

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING STUDENTS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

*A review of the current CALM 20 curriculum and suggestions for future
improvement.*

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DISCLAIMER

The intent of this report is to shed light on the current sexual education curriculum in the province of Alberta and suggest improvements for the future. I would like to stress that I am not an expert in the field of sexual violence, healthcare, psychology, or education. I have simply drawn from literature, data that has been released online, news articles, and my own personal experience to shed light on the current gaps in Alberta's sexual education curriculum. My main focus in this report is on the lack of information regarding sexual assault/abuse (i.e., what constitutes assault and how to cope/deal with the aftermath of sexual violence) within the current curriculum. Much of this report is focused on the Career and Life Management (CALM) 20 curriculum, however, there is much to be said about the need to reform the curriculum at every level of education.

I would also like to point out that this problem is not confined to the province of Alberta. Many other provinces have outdated sex-ed curriculums and their students are suffering because of it. It is my hope that reforming Alberta's sexual health education curriculum to better reflect our current social climate will inspire a conversation nation-wide about the need to educate Canadian students in a way that will prepare them for the future.

INTRODUCTION

All Alberta students are required to take Career and Life Management (CALM) 20 in order to graduate. This course currently teaches about managing money, applying to university, and how to stay physically and mentally healthy, all of which is important information. However, the course is currently very limited in terms of the sexual health information being conveyed. While students may learn about how to prevent against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), there is little to no information about sexual abuse/assault in the curriculum. The CALM 20 course curriculum is listed online.¹ From examining this document, it can be seen that the current curriculum contains essentially no information on sexual assault, sexual abuse, or how to deal/cope with those situations (i.e., accessing a "rape kit", legal options, getting medical/psychological help, etc.). One of the main purposes of high school is to prepare students for university. Sexual assault on university campuses is an incredibly prevalent issue, yet Alberta students are not leaving high school with the knowledge to deal with

¹Alberta Education. (2002). Career and Life Management Curriculum. Retrieved May 23, 2016, from <https://education.alberta.ca/media/160199/calm.pdf>

this reality.

In April, 2016, I launched a petition on Change.org to raise awareness about the need for an improved, revitalized, and modernized sexual education curriculum in Alberta. As of May 23, 2016, the petition has 16 989 signatures, most of which are from Canadians.²

DEFINING SEXUAL HEALTH

“Sexual health is an integral part of overall health, not restricted to the avoidance of STDs and HIV/AIDS. Sexual health contributes to the fulfillment of individual sexuality, enabling a person to share this with consenting others, without jeopardizing the health and well-being of other persons. Sexual health requires the enjoyment of free-choice, expression and responsibility, with particular regard to the prevention of transmission of [STIs/HIV]. The sexual health of an individual contributes to the well-being and health of the individual involved, his/her sexual partner(s), and the ultimate community as a whole.”³

THE CURRENT CALM 20 CURRICULUM

An Introduction into CALM 20

All Alberta students must complete Care and Life Management (CALM) 20 in order to graduate. The curriculum was last updated in 2002. This course primarily focuses on the following¹:

1. *Personal choices*
 - a. *Students will apply an understanding of the emotional/psychological, intellectual, social, spiritual and physical dimensions of health—and the dynamic interplay of these factors—in managing personal well-being.*
2. *Resource choices*
 - a. *Students will make responsible decisions in the use of finances and other resources that reflect personal values and goals and demonstrate commitment to self and others.*
3. *Career and life choices*

²Kornak, N. (2016). Government of Alberta: Reform Alberta’s sexual education curriculum to encompass consent and sexual assault. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://www.change.org/p/government-of-alberta-reform-alberta-s-sexual-education-curriculum-to-encompass-consent-and-sexual-assault>

³ Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. (2002). Factors influencing knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. Retrieved from http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/180/CYSHHAS_2002_EN.pdf

- a. *Students will develop and apply processes for managing personal, lifelong career development.*

The broadness of these learning outcomes creates circumstances whereby students may lead to discrepancies in learning, as the curriculum can easily be interpreted differently by different instructors.

Lack of Information on Sexual Abuse/Assault

The learning outcomes in the CALM curriculum terms of sexual health are as follows¹:

1. *Examine the relationship between commitment and intimacy in all its levels*
 - a. *identify expectations and commitments in various relationships*
 - b. *examine a range of behaviours for handling sexual involvement*
 - c. *describe how personal values play a role in relationships*
 - d. *explain the role of trust and ways to establish trust in a relationship*
 - e. *develop strategies for dealing with jealousy*
2. *Examine aspects of healthy sexuality and responsible sexual behaviour*
 - a. *explain the ongoing responsibility for being sexually healthy*
 - b. *examine a range of behaviours and choices regarding sexual expression*
 - c. *describe sexually healthy actions and choices for one's body, including abstinence*
 - d. *analyze strategies for choosing responsible and respectful sexual expression*
 - e. *describe the ways in which personal values influence choices*
 - f. *assess the consequences of being sexually active*

Nowhere in these learning outcomes, deemed “sensitive topics”, or anywhere else in the curriculum for that matter, is any mention of consent or sexual violence.

Alternative resources for teaching sex-ed can be found at teachers.teachingsexualhealth.ca/lesson-plans. This website contains information on sexual health that reaches beyond what is offered in CALM. The website does contain documents outlining sexual abuse/assault⁴, however, these documents do not go into detail about what to do if one has experienced sexual violence (e.g., accessing a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit, accessing emergency contraception, and getting tested for sexually transmitted infections). The information on this website has also not been updated since 2002.

⁴Abuse & Assault Lesson Plans. (2002). Retrieved May 5, 2016, from <http://teachers.teachingsexualhealth.ca/lesson-plans/abuse-assault/>

Discrepancies in Learning

A problem posed by the current CALM curriculum is the inconsistency of the information being delivered. CALM is offered as both an in-class and online course. While the online option can often be convenient for students, the downside is that information about sexual health is not always delivered on this platform. This creates a discrepancy in the knowledge held by Alberta students on this topic.

Qualifications of Educators

There is little information online regarding what exactly qualifies an educator to teach CALM. However, according to most sexual health resource centres in the province, most CALM instructors do not need to undergo any supplemental training in order to teach the course. This poses a problem when it comes to the teaching of sex-ed.

Often times, teachers do not have the same level of training in sexual health as community sexual health workers. This is one of the reasons why it is so common for schools to bring in community sexual health workers to present to their classes rather than do it themselves. However, given that highly populated cities, such as Calgary and Edmonton, have hundreds of schools, it is not necessarily feasible for a local sexual health resource centre to reach out to every single school. This may cause some students to receive inadequate information about their sexual health from teachers who are either unqualified to teach these topics or are too uncomfortable to even cover them in the first place.

There is currently no way to check whether or not teachers are delivering all of the information they are supposed to. Perhaps requiring all CALM teachers to undergo training in the same way a community sexual health worker would could increase the effectiveness of CALM lessons and increase the quality of information learned by students.

