relationship.



Intervene at the earliest point possible.

Look for early warning signs of trouble!

Intervening does not necessarily mean confronting.

Ask for support!

CHALLENGES YOU MAY FACE TO BECOMING AN ACTIVE BYSTANDER

Common barriers to taking action may include:

- feeling ill-equipped to get involved
- being busy/overworked or feeling shy
- being concerned about backlash and repercussions
- seeming unprofessional in the workplace
- your personal identity may put you at further risk of harm if you intervene

It is important to remember that your safety is essential when deciding whether to get involved, and that it is not always possible to be an Active Bystander. When these barriers arise, you can seek additional support from the [Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education](#).

Finally, in cases where a conversation may need to be terminated abruptly due to participant discomfort, it is important to follow up with the students involved. Breaking the silence may not be easy but remember, students are counting on you to do so.

You begin the following class by stating that you were reflecting on a comment made during the previous class. You then challenge the assumptions embedded in this comment by providing evidence to the contrary. It is essential that the comment be acknowledged and addressed, as inaction can cause even more distress to students who were affected by it. Furthermore, you can utilize platforms such as MyCourses to post supporting research, articles, papers, etc., to help dispel misconceptions broaden students' knowledge, and encourage reflection.

For more information on facts surrounding sexual violence visit www.mcgill.ca/osvrse/about-sexual-violence

HOW TO BREAK THE SILENCE

The classroom can sometimes be a space where students make remarks or statements about rape culture and gender-based or sexual violence that can be harmful.

Example A: a student who is an adult survivor of child sexual abuse participates in a classroom discussion in which a comment is made stating that if an assault truly happened, its legitimacy should be questioned, particularly if the disclosure or report was not made immediately. The student finds the discussion extremely painful and challenging and approaches you after class asking you to do something.

Upon reflection, you recognize that you could have addressed the comment in the moment by stating any of the following:

"Actually, the time lapse between an assault and disclosure or reporting varies tremendously and has nothing to do with the validity of the allegation."²¹

"This is a common misconception but there is no empirical evidence supporting this."



STRATEGY #3

Have a classroom commitment

Imagine the impact if every class created a commitment to inclusion and respect! Include a statement regarding inclusion and respect on course outlines and on MyCourses. This statement could explain how inclusion and respect foster a sense of safety, and articulate what the rules of engagement are, particularly when there are diverse opinions. Information about respectful conduct in online spaces is important to include. In addition, you may also be able to have a conversation during class about various topics related to sexual violence, and include content warnings prior to assigning sensitive material.

Content warnings are increasingly used to alert readers, viewers, or participants about potentially distressing material. This gives people impacted by sexual and gender-based violence and others an opportunity to prepare themselves ahead of time and to proceed with caution. Content warnings can be included in course outlines, posted on MyCourses and sent out by email ahead of time.

INCLUDE A RESPECT AND INCLUSION STATEMENT IN YOUR OUTLINE

A written commitment can be created by an individual professor, a department, or a Faculty. The statement below is one example used at McGill.

Safe(r) Space: We are committed to nurturing a space where students, teaching assistants, lecturers, and professors can all engage in the exchange of ideas and dialogue, without fear of being made to feel unwelcome or unsafe on account of biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race/ethnicity, religion, linguistic and cultural background, age, physical or mental ability, or any other aspect integral to one's personhood. We therefore recognize our responsibility, both individual and collective, to strive to establish and maintain an environment wherein all interactions are based on empathy and mutual respect for the person, acknowledging differences of perspectives, free from judgment, censure, and/or stigma. (From the [Faculty of Education, McGill University](#))

ADDITIONAL POINTS TO CONSIDER IN YOUR MESSAGE:

- That you value a student's dignity and well-being
- Your commitment to anti-black racism, anti-oppression and anti-discrimination
- Additional resources related to equity at McGill can be found [here](#)

INCLUDE A LIST OF RESOURCES IN YOUR STATEMENT

An example of such a statement can read as follows: "As the instructor for this course, I am committed to providing an inclusive learning environment. Sometimes students experience barriers to learning due to challenges related to their physical or mental health, diagnosed disabilities, and/or experience of sexual violence."

Students who are concerned about their mental health can contact [McGill's Student Wellness Hub](#) to access counselling or psychiatric services.

Students who would like to have disability-related accommodations considered should contact the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) at 514.398.6009.

Students who have experienced sexual violence and would like to discuss what supports are available to them should contact the [Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education \(OSVRSE\)](#) at 514.398.3954.

For peer related support you can contact:

[Peer Support Centre of McGill](#) at 647.558.0588

[McGill Students' NightLine](#) at 514.398.6246

[The Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Student Society](#) at 514.398.8500

THE POWER OF OFFICE HOURS

To ensure that everyone entering your space feels welcomed and at ease, we have a couple of tips to keep in mind when hosting students.

- Hold office hours during the day; avoid any evening or weekend hours.
- Whenever possible, keep your door open, unless a student is disclosing and an agreement is made to have the door closed.
- Offer telephone or virtual office hours as an alternative means of communication.
- When hosting virtual office hours, consider if other people can overhear the conversation on both ends of the discussion as this will affect confidentiality
- If you do not have an office space, seek to meet the student in a mutually agreed upon location such as a public or common area on campus, or ask to borrow a colleague's office space for the meeting. In-person office hours off-campus should be avoided.

START A CONVERSATION

The resources found in this toolkit and beyond are meant to help empower you to start engaging in these discussions in your places of work. In addition, the OSVRSE is available to help facilitate and guide these discussions upon request.

