



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 15 April 2015

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 15 avril 2015

**Select Committee
on Sexual Violence
and Harassment**

Strategy on sexual violence
and harassment

**Comité spécial de la violence
et du harcèlement
à caractère sexuel**

Stratégie de lutte contre
la violence et le harcèlement
à caractère sexuel

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**SELECT COMMITTEE
ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE
AND HARASSMENT**

**COMITÉ SPÉCIAL DE LA VIOLENCE
ET DU HARCÈLEMENT
À CARACTÈRE SEXUEL**

Wednesday 15 April 2015

Mercredi 15 avril 2015

The committee met at 1600 in committee room 1.

**STRATEGY ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE
AND HARASSMENT**

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Good afternoon, everyone. The Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment will now come to order. I would like to welcome our presenters who are with us here today, and to thank you for all coming—half an hour early, I understand, each of you. Also, welcome to any guests who are here to see and hear the work of this committee.

Let me share the mandate with you as we begin. We are here to listen to the experiences of survivors, front-line workers, advocates and experts on the issue of sexual violence and harassment. You are going to inform us on how to shift social norms and barriers that are preventing people from coming forward to report abuses. Your advice is going to guide us as we make recommendations to the Ontario government on dealing with systemic sexual violence and harassment.

However, I do want to stress that we do not have the power or the authority to investigate individual cases. That is better left to the legal authorities.

HOPE 24/7

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): So we welcome you, and I would like to invite Laura Zilney to be our first presenter and to come forward. Laura, you're going to have up to 15 minutes to address our committee, and that will be followed by questions by our committee. Start by stating your name, and begin any time.

Ms. Laura Zilney: Thank you very much for having me. My name is Laura Zilney. I am chief executive officer at Hope 24/7.

I prepared a short presentation. I'm not going to read it as we go, but the purpose I am here for is twofold. One is to share with you a proposal that I put forward and have been working on for a couple years for a provincial sexual violence line; the second is to share with you our consent education that we provide in elementary and high schools across the region, called Our Youth Our Future.

But in order to share with you why we think that Hope 24/7 would be a great service provider to run a provincial line, I included some information about the agency. We

are one of the 41 designated sexual assault centres for the province of Ontario. The Ministry of the Attorney General designates these centres. We are both a not-for-profit and a charity, and we've been operational since 1993, serving clients since 1995.

We're a very unique SAC—which is short for “sexual assault centre”—in that we're the only ones in the province who operate under the model of a professional psychotherapy practice. We're the only SAC in the province that has purely regulated health professionals dealing with clients. This is important, and I'll touch base on why it's important in a couple of minutes.

We're also the only SAC in the country that offers an online crisis chat. We implemented this chat in September 2013 in order to reach the 24-and-under crowd. We know that youth—and we broadly define youth as under 24—are at a substantially increased risk of sexual violence, and we also know they don't like to talk on the phone. We had to come up with a different medium in order to reach them, so we introduced the online chat.

We're also the only SAC to provide access to regulated health professionals outside of traditional office hours, and we're going to become an accredited community health service agency. Our site visit is next week, so we're really excited about that.

But to discuss why it's so important to have sexual assault centres: Sexual violence is really systemic and epidemic in this country. There are over 1,400 sexual assaults a day in Canada.

I represent Peel region. Peel is the most diverse region in Ontario and one of the most diverse regions in the country. Overlay that with cultural issues related to our three prominent ethnic groups—which are South Asian, broadly defined; black, both Caribbean and African; and Chinese—and there are some other additional cultural issues that come into play in such a community.

We also know that the vast majority of survivors are set up for failure in their lives. They'll be repeat victims, and more often than not they're going to know the perpetrator. It's going to be a dad, an uncle, a teacher, a coach, a mom, an aunt—that type of thing.

What's worse is that the incidence of mental health issues is substantial among survivors. What we see predominantly is post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and pain that doesn't have an organic basis but is because of all the psychological distress; it translates into

abdominal pain, back pain, bad headaches and chest pains. We often have individuals who will go to hospitals frequently for unexplained pain, and there's no cause to it outside of needing to get some assistance.