Even if a teacher does not instruct CALM, specifically, it makes sense for all educators to be well-versed in responding to students' complaints of sexual harassment/abuse/assault. Students spend nearly thirty hours per week with their teachers. Thus, it is easy to form relationships built on trust between student and teacher. If a student is experiencing or has experienced sexual abuse/assault and wants to inform a teacher with whom he or she feels comfortable, they should be able to do so and the teacher should be able to respond in an appropriate, educated manner.

The Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services offers First Responder to Sexual Assault and Abuse Training.⁵ Representatives from this organization agree that it is common sense that those working with children should be trained on how to respond appropriately to complaints of sexual violence that are brought to their attention.

DEFINING SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is defined in Canada's Criminal Code⁶ as the following:

A person commits an assault when (a) without the consent of another person, he applies force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly; (b) he attempts or threatens, by an act or a gesture, to apply force to another person, if he has, or causes that other person to believe on reasonable grounds that he has, present ability to effect his purpose; or (c) while openly wearing or carrying a weapon or an imitation thereof, he accosts or impedes another person or begs. (2) This section applies to all forms of assault, including sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm and aggravated sexual assault.

Other definitions for sexual assault are as follows:

“Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact without voluntary consent. This can mean sexual touching, grabbing, forced kissing, oral, anal or vaginal intercourse.”⁷

Kissing and sexual touching without the consent of the individual is also considered sexual assault under the law.⁸

Sexual assault can occur in many forms, which include:

- Sexual touching of the breasts and/or genitals;
- Digital penetration of the vagina and/or anus;
- Penile penetration of the vagina, mouth, and/or anus;

⁵ Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services. (2016). First Responder to sexual assault and abuse training. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://aasas.ca/initiatives/first-responders-training/>

⁶ Sexual assault criminal law, rape shield, evidence, and sentencing in Canada. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://www.sexassault.ca/criminalprocess.htm>

⁷ ConsentEd. (2016). Sexual violence basics: Sexual assault. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://www.consented.ca/basics/sexual-assault/>

⁸ Government of Canada. (2010, February 16). Frequently asked questions: Age of consent to sexual activity. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/other-autre/clp/faq.html>

- Forced performance of oral sex either on a falace or vulva;
- The removal of a protective barrier (e.g., a condom) before or during sex without the permission of the other partner(s) involved.

It is critical that students understand the various forms in which sexual assault can occur for various reasons, which include:

- If a student experiences a form of sexual assault that *does not* include penile penetration, it is important that he or she understands that the event still constitutes sexual assault.
- If a student experiences any form of sexual violence from someone of the same gender, it still constitutes sexual assault. Sexual assault does *not* need to be heterosexual to constitute sexual assault.
- Some students may be under the impression that ‘less severe’ acts (i.e., those that do not involve penile penetration) do not constitute sexual assault. This is false. If students understand this, they may be less likely to try execute such actions and those who experience such actions may be more likely to report them.

DEFINING CONSENT

Sexual assault is *not* the same thing as sex. Sex involves sexual acts that occur consensually between two or more people. Sexual assault is non-consensual, thus while one person may be having “sex”, the other individual is not and is therefore the victim of a crime. It is critical that students understand this and the importance of consent in all sexual encounters.⁹

Who can give consent?¹⁰

- Under 12: are unable to consent under any circumstance.
- Ages 12-16: some flexibility for “close in age” and peers.
- 16 is the official age of consent.
- Young people under 18 years old are protected from exploitation.

⁹ ConsentEd. (2016). Sexual violence basics: Sexual assault is NOT sex. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://www.consented.ca/basics/sexual-assault-is-not-sex/>

¹⁰ConsentEd. (2016). Consent and Canadian law. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://www.consented.ca/consent/consent-and-canadian-law/>

Conditions where consent is valid⁷

- You can only consent for yourself.
- You actually have to be able to give consent. That means you have to be awake, conscious, and sober enough to make a clear decision.
- People in positions of trust, power or authority can't abuse their position to get sexual activity.
- If you imply no through your words or behaviours that's just as good as saying "NO".
- You have the right to change your mind and stop anytime for any reason during sexual activity.

SEXUAL ASSAULT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Statistics

Campus sexual assault is incredibly prevalent in North American universities. Recent reports such as *The Hunting Ground* and *Schools of Secrets* by CBC's The Fifth Estate have revealed the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses and the obstacles survivors must endure to achieve any form of justice. There is very little data available to the public about the rates of sexual assault across Canadian universities—another thing that needs to be changed. The only data I was able to find on these statistics was from a CBC report, which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Total reports of sexual assault and rate per 10 thousand students at Alberta post-secondary institutions in 2014.¹¹

University	Total Reports (2014)	Rate Per 10 Thousand Students
University of Alberta	7	1.9646
University of Calgary	1	0.3508
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	0	0

¹¹ Ward, L. (2015, November 23). Schools reporting zero sexual assaults on campus not reflecting reality, critics, students say. Retrieved May 5, 2016, from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/campus-sexual-assault-survey-1.3328234>

Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	0	0
University of Lethbridge	0	0
Concordia University College of Alberta	0	0
Mount Royal University	3	3.4443
MacEwan University	3	2.5554

These rates are incredibly low and most analysts believe the actual rates are much higher due to underreporting.

According to a 2006 report by Sable et al. in which college men and women in the United States were surveyed, the most significant barriers to reporting sexual assault are “(1) shame, guilt, embarrassment, not wanting friends and family to know; (2) concerns about confidentiality; and (3) fear of not being believed.”¹² Another significant barrier was the lack of knowledge about how to access help. If sexual health education in middle school and high school had taught students about sexual assault earlier on (i.e., what constitutes sexual assault, how to report, what the legal process is like, etc.), perhaps more students would be reporting their assaults and receiving the justice they deserve.

Protecting Students

Out of every one thousand sexual assault cases that go on trial, only three result in convictions.¹³ This fact deters survivors of sexual assault from pursuing justice via the police and criminal courts. Thus, survivors are left to turn to the university, thinking that the administration will have the survivor’s best interest.

The protocol that each university has within Alberta can vary from one institution to the next. The University of Lethbridge has a sexual assault policy that has been published online.¹⁴ Ironically, the University of Lethbridge is one of the universities listed above in

¹² Danis, F., MSW, D. M. L., & MSW, S. G. K. (2010). Barriers to reporting sexual assault for women and men: Perspectives of college students. *Journal of American College Health*.

¹³ CBC (2013, April 10). School of secrets - the fifth estate Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/episodes/2015-2016/school-of-secrets>

¹⁴University of Lethbridge. (2016). Sexual Violence Policy and Procedure. Retrieved from http://www.uleth.ca/policy/sites/policy/files/policy/Sexual%20Violence%20Policy_BOG%20Approve

Table 1 that reported zero sexual assaults in 2014. According to a representative from the University of Alberta's Sexual Assault Centre, the university is working on finalizing a sexual assault policy for 2017. It is not yet clear what this policy will entail. The University of Calgary released a sexual harassment policy that came into effect in January 2016.¹⁵ However, it is unclear whether or not this policy applies to incidences of sexual assault, as sexual assault and harassment differ in definition.¹⁶

In March 2016, the Ontario government passed Bill 132¹⁷, requiring that all post-secondary institutions in the province adopt sexual assault policies.¹⁸ This bill has been adopted with the hope that having policies in place will encourage survivors of sexual violence to come forward and ensure proper actions are taken to ensure the safety of the survivor and other students at the institution.