If you feel equipped, facilitate a discussion. These may include the following (see glossary of terms for more information):

- definitions of consent, sexual and gender-based violence
- what constitutes an inclusive space
- what gender pronouns are and how to use them
- how harm can manifest within classrooms e.g. jokes, dismissive or disrespectful comments about marginalized groups, stereotyping, gender-biased statements
- misconceptions that are perpetuated in our society
- available resources on and off campus
- the various barriers survivors/victims may experience when trying to access resources and support
- the impacts of sexual and gender-based violence
- ways that some people have more/less privilege in the classroom and the university. To learn more about power, privilege and unconscious bias, please consult the [Equity Team in the Office of the Provost](#) at McGill.
- an action plan to address moments where you, your students, or your colleagues may be breaking your rules of inclusive/safe(r) spaces

Invite students to contribute their ideas so that they are engaged in setting the tone and climate for the classroom.

USE OF CONTENT WARNINGS

Consider the use of content warnings:

Content warnings are increasingly used in movies, podcasts and media sources. Similarly, content warnings should be considered when there are academic materials that may be emotionally triggering. This is especially important when the content in question is less relevant to the subject matter of the course and its learning outcomes. The purpose of these warnings is to provide advance notice to students impacted by trauma. Knowing what is coming in advance can help to reduce anxiety/panic attacks or reliving a traumatic experience.

The advance notice can also allow for a student to request an accommodation or take some space from the material if needed. Some examples of topics that may require content warnings are sexual assault and harassment, police brutality, genital mutilation, discrimination based on gender or personal identity, etc.

EXAMPLES OF CONTENT WARNINGS:

- The following presentation contains information on sexual assault and abuse which may be emotionally difficult and potentially triggering for some.
- Some of the following images are graphic in nature and might be disturbing to some viewers.
- The following chapter contains information on (...) and may be emotionally unsettling to some readers.

For the above content warnings, you can include support resources and/or a reminder that students can contact you should they experience any difficulty with the assignment or material.



Whether in meetings or classrooms, here are two examples of 'actions' you can take to uphold classroom and/or departmental commitments.

Do not ignore the situation(s). For example, if a person in your classroom or workspace makes a problematic joke or harmful comment at the expense of others' sex, gender, class, sexual orientation, race, or other aspect of identity:

- You can point out the safe(r) space agreement and explain that comments and jokes should not interfere with students' rights to feel safe in the classroom.
- If one or more students need further clarification, it is up to you to decide whether you have the time to have this conversation during or after class.

If someone appears distressed, provide support. For example, you are at a meeting and your colleague appears to be 'triggered', meaning that they might be having a negative emotional and/or physical reaction to something.

- You can discreetly ask them to come with you to a more private location and offer support in the form of active listening.
- In a classroom or meeting, you can call for a short pause to allow them the opportunity to leave the space.
- Follow-up with the individual after the meeting to inquire how they are doing and if you can provide them with any support.

10 EXAMPLES OF HARMFUL BEHAVIOURS THAT OFTEN GO UNADDRESSED⁴:

Telling 'jokes' using insulting stereotypes that suggest one gender is somehow inferior, e.g. dumb, over-emotional or incompetent.

Excluding people from places or conversations because of their gender, e.g. "We're talking about sport here, girls – maybe stick to what you know."

Attempting to insult by calling people names associated with one gender, e.g. "What's the matter, mate, got your period?" or "Who wears the pants in this relationship?"

Wolf-whistling, cat-calling or making sexual remarks or comments about people's appearance in public because it's a 'compliment'.

Telling people sexism doesn't exist or that they're being over-sensitive about being treated unfairly because of their gender.

Criticising others for falling outside traditional gender roles because of their appearance or actions, e.g. "She dresses like a bloke" or "What kind of guy becomes a nurse?"

Making assumptions about who will pay for something based on gender, e.g. dinner or a date.

Calling women in power 'bossy' or 'power-hungry' but men in the same positions 'leaders'.

Asking what female rape victims were wearing or where they were and at what time of night, instead of asking why the perpetrator committed the crime.

Judging people by different standards depending on their gender, e.g. "Not bad for a girl!" or "Boys will be boys."



STRATEGY #4

Engage in Training and Participation

Supporting students and peers impacted by sexual violence is one of the main components of an effective sexual violence prevention strategy for university and college campus.²²

The Act to Prevent and Fight Sexual Violence in Higher Education Institutions in Québec (Law P22.1) specifies that all members of the university community participate in mandatory training. This includes all of our constituents: students, administrative staff, and faculty. **It Takes All of Us: Creating a Campus Community Free of Sexual Violence** is an online learning program at McGill that strives to increase awareness of sexual violence. The training consists of four modules that use character-driven scenarios to teach important topics surrounding sexual violence and its impact.

The program is mandatory for everyone at McGill, including all students, administrative and academic staff. To learn more about the program, visit www.mcgill.ca/sv-education.

Further in-person education is available through McGill's Office for Sexual Violence, Response, Support, and Education (see the **OSVRSE website** for more information). The OSVRSE offers workshops and trainings on topics such as how to support those who disclose and becoming an active bystander. These sessions can be tailored to meet the needs of departments, faculties, research centres/institutes, and classrooms.

EDUCATE YOURSELF & GET INVOLVED

You may also want to seek out alternative resources to expand your understanding and learning. At McGill, educational opportunities for faculty and staff are available through **the OSVRSE**, the **Equity Team in the Office of the Provost** and the **Sexual Assault Center Of McGill Students' Society (SACOMSS)**.