We also know that they're likely to suffer from alcohol- and drug-related problems, and there's a perfectly good reason for this: It's learning to self-medicate to try to balance yourself so you can get through the day and function, so you can go to work. But all of these problems kind of accumulate and add together to create serious mental health issues for survivors of sexual violence. We also know that very, very few go to the police.

Flipping to slide 6, I had been working on proposing a sexual violence line when I came into my role going on three years ago because I learned that of the 41 SACs, 31 offer crisis lines. All of these outside of Hope 24/7 are staffed predominantly by volunteers. The problem with that is when you have somebody with a significant mental health issue or diagnosis, like post-traumatic stress disorder, it's very challenging to try to deal with them when you don't have the professional skills or the background to do so. The results can be catastrophic, up to and including suicide. So it's significant.

Moreover, there's not full coverage across the entire province, which leaves geographically isolated communities, reserves etc. without access to professional care, which then can exacerbate problems even more.

The model of our agency is the model that I proposed when I met with the Premier's staff and the staff from her executive committee. It's the same model we use in our regular operations, and that is that only regulated staff will have access to clients. We use psychological assessments. We assess all clients for suicide and risk of homicide. We do many mental status exams on them. Those are for our phone-in/chat clients. We do substantially more psychological assessments on individuals who access our in-person services.

I'll give you an example of the reason why it's so important to have trained professionals dealing with clients on a line and to have a line that's across the entire province: We have a partnership agreement with William Osler Health System, and one of the hospitals that they represent is Brampton Civic Hospital. We've partnered with their in-patient units, both their adolescent and adult units, and we'll have individuals discharged into the care of the agency, individuals who are actively suicidal. Because we have staff that are trained—they have graduate-level training, they have additional training, they're certified through the colleges—we're able to do that type of work in real time, de-escalate the crisis and avoid their having to go to the hospital over and over, which is very traumatic and very disruptive in somebody's life. So the same type of model would apply.

Because we have staff that are regulated, because we have a 1-800 number and a chat, we do currently get contacts from across the province, the country and the world, and we're able to send them to the appropriate in-person provider in their geographic location.

As part of our treatment, we also do things like standardized follow-up after four weeks, resiliency plans,

these types of things. We also offer therapeutic groups and workshops.

Because Hope 24/7 only does two things, we do them both really well. The second one is prevention and outreach, and that's predominantly through the Our Youth Our Future program, where we tap into elementary and high schools and offer a program on consent and sexual violence.

We know—and it's one of the primary reasons why you're here—that the economic costs for sexual violence are astronomical across the country, and it touches every area. It touches health; it touches social services; it touches criminal justice. There's a lot of money and resources spent to deal with the after-effects of it. We know that in Ontario, over \$100 million is spent on victims' services. Of that, about \$13 million goes to sexual assault survivors and services for them. It's a small piece, but we could save a substantial sum of money if we had a coordinated, consolidated line, again staffed by trained professionals who know what to look for, who know what to assess for, who can de-escalate and move a client forward in under 30 minutes, which is the model that we use.

I've attached the business case that I've shared with the various agencies and ministries that I've met with over the course of the last eight or so months for further information. Flipping to slide 8, it would be the same type of model. We're a trauma treatment centre. It's immediate care that would be provided to individuals. So they would call whenever or text us whenever. We also have the capacity to do a video connect, so for individuals in hard-to-serve or remote communities, like fly-in reserves, they could connect with an actual professional in real time and speak with them. Also, certain cultural groups don't want to talk on the phone or text; they are more comfortable when they see an individual, can interact with them and read their reactions, so we have video capabilities that can scale up really quickly.

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We do the mental status exams. We do the immediate de-escalation. We have a multilingual staff. We also utilize and leverage the services already available across the province through the language interpreter program, so we are able to work with persons from all different backgrounds and ethnicities.

We've also partnered with triOS College. They are doing an app for us where you'll be able to contact emergency services through the app—not just 911, but also our 1-800 number. You'll be able to text through the app and it will GPS-ping your location. So if you want to physically walk into a location—and, let's say, you're in Kenora—it will ping you to the nearest mental health service provider where they have regulated staff. That's been a great partnership.