During orientation week at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, all incoming students were required to attend a presentation on consent and sexual assault. The university did a fantastic job at ensuring that nearly all first year students attended the presentation. When I asked my peers who attend Alberta universities, including the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge, I learned that while these presentations were available to students, they were not compulsory and many students found it easy to skip them. This deepens the gap of knowledge held by students on the importance of consent as well as how to cope with the aftermath of sexual violence.

Protecting the Institution vs. Protecting Students

While most post-secondary institutions market themselves as being solely dedicated to the success and wellbeing of their students, it is a universal truth that most university administrators' top priority is to protect the institution first. Many university administrators fear false reporting due to possible repercussions. This can alter the

d%20Apr%2021_2016.pdf

¹⁵ University of Calgary. (2015). Harassment Policy. Retrieved from https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/harassment-policy_0.pdf

¹⁶Sexual assault at work. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://www.sexassault.ca/work.htm>

¹⁷Bill 132, sexual violence and harassment action plan act (supporting survivors and challenging sexual violence and harassment), 2016. (2016). Retrieved May 12, 2016, from http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=3535

¹⁸Journal, T. Q. (2016, March 8). Province mandates Ontario campuses to adopt sexual assault policies. Retrieved May 12, 2016, from <http://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2016-03-08/news/ontario-government-passes-sexual-violence-and-harassment-legislation/>

attitude that complainants receive from university administrators from whom they try are trying to seek help. For instance, university administrators who deal with complaints of sexual assault may ‘interrogate’ the complainant to make sure their accusation is true. However, this can quickly create a hostile environment that can deter the complainant from taking any further action against his/her assailant. What most post-secondary universities fail to acknowledge is that only 2% of sexual assault accusations turn out to be false, meaning that 98% are legitimate.¹⁹ It is much more effective and just to create a culture of belief, consolation, and support rather than one of hostility and victim-blaming. It is time that universities stop viewing the protection of students and the protection of the institution as competing interests; rather protecting students, specifically those who have been victims of sexual assault, can inherently protect the integrity of the institution.

Repeat Offenders

One study conducted in the United States examined 120 men who had committed acts corresponding to the legal definitions of rape or attempted rape, but who were never prosecuted. Many of these individuals were repeat rapists, committing an average of 5.8 rapes each.²⁰ Most sexual assaults occurring on college campuses are carried out by repeat offenders. Many assailants are able to continue to assault others due to the lack of repercussions by university administration. Additionally, even if legal action is being taken against the accused in a sexual assault case, cases of this nature can take years to be brought to court. During this time, the accused could continue to assault more people before he/she is convicted of a crime. This is another reason why sexual assault policies should be in place at all Canadian post-secondary institutions. There should be a zero-tolerance policy for sexual assault in our society, especially on college campuses to protect students from those who prey on the vulnerable.

¹⁹Sexual assault and rape statistics, Canada. Retrieved May 10, 2016, from <http://www.sexassault.ca/statistics.htm>

²⁰ Lisak, D., & Miller, P. M. (2002). Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists. *Violence and Victims*, 17(1), 73-84. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/vivi.17.1.73.33638>

Rape Culture and Student Athletics

“Rape supportive attitudes are sometimes prevalent among male athletes, and athletic peer groups may provide social acceptance for coercive and sexually violent behaviour.”²¹

We live in a culture that tends to glorify athletics. Athletics are incredibly important to an institution’s ‘school spirit.’ Student athletes often serve as leaders in for their student bodies. Thus, student athletes should exhibit exemplary behaviour and act as role models for their fellow students. However, it is evident that student athletics, particularly male varsity teams, often perpetuate the condonation and normalization of sexual violence on college campuses.

Student athletics are a commodity that generates revenue for universities. Thus, student athletes are viewed as an investment by universities in both the US and Canada. Canadian Interuniversity Sport provided \$14.6M to student athletes in 2012-13.²² In the same year 57% of athletic scholarship dollars went to male student-athletes, who composed 54% of all CIS student-athletes. Male varsity teams, especially football teams, tend to generate more revenue than female varsity teams. This may be one reason for the discrepancy in financial seen when comparing male and female student athletes.

Universities do not only invest in their students financially; they also invest in the public image of the players, because they image of the player reflects on the image of the university. On December 7, 2012, Florida State University quarterback Jameis Winston allegedly sexually assaulted Erica Kinsman despite Kinsman’s protests. When Kinsman reported the incident to the Tallahassee police, the authorities refused to run a DNA test on Winston and did nothing about the case for ten months after the initial report. One year after the incident, the Florida State Attorney chose to not file charges against Winston after examining the evidence. During this period, Winston refused to talk to investigators. While the investigation was occurring, Winston was allowed to play football and went on to win the 2013 National Championship with FSU. It is clear that in this case, the FSU administration and athletics board, as well as the local authorities prioritized the economic gain that Winston had to offer over the justice that Kinsman deserved. Winston currently plays quarterback for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the National Football League.²³

²¹ Promoting a culture of safety, respect and consent at saint. (2013). . Retrieved from <http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/PresidentsCouncilReport-2013.pdf>

²² Athletic scholarships: CIS schools provided \$14.6M to student-athletes in 2012-13. (2014, May 29). Retrieved May 19, 2016, from http://en.cis-sic.ca/sports/cis_news/2014-15/releases/20140529-cis

²³ Ziering, A. (Producer), & Dick, L. (Director). (2015). *The Hunting Ground* [Motion Picture]. United

Cases of this nature are not confined to the United States; they have occurred in Canada, too. On February 2, 2014, Guillaume Donovan and David Foucher of the University of Ottawa men's hockey team allegedly assaulted a woman in Thunder Bay, Ontario while other team members watched. A statement of defense notes that team's then head coach first heard of the incident the next morning, but did not inform the university about it for more than two weeks. It took the alleged survivor's friend to inform the school of the incident before any action on the incident ensued. Since then, the two players who allegedly committed the assault have been charged with sexual assault and the University of Ottawa men's hockey team has been suspended until the 2016-17 season begins.²⁴

A recent Presidents Council Report conducted by St. Mary's University in Halifax recommended that student athletes and coaches undergo bystander education with respect to sexual assault.²⁵ A personal contact of mine who plays on the University of Western Ontario men's soccer team stated that the team was required to undergo a seminar on sexual assault prior to the beginning of the 2015-16 season. He said this seminar had a positive impact on the demeanour of the players and the overall attitude of the team when it came to sexual assault. With respect to the aforementioned cases involving student athletes and sexual assault, it is reasonable to suggest that a mandatory, informative seminar regarding sexual assault may have prevented these incidents from happening in the first place. Student athletes must understand that sexual violence of any nature is intolerable by the university and that punishment will follow reports of sexual violence against student athletes. Post-secondary institutions should be required to mandate this training to all athletic bodies at the university by the government.

States: CNN.