*CAMPUS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

[It Takes All of Us: A mandatory online sexual violence education program](#)

[Indigenous Education](#)

[2SLGBTQIA+ Initiatives](#)

[How to Respond to Disclosures of Sexual Violence](#)

[Becoming an Active Bystander: A Sexual Violence Prevention Program](#)

[Staff Equity Education Workshops](#)

OSVRSE [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Newsletter](#), [Podcast](#)

[SACOMSS Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)

*ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND ONLINE TRAININGS

[Responding to Disclosures on Campus.Com: Online training](#)

[Break the Silence.ca](#)

[Courage to Act: Addressing & Preventing Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions in Canada](#)

[OSVRSE overview of services video](#)

[Project Shift](#)

[Eliminating Racism Empowering Women: What is Intersectionality](#)

[Communities of Color and the Impacts of Sexual Violence](#)

[Transgender Sexual Violence Survivors: A Self Help Guide To Healing And Understanding.](#)

[Information Guide for Sexual Assault Victims](#)

[Ending Sexual Violence: An Intersectional Approach](#)



STRATEGY #5

Support Someone Who Discloses

Choosing to disclose a personal experience of sexual violence is never an easy decision. There are many barriers that exist when deciding to come forward about an experience of sexual violence. Some of the main barriers are not being believed, not being taken seriously and being blamed for the harm. Another barrier is the increased risk of stigmatization, especially for racialized people, indigenous women and girls, people with disabilities, trans women, and men who disclose sexual violence. This section highlights the possible impacts of sexual violence, common reactions experienced by people who receive a disclosure of sexual violence, key ways to show support, words and actions to avoid, information on filing a report, and resources available to survivors and their support people.

IMPACTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Individual responses to and impacts of sexual violence vary considerably as coping mechanisms and pathways to recovery are informed by different aspects of the individual's ecosystem. Reactions to and impacts of sexual violence are a function of a person's individual and family history, as well as the communities within which they are embedded. Reactions are also shaped by culture, race, gender, age, class, ability and other aspects of identity. It is important to acknowledge that a survivor/victim may experience none, some or many of the possible reactions and impacts of sexual violence at different times. There is no single way a survivor/victim should look and act.

Impacts are also not signs of weakness, nor are they characteristics of the individual. Reactions and impacts can include someone being very sad or upset; conversely, they may be stoic and calm or exhibit anxiety and experience panic attacks. They may remember the incident vividly or almost not at all. Other feelings can include but are not limited to fear repercussions, experience social isolation or induced self-isolation, low self-esteem, self-blame and guilt. Regarding academic or work performance, someone may be unable to concentrate, be confused, fear being in certain areas, and much more. All of these are natural reactions. For more information on the impacts of sexual violence, visit [RAINN.org](https://rainn.org)

KEY WAYS TO SHOW SUPPORT:

You may be the first person to whom a survivor discloses. Reasons for a disclosure may include seeking support, an intervention, an academic accommodation, etc. By listening, believing and validating their feelings, you can have a significant positive impact on someone's healing process, their access to resources, and ultimately, their academic performance.

Remember, you don't have to be a trained professional or have all the answers to help a survivor. There is, and should be, a limit to the support that you provide. It is important to set boundaries and refer the survivor/victim to resources that can address their distress.

Listen: Provide a space where the person disclosing is able to speak freely and at their own pace without interruption. Consider privacy and the sense of security. Be patient and respect the person's boundaries. "What I hear you saying is ..."

You may also have certain obligations depending on your role and your responsibilities that will limit your ability to maintain confidentiality. Be transparent and clear about your obligations and what you will be doing with the information you receive. If you feel that the person is at risk of harming themselves or others, you have an obligation to report this to the [Dean of Students](#) and/or your Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

Believe/Validate: Believe/validate the disclosing person's account of their experience; they are the one who has gone through it. Your responsibility is not to investigate an allegation or arrive at any conclusion. Rather, your role is to validate that their experience has had a negative impact on them. Let them know that their feelings and reactions are valid. You may be the first person in a position of power and authority to acknowledge this and it can have a significant influence on their healing process. Key phrases include:

"Thank you for sharing this with me."
"It takes a lot of courage and strength to talk about this."
"I believe you."

Empower: Give support that empowers individuals to make their own decisions without imposing certain options and resources.

You may be tempted to skip to problem solving because the situation makes you feel uncomfortable, is too painful to listen to, or because the intensity of the person's feelings is overwhelming. Be aware of this reaction and slow down.

- Ask them what they need and how they would like to be supported.
- Ask what their biggest concern is at that moment.
- Use statements such as "How can I best support you?"

Provide Resources: If the person disclosing is seeking support resources or plans to report, offer to research and/or contact the service of their choice, including the Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education (OSVRSE) or the Sexual Assault Centre of McGill Students' Society (SACOMSS).

OSVRSE

A McGill office staffed by mental health professionals providing confidential, non-judgmental and non-directional support and education to students, faculty and staff of all genders who have been impacted by sexual violence. Services include crisis and short-term individual and group counselling support, resource coordination (including academic accommodation, emergency housing support and medical support), reporting information and accompaniment within McGill and externally, etc.

SACOMSS

A student-run organization committed to supporting survivors of sexual assault and their allies through direct support, advocacy and outreach. Free services include: a confidential, non-directional phone line (DIAL), drop-in hours, group support, assistance with reporting at McGill and community outreach. McGill members can access both SACOMSS and the OSVRSE at any time for support and information.

McGill members can access both the OSVRSE and SACOMSS at any time for support and information.

Help the survivor to identify individuals within their existing support systems whom they trust and feel supported by, and to whom they may reach out.

"I'm here to listen and support you. It might also be helpful for you to talk to someone who has specialized knowledge in this area."

You are in a position to consider providing **academic and workplace accommodations** if the survivor's experience and reactions result in limitations in their ability to function at school and/or at work. To the extent that this is possible, accommodations should be considered. You can consult the OSVRSE about the various available options and how to access them.