I'd like to say that we also do feedback and our client feedback has been consistently high. We have a 99% client satisfaction rate. Clients are surveyed after every interaction with the staff and we do not leave the client unless they are fully satisfied and have gotten the assistance that they need.

Shifting gears, I know that the government has been speaking about introducing consent education into the schools, and I just wanted to share with you the model that we use. We call the program Our Youth Our Future. It's based upon the Ministry of Children and Youth Services' Stepping Up framework. We assess for things like mental health disorders, substance abuse, incidents of STIs, social engagement etc., based upon that youth wellness framework. We do the assessment at the beginning and then at the end.

We've worked with our regional schools. We target at-risk schools, as defined by the Ministry of Education's criteria. We ask the superintendents of the catchment area to cherry pick the schools and then we work with the superintendents and principals to cherry pick the students. We want the hardest at-risk kids. These are CAS-involved children; kids that have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked; recent immigrants where language is a barrier and there's some concerns; or individuals who have already been assaulted, whether on school property or not. We put them through a 24-week program. The program is 12 weeks of content on things like consent, what is a relationship, and "How do I find my values when I identify as Canadian and mom and dad don't identify as Canadian?" We work through all of these issues.

Each week of content curriculum is followed by a week of operationalizing what they've learned. Some examples of things that we've done with these kids: We had a group of 12-year-old boys put together a rap on what respect means to them. They story-boarded it, rapped it and did a dance kind of routine. We did a music video and brought in a music producer to kind of mix it so it sounded really good.

We had a group of South Asian and Muslim teenage girls. They wrote up a public service announcement—we filmed it for them—on how you should not shame individuals who have been assaulted or have had their pictures taken unbeknownst to them and distributed around.

We had another group of young boys who were all survivors of sexual violence put into poetry and lyrics their experiences of being victimized and how they want to change that. And we had another group of girls do a dance routine. So it's very flexible and interactive, because we want to reach the children wherever they're at and that changes from school to school.

When we started the program, we came into it with less than 20 kids, and we're well over 320 children this year and are growing into another six more schools. Positive benefits across the board: Psychological distress has proven to have gone down and grade-point average, ironically, has gone up. So the average student has experienced a 7% increase in their grades as a result of participating in the program, and their attendance has increased.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Ms. Zilney, you have one minute left.

Ms. Laura Zilney: Okay. That means a much more positive outlook on life for them later on in terms of jobs and access to different services.

That is basically my presentation. I should just quickly mention we culminate our Our Youth Our Future program in a youth summit every May, which is sexual violence awareness month. This year's theme is the bystander effect. We have workshops, athletics and we've partnered with the city of Brampton to offer that.

So thank you very much.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you. Our first set of questions for you comes from our opposition side.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you. I have a couple of questions. You mentioned with your 24/7 program that you would like it to be fully staffed with professionally trained—I've got "professionally trained professionals," but you get the idea. My question is, because you have the gamut where it could be a mental health issue primarily or it could be sexual assault immediacy, what are the designations that you're looking for when you're hiring for that 24/7?

Ms. Laura Zilney: They have to fall under one of the regulated colleges, so that's the College of Psychologists, the new College of Registered Psychotherapists, and the College of Social Workers. Those are generally the three that we target.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Then are they sorted, depending on the primary or first issue that must be dealt with, to a mental health worker or to—

Ms. Laura Zilney: No. They're all trained. This is one of the reasons why the first thing out of the gate we conduct assessments for risk of suicide and homicide and we do a mini mental status exam. Because one of the ways that we operate—it would be totally unethical and immoral if we were to have a schizophrenic individual call, for instance, and we would try to de-escalate them and not deal with the schizophrenia if it's untreated. If it's treated, that's one thing, but somebody who is profoundly mentally ill doesn't have the ability to process the trauma when they're not stable. So we do those assessments in order to—if they're stable, we work with them, and if they're not, then we transition them to CMHA or CAMH.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Is there any component within the continuum of helping someone where peer support is part of your model?

Ms. Laura Zilney: Yes. We do have a peer-to-peer program. We offer it in two of the three cities within Peel. The peer-to-peer model is not for clinical support. It's just if somebody wants to sit and touch base with somebody who's been through the experience that they've been through, and they have that shared understanding and they can just say, "You know what? I've had a really rough day."