²⁴ CBC News. (2016, January 27). U of O men's hockey players had sex while others watched, university claims. Retrieved May 20, 2016, from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/u-of-o-sexual-assault-statement-defence-1.3420053>

²⁵ Promoting a culture of safety, respect and consent at saint. (2013). . Retrieved from <http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/PresidentsCouncilReport-2013.pdf>

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DEMOGRAPHICS²⁶

Cisgendered Women

Violence against women is a very prevalent issue in the media. This is primarily because, statistically, over 80% of sex crime survivors are women.¹⁶ Every 17 minutes, a woman is sexually assaulted.²⁷ One in four North American women will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime.¹⁶ 83% of disabled women will be sexual assaulted during their lifetime.¹⁶

Since women are considered the primary target of sexual violence, there is a common misconception that they are somehow responsible for their own sexual assaults. This leads women, especially those who come forward about experiencing sexual assault, to be questioned about their outfits at the time of the incident, whether or not they were consuming alcohol, and their past sexual history. Though this is not always the case, many women who have come forward about their assaults report that this happened to them either in the context of an interview with the police or university administrators or in a courtroom.

It is important to recognize that women can be assaulted by both men and women and that the assault does not just have to be penetrative intercourse to count as sexual assault.

Cisgendered Men

The 2013 National Crime Victimization Survey in the United States found that of 40 thousand households surveyed, 38% of sexual violence occurred against men. Though it is not commonly discussed by the media, 15% of sexual assault survivors are boys under 16. Police-reported data show that the risk of violent victimization among adult males is comparable to that of adult females.²⁸ The 2004 General Social Survey found that nearly

²⁶ Statistics in this section, unless otherwise denoted, have been taken from <http://www.sexassault.ca/statistics.htm>

²⁷ Makin, K. (2013, October 5). How Canada's sex-assault laws violate rape victims. Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/how-canadas-sex-assault-laws-violate-rape-victims/article14705289/?page=all>

²⁸ Gender differences in police-reported violent crime in Canada, 2008: Main article. (2015, November 27). Retrieved May 22, 2016, from

61% of adult males who had been violently victimized did not report the incident to the police. Males were 2.5 times as likely than their female counterparts to experience sexual assault in an institutional setting (e.g., a school or university college). Male survivors of sexual assault were also more likely to be victimized by family members (other than spouses/ex-spouses) and by friends/acquaintances than female sexual assault survivors.

There is often a misconception that males are not assaulted at all—that they should be able to fight off their assailant with ease. However, it is important to remember that those who abuse/assault others can be of any gender identity, sexual orientation, or age. Additionally, perpetrators can have any relationship to the survivor. They might use physical force or psychological and emotional coercion tactics.²⁹

Transgendered Individuals

In the United States, statistics show that approximately 50% of transgender people experience sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.³⁰ In addition, approximately one in ten transgendered individuals have been sexually assaulted in a healthcare setting.³¹ A 2013 study found that approximately 20% of transgender Ontarians had been sexually assaulted.³² It is critical that we include transgendered individuals in the conversations our classrooms have about sexual violence, as this demographic is commonly sexually exploited.

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85f0033m/2010024/part-partie1-eng.htm>

²⁹ 2009, R. (2009). Rape, abuse and incest national network. Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <https://rainn.org/get-information/types-of-sexual-assault/male-sexual-assault>

³⁰ Stotzer, R. (2009). Violence against transgender people: A review of United States data. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 14*, 170-179.

³¹ Grant, J.M., Mottet, L.A., Tanis, J., et al. (2011). Injustice at every turn: A report of the National Transgender Discrimination Study. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality. Retrieved from http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_full.pdf

³² Bauer, G. R., Pyne, J., Francino, M. C., & Hammond, R. (2013). Suicidality among trans people in Ontario: Implications for social work and social justice. *Service social, 59*(1), 35. doi:10.7202/1017478ar

Indigenous peoples

Sexual assault is a prevalent issue in many Aboriginal communities across Canada. In 2002, the rate of sexual assault in Nunavut was 96.1 for every 10,000 people.³³ Aboriginal women make up a large percentage of Canadian sex workers. This can be attributed to various socio economic factors facing Indigenous communities. Recently, the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has become a prevalent issue in our country. In reforming Alberta's sex-ed curriculum, we must retain an element of cultural appropriateness and sensitivity such that our Indigenous children and youth benefit from its teachings.

Children³⁴

60% of all reported sexual assaults are against children. 4 out of 5 incidents of sexual abuse will occur before the age of 18. Exploitation of children often occurs under the noses of educators. 95% of child sexual abuse cases go unreported. It is important that children are taught about healthy relationships from an early age and what to do in the event that an inappropriate sexual relationship has taken place.

PREVENTION VS. INTERVENTION

It is a common belief by many sexual health educators that the best thing educators can do is try to prevent sexual assault. Many also hold that the best way to do this is by teaching the importance of consent in classrooms. While consent is currently not in the CALM 20 curriculum, many external educators from sexual health resource centres and/or sexual assault centres who visit classrooms often bring it up in conversation. The issue remains that not all students are receiving the same information (i.e., not all students receive presentations from external educators), which leaves a discrepancy in the knowledge held by Alberta students.

The teaching of consent can give students the knowledge and confidence to make their

³³Aboriginal Victimization in Canada: A summary of the literature - victims of crime research digest no. 3. (2010, April 16). Retrieved May 15, 2016, from Department of Justice, <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd3-rr3/p3.html>

³⁴Statistics & Research. Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <http://littlewarriors.ca/about/regional/statistics-research/>

own decisions when it comes to engaging in sexual activity. However, while it is critical to teach the importance of consent to students as a measure for preventing sexual assault, there needs to be a ‘backup’ method for when these preventative measures fail. This is why it’s critical to teach about sexual abuse/assault and how to cope with the aftermath of an event of this nature. Simply teaching about consent does not ensure that every individual is protected against the statistical likelihood that is sexual assault.

Our government and educators need to be pragmatic about this issue. Sexual assault is a prevalent issue that has perpetually plagued our society. We as a society cannot retain a hopeful, yet naive perspective that sexual assault can be stopped by teaching that it’s wrong. Instead, we should couple the teaching of consent with the teaching of safe sex and knowledge about dealing with sexual violence to ensure students understand how to handle with any situation they may encounter in the future.

SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE KITS (A.K.A. A “RAPE KIT”)^{35, 36}

Investigators in various crime dramas, like *CSI*, often used a “rape kit” to collect evidence. These kits, however, are not simple tools to accelerate a plotline; they are real tools that investigators use to help survivors of sexual violence find their perpetrator. However, learning about a “rape kit” from a TV show is not the right way to educate children on this serious issue.

“Rape kits” can be used to collect physical evidence of a sexual assault and can be used if the case goes to court. One study conducted in British Columbia examined 462 cases of sexual assault. Of these 462 cases, only 32.7% of survivors pressed charges. Only 11% of those who pressed charges secured a conviction. The study found that a positive correlation between the documentation of genital and extragenital injury and the rates of filing and convictions.³⁷ The likelihood of a conviction is much stronger if a sexual Assault Evidence Kit, also commonly referred to as a “rape kit” has been conducted and

³⁵ Rape, Abuse and Incest National network. (2009). What is a rape kit? Retrieved May 15, 2016, from <https://rainn.org/get-information/sexual-assault-recovery/rape-kit>

³⁶ Information in this section, unless otherwise denoted, has been provided by Corinne Ofstie at the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services.