Refer to the Appendix for a complete list of resources or visit the [OSVRSE website](#) for more information. For more information on how to respond to disclosures, visit <https://www.mcgill.ca/osvrse/support-survivor>. Additionally, see the Appendix for a handout on supporting a survivor.



What to Avoid Saying/Doing

- Judgmental statements, such as asking "why" questions such as "Why did you do that/go there/take drugs/sext? Why would (the accused) do that to you?".
- Questions to gather more details surrounding the incident. Remember, you are there to provide support and not to conduct an investigation.
- Blaming statements such as "You should have told me about this sooner."
- Assuming that you know what the person disclosing needs and what is best for them.
- Should/must/ought/never statements. They imply that there is one right way to feel about, deal with and respond to sexual violence. E.g., "You shouldn't feel that way." "If you do___, you will feel better."
- Pressuring the survivor into reporting the incident. The decision to report is entirely that of the survivor. All too often survivors are blamed for their experience, are not believed or are not taken seriously. They may fear retaliation from the perpetrator. All these factors can influence a survivor's decision to report or not, e.g., "You should report this to make sure it doesn't happen again."
- Making promises you cannot keep. E.g., "You have nothing to worry about." "I will do anything you need me to do."

Reflecting on your position of power and how that can play a part in your relationship with a student who discloses is an important step to becoming an effective support person. As a Teaching Staff member, your position at the university can allow you to help a student access resources and empower them to have their voice heard by others. Be mindful of confidentiality, how you set up your classroom and office space, and the way you support someone in their next steps.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN SOMEONE DISCLOSES

There is no one way to react to an experience of sexual violence. Each individual has their own coping mechanisms and path to recovery. Reactions are also shaped by culture, race, gender, age, class, ability and other aspects of identity. A survivor may be very sad or upset or stoic and calm; they may also exhibit anxiety and experience panic attacks. They may remember the incident vividly or they may have trouble remembering and focusing. All of these are natural reactions. So, when a student comes to tell you about their experience, their disposition will vary and is not a reflection of the severity of their experience.

COMMON REACTIONS TO A DISCLOSURE

It is important to be aware of your own reactions to someone's experience. It can help you identify and manage the effects that the information is having on you and allow you to maintain your ability to be a support person for the people in your life.

- You may feel anxious about responding the 'right' way or worried about how this event will impact your relationship with the person who is disclosing to you. Reassure them that the assault or harassment was not their fault and that you believe them. These can be the most powerful and helpful statements for a survivor to hear.
- You may feel triggered if the disclosure reminds you of a similar situation in your own life.
- You may be confused, surprised or shocked, especially if you know the person who committed the act of sexual violence.
- You may feel a sense of disbelief and/or denial that the violence occurred.
- You may feel sad, hopeless, angry, worried or powerless.
- If you know the person who committed the act of sexual violence, you may feel sad about how this has changed your relationship to them as well.

Taking care of yourself is essential and it will help you help others. Practice self-care and know that it is okay for you to ask for help as well. If you feel triggered and/or have questions about the disclosure you received, you can reach out the OSVRSE for support.

FILLING A FORMAL REPORT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT MCGILL

When providing support to someone impacted by sexual violence, it may be important to know how to file an internal report at McGill and the available resources to help someone through the reporting process.

Individuals wishing to file an internal report can directly contact the [Senior Equity and Inclusion Advisor](#) (SEIA) for information about the reporting process and/or to initiate a formal report under [McGill's Policy Against Sexual Violence](#).

McGill members with questions about initiating a report as a witness or a third-party can contact the SEIA or the OSVRSE to consult in a confidential manner.

The SEIA transfers all reports of sexual violence, including sexual harassment and sexual assault involving McGill students, faculty and staff, to a [Special Investigator](#). The Special Investigator is committed to providing an impartial, trauma-informed, and confidential process independent of McGill.

The OSVRSE is also available to anyone in the McGill community seeking more information on and assistance with filing an internal report.

FILLING A FORMAL REPORT WITH THE POLICE

To file a report, you can go to your [local police station](#) or call 911 if it is an emergency. The [OSVRSE](#) can also facilitate a meeting with local police officers. There is no statute of limitations (time limit) to file a report of sexual assault in Canada.

If you want to provide anonymous information, you can call Info-Crime Montréal at 514.393.1133.

For more information, you can access [Plaidoyer-Victimes' Navigating Your Way Through the Justice System online](#) or visit the [OSVRSE website](#).

MEDICAL SUPPORT

In the case of a sexual assault that occurred in the last 5 days, you can access a [designated centre](#) to gather forensic evidence (a kit used to gather and preserve physical evidence for the police) and/or receive medical assistance. Note that the forensic evidence kit can be requested even if you have not yet decided whether you will report to the police. The forensic evidence kit is not mandatory when filing a report.

If a survivor/victim does not want a forensic evidence medical kit but would like to access medical and/or psychosocial services, they can still access the designated centres up to a year after a sexual assault or access [McGill's Student Wellness Hub](#).

It is the choice of the survivor/victim whether or not to proceed with a medical examination and/or the gathering of forensic evidence.

For more information about the forensic evidence kit and accompaniment through a medical process, contact the OSVRSE at osvrse@mcgill.ca or visit the [website](#).

ACADEMIC AND/OR WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS

As Teaching Staff, you may be approached by a student, administrator or OSVRSE staff member to consider implementing academic or workplace accommodations. Due to the impacts of sexual violence, as explored above, a student may not be able to attend class, an exam, or work or fulfil assignments on time.

You are in a position to directly support a student with their request. You can also refer the student to their Academic Advisor, the OSVRSE for resource coordination and, in some instances, the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#).