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Okay. Do I have any time left?

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): You have one minute left.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Okay. With your school program, you mentioned that you're targeting at-risk youth chosen by the principals and the superintendents. I've had some schools and some programs where they actually discour-

age that because it segregates children or young people who are already having issues. I'm wondering if you can comment on why you've chosen the specific model where you have a group of children or young people, but not everyone.

Ms. Laura Zilney: That's an excellent question and it's right down to the basic resources. We weren't able to expand into all schools so we had to do targeted schools. The superintendents identified certain schools as particularly challenging in terms of sexual violence occurring on the campus itself. Those are the schools that we targeted first.

We're finalizing the second year that we've been in the program. This is also the year where we've said, "Give us five to 10 kids who volunteer," so the student council, the debate club and the sports teams. We know that good kids tend to be good throughout, right? But if you've had some hiccups and you're in a bit of trouble, you tend to fall into that crowd and then the behaviour repeats. That's exactly to your point.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our next set of questions for you is from MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Yes, thank you so much for the presentation. I'm interested in learning a bit more about the HR model that you use. You're the only SAC in Ontario to employ only regulated health professionals. Other SACs have, I guess, a variety of other counsellors and staff who deliver the programs. Do you have evaluations that show differences in the outcomes based on the kinds of staff who are delivering programs? I guess this is a very expensive model to use, and I'm just curious to know about some of the history and if there's any evaluation data associated with only using regulated health professionals.

Ms. Laura Zilney: It's actually not a more expensive model. Peel is one of the least funded SACs across the province on a per capita basis. I'm able to budget such that we can afford the staff. It just means sacrificing in other areas. For instance, we operate out of 1,000 square feet right now, moving to 2,200 square feet in a couple of weeks. We sacrificed space in order to deliver client services by regulated staff.

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In terms of outcomes, I couldn't tell you because the other SACs don't collect that. So we measure our outcomes—what I tell my staff is that I want to see lowered psychological distress and exceedingly high client satisfaction, and you haven't been successful unless you've done that. We won't exit you unless you're down to the mild range of psychological distress. That's how we track it, through psychological assessment measures and feedback, which is externally validated feedback. We didn't make this scale up. But we couldn't compare, because the other SACs don't track the outcomes of their clients. We follow them for four weeks, post-treatment-completion, as well, to make sure that they're on track to continuing with their resiliency plan and succeeding.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay. The brochure that you have talks about the mix of fee-based services and the free

crisis services. What is the proportion of fee-based versus free crisis services that you have? Is that typical for all SACs in the province?

Ms. Laura Zilney: No. We started to charge fees for our—the break-off point is "mild" on the psychological assessment measures. Everybody comes in and they get a free intake. Then we base it upon both the psychological assessment measures and clinical judgment. We have an ethics framework that shifts those clients in the grey area.

Some 95% of our clients are crisis. Once we de-escalate the psychological distress, that 5% is pretty much all individuals who choose to stay with the agency going forward.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Just that 5% would take up the fee-based services?

Ms. Laura Zilney: Yes. It's not a substantial portion.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Do most SACs have that same mix of programs?

Ms. Laura Zilney: There's no coordination, no standard across the province.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay, so every SAC in every community would have—

Ms. Laura Zilney: Does whatever they want.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Oh, whatever they want. Okay.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our final questions for you are from MPP McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Laura, for an excellent presentation. You've had a lot of experience in this field. I think what I'd like to gain from you is, amongst your practice, what are the best practices, in your experience, in preventing sexual violence and harassment in the first place?

Ms. Laura Zilney: It's education, and it starts young. We did a cut-off of 12 years, because anything under 12 requires a sub-specialty, or a skill set that's different. It really is catching them young and helping them understand what respect is. Diversity is another issue—helping them understand what's acceptable in Canada versus what was acceptable, perhaps, in the country of origin as well.