³⁷ McGregor, M. J., Du Mont, J., & Myhr, T. L. (2002). Sexual assault forensic medical examination: Is evidence related to successful prosecution? *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 39(6), 639–647. doi:10.1067/mem.2002.123694

the physical evidence collected is then presented in court. The problem is that in the current CALM 20 curriculum, students are not learning about SAFE kits. If students do not learn about them in the first place, they are unlikely to access one if they experience some form of sexual violence.

The Purpose of a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit

In Canada, evidence in sexual assault cases can include:

- Witness testimony;
- Witness statements;
- Forensic evidence
- Photographic evidence;
- Statements.

Testimony from the survivor is usually the most important, and is sometimes the only piece of evidence in sexual assault trials. Physical evidence of biological material can be extremely important in some sexual assault cases, particularly where the identity of the assailant, the nature of the sexualized acts that occurred, or the timing of these acts is in question. Survivors of sexual violence may choose to undergo a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit, because:

- Evidence can support the survivor's statement that a sexual assault has occurred.
- Evidence can support details of the statement, such as location, use of force, and time.
- Evidence can link the survivor and alleged perpetrator to a location.
- Evidence may establish the identity of a perpetrator through DNA testing.
- Evidence can be discounted if it was obtained illegally or handled improperly, thus undergoing the kit properly can ensure that evidence is admissible in court.

It is important to note that evidence from a Sexual Assault Evidence kit may not be able to indicate consent or lack of consent.

Contents of a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit

The Sexual Assault Evidence Kit is a box that contains all the necessary materials to collect evidence of a sexual assault.

Each kit has a unique number assigned to it. All evidence collected will be placed in tubes, envelopes, or bags and labeled with this number. There are detailed instructions for each step that the medical providers should follow.

All kits in Alberta are provided by the local police force and completed kits are collected by police for analysis, unless there is a provision for Third Choice/Third Option in one's community. (The Third Option offers survivors of sexual assault another choice when deciding whether or not to report a sexual assault to police.³⁸)

Contents of a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit often include:

- Bags and paper sheets for evidence collection;
- Comb;
- Documentation forms;
- Envelopes;
- Instructions;
- Materials for blood samples;
- Swabs.



The process of the examination

Physical evidence of sexual assault may be collected through a medical exam, which may (but not always) include the use of a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit. **It should be noted that not all hospitals can/do administer Sexual Assault Evidence Kits, many don't.** They ensure medical stabilization and may refer the survivor to the nearest hospital or other sexual assault centre that can do a kit and ensure transportation (through RCMP

³⁸Calgary communities against sexual abuse. (2012). Retrieved May 18, 2016, from <http://www.calgarycasa.com/initiatives/third-option/>

and VSU). The kit is supplied by the local police force where the assault occurred.

The sexual assault exam serves two goals:

1. To provide the best immediate care for the survivor;
2. To collect evidence that may be used to prosecute the crime.

Survivors of assault can expect the following procedure if he/she chooses to have a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit done:

- Taking a history of current medications, pre-existing conditions, recent sexual activity, etc.;
- A full body examination, including internal examinations of the mouth, vagina, and/or anus;
- Possible blood draws;
- Possible collection of clothing, including undergarments worn during the assault.

Accessing the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit

Sexual Assault Evidence Kit can be found at:

- Hospitals;
- Local sexual assault centres;
- Local police stations.

Please note that not all hospitals provide Sexual Assault Evidence Kits. Survivors should do their best to look up a location that can provide the kit beforehand.

Please see the section titled “Sexual Health & Assault Centres in Alberta”.

Who will conduct the examination?

Examination of sexual assault survivors can be conducted by:

- A doctor;
- A Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).
 - A team of female Registered Nurses (commonly referred to as Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners or SANEs) who have been trained specifically to care for people who have been sexually assaulted within the past 72 hours

These individuals are trained to conduct these examinations.

Precautions to Take Before Accessing a Kit

Those receiving a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit should try to refrain from doing the following prior to the examination:

- Bathing;
- Showering;
- Using the restroom;
- Changing clothes (it is also wise to bring a spare change of clothes, as the clothes from the assault may need to be collected);
- Combing hair;
- Cleaning up the area;
- Taking any drugs or alcohol.

Survivors should also look to bringing a trusted friend and/or family member for support, as this can be a difficult process both physically and emotionally.

Even if one knows about a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit, they often do not know to take exercise these measures before going to get a kit. It is critical that individuals are aware of this knowledge.

When should one access a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit?

Historically, the benchmark timeline for collecting physical/biological evidence for sexual assault was 72 hours. Current 'best practice' is to gather evidence within 5 days, with the possibility of collecting vaginal samples being up to 7 days. However, the survivor of assault should try to undergo the kit as soon as possible to prevent any contamination of evidence.

Regardless of biological samples, some evidence of injuries may be evident at the outset while other injury evidence may not appear for several days. Whether a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit is used or not, the survivor receives the same care and attention to support their recovery and healing.

If a Kit is not completed, medical records *can* still be used in court.

Who can access a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit?

People of all ages and genders have the right to access the kit if needed.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR ASSAULT SURVIVORS

Providing psychological help to sexual assault survivors

The following people can and should provide psychological help to sexual assault survivors:

- School councillors;
- Local sexual health clinics;
- Private counseling;
- Crisis hotlines.

*Medical care following sexual assault*³⁹

Sexual assault survivors may need to access follow up care after an assault has occurred. This is **not** usually a part of the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit collection. Medical examinations following sexual assault may include:

- Examination of the body for any signs of injury (lacerations, contusions, etc.)
 - The breasts, external genitals, vagina, anus, and rectum are typically the areas that are most likely to be injured.
 - These areas will likely be carefully swabbed and cultured.
- Testing for STIs (i.e., HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and, trichomonas)
- Testing for pregnancy
- Prescription of medications
 - HIV prophylaxis
 - Antibiotics
 - Emergency contraception (A.K.A. “Plan B”)
 - Should typically be accessed within 72 hours after intercourse.

Toxicology Kit

A survivor may also wish to undergo a toxicology kit⁴⁰ to document any substances that were in his or her body at the time of the assault. (Remember that consent is invalid if either party is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol).

³⁹Care after sexual assault. (2016). Retrieved May 19, 2016, from <http://www.uptodate.com/contents/care-after-sexual-assault-beyond-the-basics>

⁴⁰ Forensics › sexual assault forensics › toxicology › forensics for survivors. (2015). Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <http://www.surviverape.org/forensics/sexual-assault-forensics/toxicology>

REPORTING SEXUAL ASSAULT IN ALBERTA⁴¹

“The primary role of the police in dealing with allegations of sexual assault is to ensure that a thorough, unbiased, and professional investigation is conducted. Perhaps more than any other crime, the testimony of the victim is vital because it is often the primary source of evidence for the prosecution. In this respect, police officers must first seek to understand the impact and trauma experienced by victims of sexual assaults.”⁴²

By asking for a SART nurse, a survivor is *not* automatically reporting the assault to the police. The SART nurse will ask if he/she wants to report to the police. If the survivor does not want to report, the SART nurse will do a physical and genital exam to assess any injuries that may have occurred.