STRATEGY #6

Understand the Regulations Governing Student-Staff Relationships

McGill's Policy against Sexual Violence states that "(T)he University is committed to cultivating and maintaining a safe academic environment for students based on integrity and respect. Students have the right to a safe and respectful learning environment that fosters their academic success. Members of the Teaching Staff bear the responsibility of conducting themselves with professionalism and integrity at all times in their contacts with students."

The Policy establishes a Code of Conduct (8.1) that governs sexual or romantic relationships between Teaching Staff and students. Section 8.1(i) prohibits members of Teaching Staff from entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with students if the Teaching Staff member:

1. has academic authority over the student
2. has an influence over the student's academic progress
3. collaborates academically with the student.

In the Policy, "student" includes any postdoctoral fellow, whether deemed an employee or not.

Even where a member of Teaching Staff does not currently exercise authority or influence over the student, if the Teaching Staff member enters into a relationship with a student in the same Faculty and/or where the Teaching Staff is likely to have influence over the student's future academic path, they are required to disclose the potential conflict of interest following the process outlined in the [Regulation on Conflict of Interest](#).

Additional information on how to recognize a conflict of interest can be found on the [Secretariat's website](#).

CONCLUSION

Every little action counts, from creating a course commitment to fostering inclusive spaces, including information and resources in your course syllabi, learning how to become an active bystander when you are confronted with harmful social norms such as problematic comments, jokes and physical actions, to adopting key ways of showing support when someone discloses sexual violence, amongst many other positive changes.

Yours is a position of power and influence in our community. This is an important factor in how students and, possibly, colleagues perceive you when they reach out to you for support. Increasingly, students are turning to their professors for guidance, information and assistance in times of distress. Understand that, as a potential support person, you are not alone with this responsibility and that there are resources available to support and assist you through the OSVRSE.

It takes a community to effect change and we are counting on everyone – including you – to help make that happen.

Thank you for your time, dedication and continued support.

APPENDIX, GLOSSARY AND RESOURCES

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following are a list of terms taken from McGill's [Policy against Sexual Violence](#), the [Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education \(OSVRSE\)](#), and other resources. We recognise that there are many ways to address sexual and gender-based violence and have included the more common terms known at McGill. Beyond this tool kit, we encourage users to explore the many other definitions associated with the anti-violence movement.

Sexual Violence: An umbrella term that refers to a continuum of psychological or physical actions of a sexual nature that is threatened, attempted or committed towards a person without their consent. It may be directed towards a person's sexual orientation, sexual or gender expression, or gender identity. It includes sexist, homophobic and/or transphobic jokes, coercion, stalking, voyeurism, cyberviolence, sexual harassment, interpersonal (or intimate partner) violence and sexual assault. Sexual violence is influenced by intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination, including but not limited to sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and classism. Acts of sexual violence can happen in-person, online or by phone.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Involves the use and abuse of power and control over another person and is perpetrated against someone based on their gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender. Violence against women and girls is a form of gender-based violence. It also has a disproportionate impact on LGBTQI2 (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and two-spirit) and gender non-conforming people. This includes emotional and psychological violence, such as intentional misgendering, intentional "outing", and use of gendered slurs, as well as physical, sexual, and structural or systemic violence.²³

Consent: Free, informed, expressed and ongoing agreement to engage in sexual activity. It cannot occur when a person is incapable of consenting to the activity, for example, when a person is rendered incapacitated by alcohol or drugs, is unconscious, or where the sexual activity has been induced by conduct that constitutes an abuse of a relationship of trust, power or authority, such as the relationship between a professor and their student.

Cyber Violence: Technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV), where mobile and online technologies are used as tools to blackmail, control, coerce, harass, humiliate, objectify or violate another person.²⁴ Part of the challenge is to devise appropriate terminology to describe a vast array of different gender-based online harms such as 'revenge pornography', 'virtual rape', 'cyberstalking' and 'online gender-based hate speech,' as well as the use of new technologies to perpetrate more traditional or conventional crimes, such as domestic violence or sexual assault.²⁵

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Disclosure: The act of making new information known for the purpose of seeking support and/or information.

Gender Non-Conforming: A descriptive term and/or identity of a person who has a gender identity and/or expression that does not conform to the traditional expectations of the gender they were assigned at birth. People who identify as “gender non-conforming” or “gender variant” may or may not also identify as “transgender.”²⁶

Gender Pronouns: A word used instead of a noun, chosen by the person you are engaging with, and often brought up during introductions. Knowing someone’s pronoun informs you of how to refer to the person. Examples of gender pronouns include but are not limited to: they, she, he, them, ze. [More information on Gender Pronouns and how to use them](#)

Interpersonal Violence: Also referred to as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Domestic Violence, it is the abuse of power and control within a past or current relationship that endangers the well-being, security or survival of another person. Interpersonal Violence can occur in all types of relationships (e.g., dating, long-term, common-law, marriage, etc.). It can also occur between roommates and close friends.

Rape: Physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration – even if slight – of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or an object. The attempt to do so is known as attempted rape. Rape of a person by two or more perpetrators is known as gang rape or multiple perpetrator rape.²⁷

Rape Culture: A culture in which dominant ideologies, media images, social practices and institutions promote or condone, either implicitly or explicitly, the normalization of male sexual violence and victim blaming. In a rape culture, incidents of sexual assault, rape and general gender-based violence are ignored, trivialized, normalized and/or made the fodder of jokes and entertainment.²⁸

Report: The act of informing an individual having authority to discipline an alleged perpetrator (for example, the Dean of Students, the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies or a Faculty Dean) about an incident of Sexual Violence for the purpose of initiating a disciplinary or administrative process.