It comes down to education. Out of the over 300 that we work with, when we start the program—because we measure, "How much do you know? Do you know if this is an assault?"—they have no clue that what they're doing or have had done to them is assaultive behaviour. It permeates society with media and everything. So the education piece is really a fundamental component. It breaks the cycle, because we'll have kids in the program who then have their older siblings come to us, and their parents come to us, as clients. It helps to break that cycle. But we wouldn't have reached them without having them enter the educational program.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you. I would imagine that you're in support of the new sex ed curriculum that's going forward.

Ms. Laura Zilney: Yes.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: What prevents sexual assault victims from reporting?

Ms. Laura Zilney: I think there are a myriad of factors. One is shame and blaming. We hear a lot of feedback that the police are not receptive to certain things. The line of questioning that victims go through when they're giving a statement can be very degrading and humiliating. We've tried to partner with the police in order to train them up on what a trauma-informed perspective would be. But the shaming is one.

We're talking about individuals who have multiple challenges faced against them. They might have mental illnesses. They might be single parents. They might be working four jobs. When are you going to go? Are you going to take time off work? And then how are you going to pay your rent? If you're wealthy, are you really going to go and have everybody under the sun know what happened to you?

It's easier if you just bury it, but then it comes out in other ways. It comes out through anger. It comes out through hurting yourself, through substance misuse, that type of thing.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Okay, thank you. What kind of reaction do you think there would be within the sexual assault centre community if all the crisis lines that are out there right now were to be amalgamated into the Hope 24/7 service?

Ms. Laura Zilney: I think there might be a little bit of pushback, because a lot of the SACs—this is my personal perspective—are operating in a model that's a couple of decades old. It's challenging to respond to individuals presenting with complex mental health issues if you don't have an understanding of what those mental health issues are, the neuro-biological basis of trauma, and you don't understand a trauma-informed perspective. It's challenging.

But the results are clear: We have a 100% success rate for our treatment completers. Their psychological distress is lower. They're back to work. They're not going to the hospital. They're not being committed to mental health units. So there is a model that works. It's not more expensive, but it requires individuals who have training in being able to implement it.

If there was above-board spending and the SACs could re-invest that money in in-person services, there would be minimal pushback, if any. But if it was cutting the funds that they spend on the line and pushing it into a consolidated line, then there will be pushback, because the funding hasn't increased in 10 years for sexual assault centres.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Okay. Then, lastly, what suggestions do you have to improve the system to better target those and your specific high-risk groups that you've been talking about?

Ms. Laura Zilney: It's really having a collaborative partnership model. Different agencies get target different populations. So you have agencies serving severely and persistently mentally ill. You have agencies serving the homeless. You have agencies serving at-risk youth. Then you have the schools. The clients themselves—they don't cross agencies. So it's the agency's responsibility to be

the one that can navigate through the system and find those clients and target. It's those collaborative partnerships that are really required in order to get to the people that you need to get to.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. If you would like to join our audience, please do so. We thank you so much for coming and sharing your information with us today.

Ms. Laura Zilney: Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

ONTARIO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ALLIANCE

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Our next presenters are Steve Dolk and Ms. Heidi Nabert. I would ask that they—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Committee members, we are going to skip ahead to our 5 p.m. presenters, if they would be ready. I would ask Sean Madden and Danielle Pierre to come forward and to take a seat. You have 15 minutes to address our committee, and that will be followed by questions by our committee members. Please start by stating your names and begin anytime.

Mr. Sean Madden: Absolutely. Thank you, Madam Chair, and the rest of the committee. My name is Sean Madden, and I am the executive director with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, affectionately known as OUSA. We're an advocacy body representing nearly 140,000 undergraduate and professional students across seven university campuses.

Ms. Danielle Pierre: I am a research analyst at the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. My name is Danielle Pierre. Thanks for having us today.

Mr. Sean Madden: Again, a big, big thank you. This committee is undertaking important work, and we appreciate the opportunity to present our thoughts to you today.

Sexual violence is a serious reality in our society, and touches nearly every citizen, whether in an acute way or through the immersion in cultural conditions that contribute to violence and hate.

The province's leadership in this area is an important step forward, and recognizes that this issue of sexual violence is broadly realized and often intersecting, again, whether talking about acute issues or those cultural factors that contribute to violence or those supports that survivors require.