If one does choose to report his/her assault, the nurse will call the police and a detective with the Sexual Assault Section will come to the hospital (typically in plain clothes) to speak with the survivor. When the detective arrives, he or she will ask the survivor what happened; if the survivor is not up to giving a full verbal statement at this time, the officer will usually wait until the next day. The detective may provide the survivor with witness statement forms and ask him/her to complete a written statement at home. At this point the survivor can also choose whether or not to have a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit completed.

After the survivor has been examined, the detective will usually provide her or his contact information and make arrangements to speak with the survivor again about the assault.

One may also report a sexual assault by going to a police station or community station and report it to the officer at the desk. The procedure in this case can vary greatly due to differences between stations.

⁴¹www.edmontonpolice.ca/CommunityPolicing/PersonalPropertyCrimes/SexualAssault/ReportingSexualAssault.aspx

⁴² Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, Criminal Justice Division. (2013). Sexual assault handbook - for police and crown prosecutors in Alberta. Retrieved from https://justice.alberta.ca/programs_services/criminal_pros/documents/sexualassaulthandbook-policecrown.pdf

When the survivor comes into a police station to report, he or she will write a witness statement and the officer will start a report. However, the survivor may be asked to write the witness statement sitting at a table in the waiting room, standing at the counter, or in a private room, depending on the station. He/she may also have to wait for another officer to come back to the station to do the report, if the desk officer is the only one there. This can take time.

After starting the report and writing a witness statement, the survivor will receive a copy of the statement and a file number. The survivor can go home or (depending on the time frame between the sexual assault and reporting), he or she may be asked if they want to attend the hospital for an examination.

It is important for the survivor to keep the statement and file number for his/her records. Depending on the circumstances, the initial investigating officer may continue to investigate the case, or the file may be forwarded to the Sexual Assault Section of the police force. After the investigation is completed, it is up to the police and the Crown Prosecutor's office as to whether or not charges will be laid against the assailant. Once a decision has been made, the officer will contact the survivor.

Currently, Third Option/Third Choice is offered in Calgary and Edmonton. Calgary was the initial pilot in Alberta for Third Option in April 2011. Lethbridge is engaging in a pilot project for Third Option in 2016. Third Option or Third Choice offers survivors of sexual assault another choice when deciding whether or not to report a sexual assault to police. Previously, survivors who attended a hospital within 72 hours after being sexually assaulted had the options of collecting evidence and reporting the crime against them to police immediately or choosing not to have evidence collected and released to police. The Third Option pilot project provides recent survivors of sexual assault with an additional and compassionate reporting choice—collecting forensic evidence and having it stored for a period of up to one year allowing survivors time to make the reporting decision that is best for them without pressure. “Giving sexual assault victims more time to make a reporting decision is crucial, as most of these crimes are committed by someone who is known to the victim. That makes it harder for the victim to know what to do. It only makes sense to give people who've experienced major trauma time to consider such a decision,” says Danielle Aubry, Executive Director of Calgary

Communities Against Sexual Abuse. The main goal of the project is to secure any evidence for potential future use should they decide to report to police and provide survivors of sexual assault additional time to consider the decision to report. (www.calgarycasa.com).

The kits essentially belong to police. It is the police who investigate and 'press charges.' It is a common misconception that survivors choose to press charges. So if a survivor consents to a kit, if Third Option is not an available for them, they are reporting sexual assault to Police and the evidence that is collected belongs to the Police.

Police conduct an investigation and make the following determinations:

1. **Unfounded:** Applies when the police investigation has established that a crime did not happen or was not attempted. Therefore, police can classify a case as unfounded only when they have evidence to confirm that an incident did not occur or was not attempted.
2. **Founded - Not Cleared:** Applies where there is no evidence that a crime did not take place but where there is not enough evidence to proceed.
3. **Founded - Cleared by Other Means:** Applies when police decide not to complete a Report to Crown Counsel (RCC) even though they have identified the offender and have sufficient evidence to support a charge (i.e. suspect is deceased, reluctant witness, diplomatic immunity)
4. **Founded - Cleared by Charge:** Applies when police file a Report to Crown Counsel alleging responsibility for an offence. This does not necessarily imply the swearing of an information or prosecution since Crown counsel may return the case to police due to insufficient evidence or take no further action.
5. **False Allegation or False Report:** The determination that a report is false can the only be made when there is sufficient evidence to establish that the sexual assault did not happen (was not completed or attempted).

The conviction rate for sexual assault is very low. Only 0.03% of sexual assaults are prosecuted resulting in conviction. Most reports do not exceed the Police 'Unfounded' and 'Founded - Not Cleared' threshold.

SEXUAL HEALTH & ASSAULT CENTRES IN ALBERTA

A list of sexual assault centres in Alberta can be found at aasas.ca/get-help. Some of the services listed below have Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs). SARTs are collaborative community responses to recent sexual assaults that support survivors' options to:

- Make immediate decisions or defer their decisions to a time that is most helpful to them;
- Access support and/or counselling services in the community;
- Seek medical attention. This may or may not involve the police depending on the decisions made by the survivor;
- Request police involvement;
- Apply for Victims of Crime benefits.

There are currently nine SARTs in Alberta, which can be found in:

- Fort McMurray;
- Medicine Hat;
- Lloydminster;
- Grande Prairie;
- Rocky Mountain House;
- Edmonton;
- Red Deer;
- Calgary;
- Lethbridge.

Listed below are some of the sexual health centres and sexual assault services in the province of Alberta. Please note that not all sexual health centres provide help for those who have experienced sexual violence. Some of these centres are aimed at providing individuals with access to information about sexual health, while others are focused specifically on the issue of sexual violence.

Calgary Sexual Health Centre, Calgary, Alberta

- Services include:
 - Counselling;
 - Running Calgary’s Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) network;
 - Workshops;
 - Providing resources for parents;
 - School-based education programs.⁴³

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA), Calgary, Alberta

- Services include:
 - A 24-hour crisis hotline **((403) 237-5888)**;
 - Community outreach;
 - Crisis intervention and counselling;
 - Educational programs⁴⁴;
 - “Who do you tell?”™⁴⁵.

Compass Centre for Sexual Wellness, Edmonton, Alberta

- Services include:
 - Counselling;
 - Culturally appropriate sexual health education for parents, youth, families and newcomers who may benefit from such information;

⁴³Calgary Sexual Health Centre. (2016). School education program objectives - Calgary sexual health centre. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.calgarysexualhealth.ca/programs-workshops/school-based-education/school-education-program-objectives/>

⁴⁴Calgary communities against sexual abuse. (2012). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.calgarycasa.com/programs/education/>

⁴⁵ Calgary communities against sexual abuse. (2012c). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.calgarycasa.com/who-do-you-tell/>

- Community events;
- School-based education programs.⁴⁶
- Compass' educational sessions may/may not cover sexual assault depending on whether or not the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE) will also be presenting at the same schools.
 - If SACE is *not* presenting, then Compass' educators will try to include components of sexual assault in their presentation.
 - If SACE is presenting, then Compass' educators typically will not discuss sexual assault in their presentation.
- Compass' educators always try to include information about consent into their presentations despite the fact that it is not explicitly in the CALM curriculum.

Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta

- Services include:
 - A 24-hour crisis hotline **((780) 420-1482)**;
 - Online lessons about sexual assault⁴⁷ and child sexual abuse⁴⁸;
 - Public education programs.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Education | programs & services | compass centre for sexual wellness. (2016). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.compasscentre.ca/services/education/>

⁴⁷Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton. (2012). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <https://www.sace.ab.ca/index.php/learn/online-lessons/sexual-assault>

⁴⁸Sexual assault centre of Edmonton. (2012). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <https://www.sace.ab.ca/index.php/learn/online-lessons/child-sexual-abuse>

⁴⁹Sexual assault centre of Edmonton. (2012). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <https://www.sace.ab.ca/index.php/learn/public-education-program>

Edmonton STI Clinic, Edmonton, Alberta

- Services include⁵⁰:
 - Free and private testing and treatment for STIs;
 - Testing for HIV, bacterial infections (e.g., chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis), and diseases of the blood (e.g., Hepatitis C);
 - HPV (genital warts) treatment;
 - Pregnancy testing and referral;
 - Emergency contraceptive pill;
 - Referral to community services;
 - Needle exchange (service is not offered at East Edmonton Health Centre site).

Fort McMurray Sexual Assault Program, Fort McMurray, Alberta⁵¹

- Services include:
 - A 24-hour crisis hotline ((780)791-6708);
 - An emergency shelter;
 - Emotional support;
 - Client Advocacy;
 - For clients wanting support with meetings involving court, hospital, and RCMP
 - Provide clothing to women that release their clothes to RCMP for evidence
 - Educational groups;
 - AMAC (Adults Molested As Children)
 - Child Sexual Abuse Safety
 - Sexting, Healthy Relationships & Age of Consent

⁵⁰Alberta Health Services. (2016, April 26). Edmonton general continuing care centre - sexually transmitted infections clinic. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/facility.aspx?id=3918&service=1001498>

⁵¹Fort McMurray family crisis society. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.fmmfcs.com/programs/index.html>

- First Responder to Sexual Assault
 - parents groups (child care available)
- Public education programs.

PACE - Peace Country Sexual Assault Line, Grande Prairie, Alberta

- Services include:
 - A 24-hour crisis hotline **(1-888-377-3223)**;
 - Safe visitation;
 - Non-custodial parents can visit their child
 - Women's support group;
 - Developing and maintaining healthy relationships
 - Setting limits and boundaries
 - Building confidence
 - Child abuse treatment;
 - Provides play and individual therapy for children ages 3-17 who have been traumatized
 - Public education programs⁵²;
 - Includes a sexual violence awareness program⁵³
 - One program is designed for K-6
 - One program is designed for grades 7-12

⁵²PACE. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.pacecentre.ca/ProgramScreens/PublicEducation.php>

⁵³Sexual violence presentation. . Retrieved from <http://www.pacecentre.ca/DownloadableFiles/SV%20Information%20Page.pdf>

YWCA Harbour House, Lethbridge, Alberta

- Services include:⁵⁴
 - A 24-hour crisis hotline **(1-866-296-0447)**;
 - Project Child Recovery;
 - A support group for children 6 -12 years old who have witnessed domestic violence or other forms of trauma
 - YWCA women's residence;
 - 32 beds in both single and double furnished rooms.
 - Residents (and any dependent children) share a kitchen as well as washroom and
 - Coin-operated laundry facilities. Rooms are available to rent on a weekly or
 - Monthly basis at reasonable rates
 - Counselling and support services are provided to the women and children
 - Safe visitation;
 - provides the opportunity for non-custodial parents to have contact with their children to promote or rebuild a healthy relationship
 - Victim awareness sessions;
 - one-on-one meetings with a YWCA Outreach counsellor
 - sessions address the cycle of violence, the effects of violence on children, danger assessment, and safety planning
 - Public education sessions.
 - Available upon request
 - There is not a lot of information available on the content of these sessions

⁵⁴YWCA Lethbridge. (2016). Retrieved from <http://programs.ywcalethbridge.org/userfile/file/What%27s%20Happening%202016-17.pdf>

*Lloydminster Sexual Assault & Information Centre, Lloydminster, Alberta*⁵⁵

- Have a 24-hour crisis hotline available;
- Website is currently under construction, thus information on community programs is currently limited.

Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre, Red Deer, Alberta

- Services include:
 - A 24-hour crisis hotline **(1-866-956-1099)**;
 - Court support⁵⁶;
 - Staff and volunteers assist survivors of sexual abuse/assault as they navigate their way through the criminal justice process including police investigations, preliminary hearings and trials.
 - Services offered include counseling, police accompaniment for reporting, court preparation and accompaniment, advocacy for survivor through the court system and follow-up, including de-brief, referral and counseling.
 - Public education programs.⁵⁷

SAFFRON: Strathcona Sexual Assault Centre, Strathcona, Alberta

- Services include:
 - A 24-hour crisis hotline **(1-888-416-7722)**;
 - Therapies;
 - Art therapy
 - Play therapy
 - Group therapy

⁵⁵Lloydminster Sexual Assault. (2016). Lloydminster sexual assault & information centre. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://www.lloydminstersexualassault.com/>

⁵⁶Court support. (2013). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://casasc.ca/court-support/>

⁵⁷Education. (2013). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://casasc.ca/education/>

- One-on-one therapy
 - School presentations;
 - Elementary⁵⁸
 - Junior high⁵⁹
 - High school⁶⁰
- Sexual assault is covered in the junior high and high school presentation.

WORKING WITH RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

It is the truth that sexual abuse/assault can occur regardless of one's race, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and/or religion. Thus, it is important that all children of all religions are well-versed in how to cope with the reality that is sexual abuse/assault. However, this must be done in a culturally-sensitive manner that is respectful of religious freedom.

Please note that I reached out to Islamic and Jewish schools in the Calgary area regarding how sexual health is taught in their schools, but have yet to receive a response.

Catholic Schools

“The human sexuality component of Health is taught in Religious Education and Family Life and all themes are taught within the context of the Catholic Church.”⁶¹

“The Catholic Church's traditional teaching about sex education, especially as formulated by Popes Pius XI and Pius XII, is that it should not be primarily a matter of giving explicit information at all, but rather it should be a matter of inculcating modesty, purity, chastity, and morality, a matter of teaching the sixth and ninth commandments. Moreover, it should

⁵⁸Saffron Centre. (2014, August 14). Elementary school presentations. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://saffroncentre.com/elementary-school-presentation/>

⁵⁹Saffron Centre. (2014, August 18). Junior high school presentations. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://saffroncentre.com/junior-high-school-presentations/>

⁶⁰Saffron Centre. (2014, August 18). High school presentations. Retrieved May 9, 2016, from <http://saffroncentre.com/high-school-presentations/>

⁶¹ Supplementary Curriculum. (n.d.). Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <https://www.cssd.ab.ca/Programs/Curriculum/SupplementaryCurriculum/Pages/default.aspx>

also be primarily a matter for the parents to impart privately in the home, not something to be purveyed and discussed in mixed classrooms of boys and girls at impressionable ages.”⁶²

The teaching document issued by the Pontifical Council on the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family* was written in 1996—20 years ago. Since this document has been released, the world’s social climate has changed. There is now more emphasis on the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, more scientific research about various reproductive technologies, and more research on child development and how children respond to sexual health education.