Safe(r) Space: An area or forum where there are stated norms against (certain forms of) exclusion, discrimination and oppression. A Safe(r) Space challenges and confronts oppression and discrimination.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Sexual Assault: Any act of a sexual nature performed without the consent of the other person(s). Forms of sexual assault can include:

- Attempted rape
- Fondling or unwanted sexual touching
- Forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator’s body
- Penetration of the victim’s body, also known as rape

Sexual Harassment: Any unwanted sexual communication or attention that is offensive, intimidating or humiliating, whether in verbal, written or visual form. This may include psychological violence, verbal abuse, manipulation and coercion. An example of sexual harassment is when a teacher’s assistant invites a student on a date and implies that their grades will benefit if they accept the invitation or worsen if they don’t.

Survivor/Victim: Any person who has experienced Sexual Violence. The term “survivor” generally focuses on agency and resilience whereas “victim” refers to the person being victimized by someone else and focuses on elements outside of a person’s control. It is equally possible for a person to self-identify as a survivor and a victim depending on their experience. Personal, cultural, and socio-political reasons may influence a person in self-identifying with either term.

Trauma-Informed Care: is grounded in the understanding of the many different impacts trauma can have on an individual and community. It places an emphasis on fostering the physical, psychological and emotional safety of the person disclosing. It is an approach that is rooted in empowerment and in regaining control over one’s situation.

Trigger: A term used to describe the result of a sensation, image, event, reading, dialogue, film, etc. that provokes an emotional response to a past traumatic experience.

Victim Blaming: The act of blaming the occurrence of sexual assault on the survivor instead of the perpetrator. Victim blaming can be implicit. For example, recommending that one does not wear revealing clothing or travel alone at night implies that such actions provoke sexual assault. A non-victim blaming response acknowledges that perpetrators make choices to violate the bodily integrity of others and that perpetrators alone are responsible for these choices.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF AT MCGILL

EMOTIONAL/REPORTING SUPPORT

The Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education (OSVRSE)

550 Sherbrooke Street W., Suite 585 (West tower elevators 1-11)

514.398.4486 (Sexual Violence Response Advisor);

514.398.3786 (Sexual Violence Education Advisor)

[Website](#) | [Email](#)

Services students and staff

Provides confidential, non-judgmental and non-directional support and education to students, faculty and staff of all genders who have been impacted by sexual violence. Services include crisis and short-term counselling support, resource coordination (including academic accommodation, emergency housing support and medical support), reporting information within McGill and with the Police, and group support. Visit the website for drop-in hours.

Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Students' Society (SACOMSS)

514.398.8500

[Website](#)

Services students and staff

A student-run organization committed to supporting survivors of sexual assault and their allies through direct support, advocacy and outreach. Free services include: a confidential, non-directional phone line (DIAL), drop-in hours, group support, assistance with reporting at McGill and community outreach. McGill members can access both SACOMSS and the OSVRSE at any time for support and information.

Legal Information Clinic at McGill (LICM)

514.398.4384

[Website](#)

Services students and staff

For issues within the McGill community, Student Advocacy, a proud part of LICM, offers free advice and representation to students accused of a disciplinary offence or students who feel unjustly treated by the University. We help students find formal and informal solutions to their problems.

McGill Domestic Violence Clinic

514.398.2686 (Downtown)

[Website](#)

Services students and staff

Anyone affected by issues related to any form of violence in an intimate relationship and its effects on individuals, their families and their social networks can access the clinic's counselling services. Appointments can be made by contacting the clinic by phone.

McGill Students' Nightline

514.398.6246

[Website](#)

Services students and staff

A confidential, anonymous and non-judgmental listening service, run by McGill students (closed during summer and winter breaks).

The Union for Gender Empowerment (UGE)

514.398.2569

[Website](#)

Services students

A trans-positive, feminist service of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU). Everyone is welcome to use their services. They coordinate: an alternative lending library (with over a thousand titles); a co-op stocking pay-what-you-can, ecologically responsible menstrual products, DIY sex toys, safer sex supplies and other gender empowerment items; and a zine library. The UGE also runs trans 101/allyship and anti-oppression workshops for other organizations and projects, and has a resource binder with information about abortion services, counseling and queer/trans-friendly health services in Montreal.

First Peoples' House

514.398.3217 (Downtown) 3505 Peel street.

Drop-in hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday

[Website](#)

Services students

First Peoples' House staff are dedicated to supporting all First Nations, Inuit and Métis students at McGill. Students can drop in or make an appointment with the First Peoples' House Coordinator. First Peoples' House staff are not trained counsellors but will listen respectfully and without judgment and will follow up with students as they receive appropriate support.

McGill Student Wellness Hub

514.398.3601 (Downtown); 514.398.7992 (Macdonald Campus)

[Website](#)

Health Professions (counsellors, psychiatrists, doctors, nurses and Local Wellness Advisors) are available for students by appointment. Additional resources and information on self-help, taking care of yourself and post-traumatic stress disorder can be found on their website. For more information on booking an appointment, visit their website.

Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (MORSL)

514.398.4104

Drop-in hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday.

[Website](#)

Services students

Volunteer chaplains from a wide variety of faith traditions offer informal and confidential support for survivors by appointment. MORSL staff and chaplains are not trained counsellors, but they can listen confidentially and compassionately, and can refer students to appropriate on-campus services. Chaplains are especially helpful for students who identify within a particular faith tradition or who wish to take a spiritual approach to their recovery and well-being.

Peer Support Centre

[Website](#)

Services students and staff

A student-run volunteer organization that provides free and confidential drop-in space, offering non-judgmental peer support, information, and referrals to all McGill members.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR STAFF

AMURE Counselling Services

[Website](#)

1-844-880-9142

For union members who have experienced sexual assault, domestic violence or abuse. They can access a licensed counsellor and trauma specialist for 10 sessions, renewable as necessary.