Post-secondary campuses are sites of particular concern due to high rates of sexual violence and misconduct, as well as the vulnerability of student populations. However, campuses also offer a special opportunity in which to proactively address crisis and violence due to their positions as places where many youth are living, learning, eating, working and socializing.

Putting policies and initiatives in place at universities and colleges will shape not only the immediate experi-

ence of students, but will also be important to establishing cultures of mutual respect, consent and intervention that will leave lasting social impacts.

Stand-alone policies on sexual violence at our universities are important tools in addressing these issues. Some have questioned whether they are required or if sexual misconduct is already adequately addressed by student and staff codes of conduct. Quite simply, though, sexual violence, and the response to sexual violence, is very different from other misconduct on campuses.

Having a stand-alone policy and review process not only makes sense procedurally, as services and strategies can evolve quite quickly over time, but it sends a clear message to all students, especially survivors and complainants, that this is something that is taken seriously and for which there are clear institutional supports and processes.

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Ms. Danielle Pierre: We want to take the opportunity today to offer some suggestions for policy elements that should be considered. But first, I do just want to make a point about language. As we begin these complex discussions, it's important that we touch base and make sure we're all talking about the same thing. As policy-makers, defining our terms and naming violent incidents for what they are is about more than demonstrating our expertise; it is a signal to survivors that we have no desire to dilute their pain. It's a signal to the post-secondary sector that there are separate, although intersecting, issues we need to address. Lastly, it is a crucial step in dismantling cultural stigma surrounding sexual violence.

In the past, the province has offered a multi-faceted definition of sexual violence that we would like to remind you all of today. We define sexual violence as any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. This includes sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape, as well as forms of sexual harassment like stalking, voyeurism, and cyber-harassment. In this way, we are able to recognize the continuum of crisis that our students may experience, or may have already experienced, when they arrive at our university campuses. We ask that you keep this definition in mind as we go through our recommendations today.

Mr. Sean Madden: Today, as we mentioned, we are hoping to offer some suggestions about what a sexual violence and harassment policy on campuses might look like. While traditionally universities have had a fair amount of latitude to tailor these things to their unique needs—and that, of course, is something that is likely to continue in the future—we hope that the province, through this committee, takes a leadership role in defining a framework, at least, to work from or some important elements that should exist within campus policies around sexual violence and harassment.

Effective policies for university campuses must, of course, be grounded in the principle of compassion for survivors. This means recognizing their right to be treated with dignity and respect, to be in control of reporting and recourse, to be informed of all available support

resources, to be provided with academic accommodations, and to be supported in developing a safety plan going forward, as well as having the right to choose from an array of supports available.

Effective policies in that vein will be flexible and specific, in that they should outline a variety of reporting and recourse methods not only to allow any student or staff person who has experienced sexual violence to retain control in deciding which methods they are most comfortable with, but also to ensure that there are appropriate recourse methods in place to address a continuum of possible experiences.

Reporting and recourse options should include the ability to press charges under the Criminal Code of Canada or to file a complaint under any relevant campus codes of conduct, human rights, or employment policies with the full co-operation of the institution and the full control of the survivor or complainant. Standards of communication and confidentiality should be detailed for all stakeholders involved in this process, and the disclosure and resolution of reports of sexual violence should respect those standards of communication and confidentiality.

Policies should also include within their own body up-to-date listings of the campus and community support resources available. While these resources should be broadly advertised everywhere on campus, their inclusion in the policy itself facilitates easier access to comprehensive information. Often you only get one chance with a survivor or complainant to lay out all of their options and all of the steps, and it's important that that information be as broadly distributed as possible.

Ms. Danielle Pierre: It's important that policies lay out expectations for the training of university staff, in recognition of survivors' need to be assured that they'll receive quality support, no matter which member of the campus community they approach. Not everyone will be required to know everything—in fact, having certain individuals working case-management roles is a best practice in this area—but every person in a position of authority, trust or service should have resources allowing them to best support and refer survivors in the event of a disclosure. In this matter, there should be no wrong door for victims.