Many children who attend Catholic schools receive limited knowledge in terms of reproductive health (e.g., STIs, condom use, abortion, etc.), because these topics are sensitive in the Catholic faith.

According to the Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 734 Administrative Procedures Manual, “the Program of Studies provides a list of recommended resources to use in teaching Human Sexuality. Prior to using any supplementary resources, administrators and teachers will seek approval from the Christian Family Life and Religious Education Consultant. This approval must be obtained well in advance of teaching the lessons. Principals are expected to monitor external groups offering resources or interacting with students so that all information presented to students honors and reinforces the teachings of the Catholic Church.”⁶³

I have been unable to find any documents outlining how sexual health education is taught in Catholic schools on the Alberta Education website, thus I am unable to comment on the current state of sexual health education in this school division.

The following are passages from *Human Sexuality*.

“Another abuse occurs whenever sex education is given to children by teaching them all the intimate details of genital relationships, even in a graphic way. Today this is often motivated by wanting to provide

⁶² Sex education: The Vatican’s guidelines. (1996). Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/marriage-and-family/sexuality/sex-education-the-vatican-s-guidelines.html>

⁶³ Craig, J. (2015). Christian Family Life/ Human Sexuality Education. Retrieved from <http://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/32338>

education for safe sex, above all in relation to the spread of AIDS. In this situation parents must also reject the promotion of so-called safe sex or safer sex, a dangerous and immoral policy based on the deluded theory that the condom can provide adequate protection against AIDS. Parents must insist on continence outside marriage and fidelity in marriage as the only true and secure education for the prevention of this contagious disease.”

“Insofar as it entails sincere self-giving, it is obvious that growth in love is helped by that discipline of the feelings, passions, and emotions which leads us to self-mastery. One cannot give what one does not possess. If the person is not master of self— through the virtues and, in a concrete way, through chastity — he or she lacks that self-possession which makes self-giving possible. Chastity is the spiritual power which frees love from selfishness and aggression. To the degree that a person weakens chastity, his or her love becomes more and more selfish, that is, satisfying a desire for pleasure and no longer self-giving.”

It is my hope that students attending Catholic schools will be able to access the information regarding sexual health they need and desire (specifically on the topic of sexual abuse/assault) and will then be able to make their own informed decisions based on their own morals and faith.

Islamic Schools

The Qur'an itself encourages the acquisition of knowledge throughout life. With respect to sexuality, early Muslim scholars described sex as a normal, positive part of life. Al-Ghazali, a Muslim scholar who lived over 900 years ago, described sexual pleasure as a blessing from God.⁶⁴

The Fort McMurray Islamic School, which is a part of the Fort McMurray Public School Division, requires parents to give permission for their child to attend “the human

⁶⁴ Sexuality and diversity. (2010). Retrieved May 22, 2016, from Muslims for Progressive Values, <http://www.mpvusa.org/sexuality-diversity/>

sexuality sections of the Health Program” and “the abuse prevention component of the Health Program.”⁶⁵

While all Alberta students must complete CALM 20 to graduate, it is unclear how the sexual health component is taught in Islamic schools and whether or not those teachings are consistent across the province.

Jewish Schools

Judaism considers sex natural and holy. With respect to sexual abuse/assault, Judaism forbids a man from pressuring his wife sexually.⁶⁶

Again, all Alberta students must complete CALM 20 in order to graduate. However, there is little documentation on how Jewish schools teach the sexual health component of the CALM curriculum.

⁶⁵ Francis. (2014). Student registration fort McMurray Islamic school mission statement has the student ever attended a school in Alberta? Retrieved from <http://islamic.fmmpsdschools.ca/documents/general/Registration%20form%202016-2017.pdf>

⁶⁶ MJL Staff. (2002, August 21). Judaism and sexuality. Retrieved May 22, 2016, from <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/judaism-and-sexuality/>

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CURRICULUM

Given that Alberta Education is currently redesigning the CALM 20 curriculum, the following suggestions have been made via the Change.org petition. Hopefully these changes will be taken into consideration by the Government of Alberta.

1. Discuss the importance of consent.
 - a. Inform students that the age of consent in Canada is 16 years of age.
 - b. Inform students that the age of consent is 18 years where the sexual activity "exploits" the young person -- when it involves prostitution, pornography or occurs in a relationship of authority, trust or dependency (e.g., with a teacher, coach or babysitter).
 - c. Discuss how drugs and alcohol can invalidate consent.
 - d. Discuss how consent must be given with each renewed sexual interaction.
 - e. Ensure that student are aware that consent stretches to photography and that soliciting intimate images without one's consent is a criminal offense according to the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act⁶⁷
 - i. Discuss how "revenge porn"⁶⁸ violates the law.
2. Define sexual assault according to Canada's criminal code.
 - a. Students should understand that sexual assault can occur in various forms (please see section titled "Defining Sexual Assault").
 - b. Inform students that sexual assault can occur between peoples of all genders (e.g., women, men, and transgendered individuals).
3. Discuss the resources available to students who have experienced sexual abuse/assault/may experience it in the future.
 - a. Inform students about a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (also commonly referred to as a "rape kit") and where/how to access one.
 - b. Discuss legal options for survivors of sexual assault/abuse.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Bill C-13. (2014, March 26). Retrieved May 9, 2016, from Bill C-13, <https://openparliament.ca/bills/41-2/C-13/>

⁶⁸ Revenge Porn (2016). In Wikipedia. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revenge_porn

⁶⁹Sexual assault: Introduction to legal options KWSASC court accompaniment training sexual assault: Introduction to legal options. (2006). . Retrieved from http://www.sascwr.org/files/www/resources_pdfs/legal/Sexual_Assault_Legal_Info.pdf

- i. Ensure that students have a basic understanding of what court proceedings are like
 - ii. What punishment will be given if offender is convicted:
 1. Up to ten years in jail for an indictable offence.
 2. Up to 18 months in jail for a summary conviction.
 - c. Discuss what medical and psychological resources are available to survivors of sexual violence.
4. Ensure that teachers who teach the course are properly trained to deliver the information, specifically by workers from local sexual health resource centres.
5. Ensure that students understand that the survivor is never to blame in an incident of sexual assault.
6. Ensure that all students in junior high and high school receive the same quality of sexual health education, including those taking health and wellness courses (similar to CALM) online.
 - a. Perhaps implement a survey for the first few years after the new curriculum has been implemented to gather information on what each student learned. Use this information to ensure each student receives the same quality of education.
7. Provide students and teachers with basic training/information on how to properly help a peer who has been abused or sexually assaulted and how to intervene when they see that someone may be at risk of abuse/assault.
8. Mandate that all incoming students to Alberta post-secondary institutions attend a presentation on consent and sexual assault.
9. Require Alberta post-secondary institutions to develop a sexual assault policy to deal with any complaints that may rise.

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