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

[Website](#)

1-844-880-9142

For staff members who are members of the University's benefits program, Morneau Shepell provides a confidential 24/7 short-term counselling and referral service.

SAFETY AND SECURITY SERVICES

Drivesafe

514.398.8040

Hours: Thursday to Saturday, 11 p.m. to 3 a.m.

[Website](#)

A volunteer SSMU Sservice aimed at bringing students home safely.

McGill Security

805 Sherbrooke Street W., Room 120

514.398.3000 (Downtown); 514.398.7777 (Macdonald Campus)

[Website](#)

Services students and staff

McGill Security is responsible for investigating all serious crimes on campus and liaises with police forces conducting investigations that involve McGill University.

McGill Security Sservice can also facilitate a disclosure and connect you with the appropriate resources on and off campus to file a report.

Office of the Dean of Students

3600 McTavish Street, Room 2100

514.398.4990

[Website](#)

Services students and staff

The Office of the Dean of Students is the main contact for any issue regarding student safety and well-being on both campuses. In the case of sexual harassment, sexual assault and abuse, the Dean of Students can authorise emergency safety measures, coordinate conflict resolution/mediation and coordinate access to various university services.

Walksafe

514.398.2498

[Website](#)

Services students

Hours: Sunday to Thursday, 9 p.m. to 12 a.m.; Friday and Saturday, 9 p.m. to 3 a.m.

A volunteer SSMU service that provides free night-time accompaniment for those who feel uncomfortable or who are unable to walk home alone.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

McGill Student Wellness Hub

514.398.6017 (Downtown); 514.398.7992 (Macdonald Campus)

[Website](#)

Services students

The downtown campus offers a walk-in clinic with physicians and nurses with a daily nurse triage. A physician can do physical assessments and complete the proper tests as needed.

Macdonald Campus has a nurse three days a week. If forensic specimens are required, transfer will be arranged to the closest assessment site. To make an appointment, visit their website.

McGill Psychiatric Services

3600 McTavish Street, Suite 5500

514.398.6019 (Downtown)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Emergency safety appointment drop-in hours: Monday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

[Website](#)

Psychiatric Services office hours are Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please note that a referral from your family doctor or another physician is necessary. Safety appointments for emergency situations are available Monday to Friday on a first come, first serve basis.

RESOURCES IN MONTREAL

MEDICAL SUPPORT

Receiving medical attention can often be important, even if it has been a while since the assault.

Quebec has designated hospitals and local health centres that have teams composed of psychosocial support workers, nurses and doctors trained in helping people of any gender or age who have been sexually assaulted. The services below are available to people of all genders and include: testing for sexually transmitted infections, blood tests, vaccinations, morning-after contraception, HIV prophylaxis, a forensic examination and psychological support. To find a designated centre in Montreal, please consult the list below.

- If the assault occurred 5 days ago or less, it is recommended to go to a designated centre as soon as possible.
- If the assault occurred 6 days ago, call ahead and make an appointment.
- If the assault occurred over a year ago, refer to the additional resources list at the end of this section.

CLSC Metro, in partnership with the Montréal Sexual Assault Centre

1801 de Maisonneuve Boulevard W., 3rd floor

514.934.0354 (CLSC Reception)

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For individuals 18+; bilingual services are offered. For evenings, weekends and holidays, refer to the Montreal General Hospital.

Montréal General Hospital, in partnership with the Montréal Sexual Assault Centre

1650 Cedar Avenue (use Pine Avenue entrance at corner of Côte-des-Neiges for emergency room)

514.934.8090 (Emergency)

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 5 p.m. to 8 a.m.; 24/7 on weekends and holidays

For individuals 18+; services are offered in English. Ask for the on-call sexual assault support worker.

Hôpital Notre-Dame

1560 Sherbrooke Street East (use Plessis St. entrance for emergency room)

514.413.8777 (Emergency); 514.413.8999 (Sexual Assault Team)

[Website](#)

For individuals 18+; services are offered in French. Emergency room is open 24/7; ask for the on-call sexual assault support worker.

STI TESTING

Screening for HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs) are available at local health-centres (CLSCs) and free of charge if you have a Quebec health card. Below are other resources available if you want to get tested.

Head and Hands

3465 avenue Benny

514.481.0277

[Website](#)

Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

For young adults aged 12-25. There is a random draw at 5pm to select 10 people to be seen in the evening; it is suggested that you arrive at 4:45pm to give your name.

Clinique Médicale L'Actuel

1001 de Maisonneuve Boulevard E., Room 1130

514.524.1001

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Thursday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Walk-in emergency hours: Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Clinique Médicale de L'Alternative

2034 Saint Hubert Street

514.281.9848

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Integrated Screening and Prevention Services (SIDEPS)

1705 rue de la Visitation

514.527.2361

[Website](#)

For cis-and-trans men who are gay, bisexual or have sex with men. Pre-and-post exposure HIV prophylaxis available. Appointments should be booked online.

SAFETY AND SECURITY SERVICES (SHELTERS)

SOS Violence Conjugale

[Email](#) | [Website](#)

1 800 363-9010

24/7 listening and referral line for women who experience interpersonal violence at 1.800.363.9010. They will coordinate immediate shelter across the province. They can also assist women and men who require shelter due to other difficulties in finding appropriate resources.

The shelter system includes shelters designed specifically for women seeking safety due to interpersonal violence, shelters for women in difficulty (including homeless shelters), shelters for men in difficulty (including homeless shelters) and shelters for youth aged 17-25.

Action Santé Travesti(e)s et Transsexuel(le)s du Québec (ASTTeQ)

1300 rue Sanguinet
514.847.0067, ext. 207

[Website](#)

Aims to promote the health and well-being of trans people. They offer one night emergency shelter support to trans people experiencing violence and participate in education and advocacy for the inclusion and safety of trans people in the shelter system.