For those taking on case-management roles, they should be expected and equipped to support any individual in navigating their chosen avenues for recourse, as well as care. This will involve assisted referrals, a degree of advocacy and a knowledge of the options available to survivors. It's important that survivors feel believed and supported in their disclosure and that the handling of their case and care mitigates any procedural stress or ambiguity. There should also be a move to strive to minimize the need for survivors to retell their stories.

Lastly, effective policies will take proactive approaches in addressing issues of sexual violence. Students think that universities should also endeavour to address the cultural exacerbations of sexual violence through programming that recognizes the role each major stakeholder plays in keeping the campus community safe.

Developing a policy is an important place and time to think about how to best serve students and staff through the integration of services. While a survivor is often going to reach out to an on-campus authority first, it is rare that their care is limited to the campus environment. Integration with medical, mental health, and protective services in the community is necessary to ensure effective management of cases of sexual misconduct. Stand-alone and continuously renewed policies then force institutions to revisit their strategies and to remap important relationships and referral networks when necessary.

Mr. Sean Madden: While policies are important, they are only really a foundation for activities, of course. The province is uniquely positioned to help bring consistency to the efforts ahead by working with experts to produce information and strategies that could be utilized by smaller groups with limited resources.

Resources, both monetary and informational, should be made available to institutions to support educational efforts, programming and other initiatives that seek to address the systemic and social conditions contributing to sexual violence on university campuses. Students have traditionally been ineligible for these types of resources, which we feel ignores the critical role that they play in instigating cultural change and in providing support services to their peers.

Ms. Danielle Pierre: Student unions have an important role to play in establishing campus culture and social expectations. They are also often at the forefront of programming and processes around staff training, bystander intervention, and health and protective services. They offer important peer-to-peer and survivor services as well, recognizing that survivors prefer to seek peer support. But unfortunately, these initiatives take their toll on associations' financial and human resources, putting the quality of their service in constant jeopardy. The province should extend eligibility to student unions for any financial resources intended to support sexual violence prevention and response.

We really are at a turning point in how we view sexual violence societally. As social stigma is diminished, the demand for services can only increase. Student unions are currently making tremendous gains in their provision of peer-support services. We cannot risk losing this progress.

It would be prudent for the province to take a leadership position now and look to provide informational and training materials for volunteers and caretakers. This action would be particularly beneficial for smaller organizations within and outside of the post-secondary education sector hoping to increase their volume of service delivery without compromising quality or the health of their staff.

Mr. Sean Madden: Despite the challenges, we of course want to applaud the province for the indication that it will mandate student participation in the development and renewal of policies addressing sexual violence in the post-secondary sector. Most students felt disenfranchised by the approach taken by colleges and uni-

versities in the aftermath of the Star exposé on campus sexual violence. The province's commitment to student involvement will result in stronger policy and successful implementation of those policies.

This proposed legislation, as described in the Premier's action plan, is only the second time that Ontario has stepped in to ensure meaningful student representation on university committees, and, like the ancillary fee protocol before it, it sends a welcome signal that students' voices will be heard throughout the policy-making process. More than that, legislated involvement has been critical in protecting student interests in the past.

In conclusion, we again want to thank you for your important work on this issue and for taking the time to hear us today. We want to share our appreciation for recognizing the role of students in this work.

We now welcome any questions that the committee might have.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our first questions for you are from MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Hi, Sean and Danielle. Thank you so much for coming today to share your thoughts and recommendations.

I had some questions about things you didn't mention. In the Premier's announcement, there was a reference to the collection and publication of data. I know that there are two sides to that about the value of collecting data. Did you have any comments to make on that aspect of the action plan?

Mr. Sean Madden: Yes, absolutely. I'm glad you mentioned that. There has been a ton of ambiguity about the real rates of sexual violence and harassment on campus, and a lot of that has to do with some process mechanisms that make students hesitant to engage with the process, but also, there's just been a lack of a collective effort. We understand the argument coming from the institutions that there are some public appearance problems with the collection and disclosure of this data, but we think that unless we fully understand the extent of the problem, we're never going to be able to comprehensively address it.