Native Women's Shelter

514.933.4688

[Website](#)

The address is confidential.

Provides a safe environment that offers in-house programs and services, as well as outreach, that helps in the healing process of Native women.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Resource and Information Centre for Men Sexually Abused in their Childhood (CRI-PHASE)

8105 avenue de Gaspé
514.529.5567

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Offers French and English group support and telephone support services for men abused in childhood.

Expression Lasalle

405 Terrasse Newman, Office 210, Lasalle QC, H8R 2Y9
514.368.3736

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Offers group art therapy on the theme of sexual abuse. English group, French and English services available.

The Third Eye Collective

[Website](#) | [Email](#)

Offers healing support, advocacy and transformative justice services for self-identified Black/African women.

GAIHST (Help and Information Centre on Harassment in the Workplace)

2231 rue Bélanger
514.526.0789

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Information, support groups, assistance in filing complaints. By appointment only.

Stella, l'amie de Maimie

2065 rue Parthenais, Suite 404
514.285.8889

[Website](#)

Drop-in hours: Monday, Wednesday to Friday (closed Tuesdays), 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Offers support and information to sex workers so that they can work and live in safety and with dignity. This includes art workshops, community meals, free vaccination clinics and maintaining a Bad Client and Aggressors List. Services geared towards cis-and-transwomen sex workers currently working in the industry or not; also open to allies.

Action Santé Travesti(e)s et Transsexuel(le)s du Québec (ASTT(e)Q)

1300 rue Sanguinet | [Website](#)

514.847.0067 ext. 207 (General information, support, referrals);

514.847.0067 ext. 216 (Education and Resource Coordinators)

A project of CACTUS-Montreal that aims to promote the health and well-being of trans people. Offers listening and referral support and one night emergency shelter support to trans people experiencing violence.

Centre for Gender Advocacy

2110 Mackay Street (Physical Address)

1455 de Maisonneuve Boulevard W., Annex V-01 (Mailing Address)

514.848.2424 ext. 7431 (Main); 514.848.2424 ext. 7880 (Peer Support Line)

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Offers trans advocacy, peer support, information and referrals.

Project 10

1575 rue Amherst

514.989.4585

[Website](#)

Hours: Monday to Thursday, 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Offers multiple services (drop-in, group, listening line, etc.) to promote the personal, social, sexual and mental well-being of LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersexed and questioning) youth and adults aged 14-25.

Please see website for opening hours.



OFFICE FOR
**SEXUAL VIOLENCE
RESPONSE, SUPPORT
and EDUCATION**



To attend or request a "how to respond to disclosures" workshop, please visit <https://involvement.mcgill.ca/>

Support a Survivor

You may be the first person to whom a survivor discloses. Your response can have a significant impact on their healing process and their access to resources.

Listening/Setting Up The Space: Consider privacy and your non-verbal signals (eye contact, posture, if you look distracted). Let the survivor decide what to share. Don't press for details.

Attend to Safety: Ask if the person is in danger and/or if they want and/or need medical attention. Consult <https://mcgill.ca/osvrse/survivors/additional-resources>.

Believe/Validate: Let them know what happened to them is not their fault and that their reactions and feelings are valid. Key statements include: "Thank you for sharing this with me," or "it takes a lot of strength and courage to talk about this."

Be Aware of Your Own Boundaries and Limitations: Be transparent with what you can or cannot support someone with. Direct them to further resources and offer to accompany them, if appropriate.

Communicate Without Judgement: Be mindful of the questions you ask. Avoid statements like "you should have known better" or asking "why" questions that convey judgement or blame.

Be Non-Directional/Empower Survivors: Explore options and encourage individuals to identify their needs and make their own decisions about next steps. Avoid smothering or overprotecting the survivor.

Tip: When possible, follow up with the survivor.

Tools for Responding to a Disclosure of Sexual Violence

Their Reaction:

Know that there is no one way to react to experiences of sexual violence. Reactions are also shaped by culture, race, gender, age, class, ability and other aspects of identity. A survivor may be very sad or upset, they may be stoic and calm, or they may exhibit anxiety and experience panic attacks. They may remember the incident vividly or they may have trouble remembering and focusing. All of these are natural reactions. Survivors may experience impacts immediately or years later.



As a support person, resources are available for you. Please contact the OSVRSE. We are here to help.

Your Reaction:

Responding to a disclosure can be an emotionally and physically demanding experience. It can have an impact on your well-being and your sense of safety. Taking care of yourself is essential and it will help you help others. Practice self and community care and know that it is okay for you to ask for help.

Be Prepared:

- ▶ Learn more about sexual violence and consent.
- ▶ Know the major misconceptions about sexual violence
- ▶ Inform yourself on trauma, and possible reactions.
- ▶ Educate yourself about the warning signs of suicide and offer to help access supports (Suicide Action Montreal has a 24/7 help line: 514.723.4000).
- ▶ Organize a workshop for you and your peers on how to respond to disclosures.
- ▶ Brush up on your active listening skills (Counselling McGill & The Peer Programs Network offer workshops on active listening. Check their websites and/or MyInvolvement to register!)
- ▶ Familiarize yourself with on and off campus resources by visiting our website for more information.
- ▶ Learn more about discrimination and critically reflect about messages you have received and/or integrated about gender norms, sexuality, (dis)ability and more.



Tel: 514.398.3954
Email osvrse@mcgill.ca
Website: mcgill.ca/osvrse



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BUREAU
D'INTERVENTION,
DE PRÉVENTION ET
D'ÉDUCATION EN MATIÈRE
DE VIOLENCE SEXUELLE



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