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There have been some institutional leaders with the courage and proactive approach to data collection and disclosure. I don't think it has very much hurt their reputation; in fact, it's probably the opposite. So we, as a small advocacy organization with limited access to data, would certainly welcome the enhanced collection, but more broadly, it's a problem that we need to get a better handle on.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: You mentioned that there have been some leading institutions that have been proactive on this. Do you know any specific institutions either in Ontario, in Canada or elsewhere that you would identify as leaders in the development of these kinds of policies?

Mr. Sean Madden: Yes. As far as leaders in the development of the policies go, Lakehead has a very, very strong policy and a strong policy process. As far as the collection and disclosure of data, Ryerson has been a

leader in that. They were specifically the ones I was thinking of when I was saying that some institutions have taken a leadership role, and I don't think it's really hurt their reputation.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay. Final question: The Canadian Federation of Students has proposed the creation of a sexual violence unit within the Ministry of TCU to oversee what's going on with this campus initiative. Is that something that you would also support, or have you taken a position on that?

Mr. Sean Madden: We haven't really taken a position, so I can't speak too much for my board, but a lot of the things we highlighted in our address point to the need for coordination with regard to institutional resources, financial resources and data collection. Whatever process it takes on the ministerial side to accomplish that, it would certainly be welcome.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our next questions for you are from MPP McMahon.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Hi, Sean. Hi, Danielle. Nice to see you.

Mr. Sean Madden: It's good to see you, too.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Wow, what a great presentation—thank you: cogent, to the point and enormously helpful in terms of recommendations.

A couple of things: Training is an issue that we're hearing a lot about as we traverse the province. That won't surprise you. I know from my conversations with McMaster and the students' union there, they seem to have a fairly well resourced program in place, and these volunteer services are looking at a 24/7 helpline; you probably are aware of that. We also heard about Lakehead in Thunder Bay too, so we're well aware of their policy, which is an outstanding example, as you mentioned.

It brought to mind that it seems as though—and we've heard from Laurentian University in Sudbury—there doesn't seem to be a framework amongst universities for sharing best practices about their responses to sexual assaults and violence on campus. Is that something that you're concerned with or that you're acting on at all? Because the colleges seem to be headed in a bit of a different direction. Is that a valid point, and can you comment on that?

Mr. Sean Madden: Yes, I think that's a fair point. Colleges, existing under one consistent act and generally being pretty responsive to what comes from the ministry and to each other, have had a fairly strong response to this.

I think there's definitely room for increased sharing of information, approaches and best practices, because we are hearing from the smaller schools that that capacity might not be there. McMaster has certainly made it a mission, but I think in other places, they're lagging behind in training for their volunteers and staff. It's less to do with will and more to do with resources.

Ms. Danielle Pierre: The only thing that I would add there is that we're seeing a lack of coordination within

institutions as well, so there is siloing even between departments in terms of response. So I guess there are two barriers there: first, making sure that institutions are sharing best practices, whether it's between health services and residence life staff, but also between institutions themselves.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Time for one more, Madam Chair?

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): One more question.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: We've also heard some conversations about the definition of sexual assault itself and, related to that, the definition of consent and how we need to build a new narrative. Is that something you see on campuses? Certainly in Sudbury we heard it. Can you comment on that, how we can work together to maybe encourage that new narrative and how the province can play a role in that? Can you comment?

Ms. Danielle Pierre: I think it starts with just making it okay to talk about sexual violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment and, as I mentioned before, just calling things what they are.

I think it's something that students are willing to do and are doing at a grassroots level. It's definitely something that we've seen from CFS-Ontario and especially at schools like York University. So it's almost bringing that up to a higher level and making institutions aware that they can use this language that already exists, kind of coming at it from both sides, bottom-up as well as top-down.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our final questions for you today are from MPP Hillier.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you very much for being here today. Listen, I want to zero in on a couple of aspects specifically with universities. I'll preface this by first saying that we know that there is a significant reluctance on people to report sexual assault and harassment. We also know that in many cases, it is the result of a relationship where one is dependent and the other has greater authority. That brings to my mind—in a university, in a campus situation—faculty and students. I'm wondering if you've done any surveys of undergraduates who may have experienced sexual assault in that sort of relationship and what the results of that may be, if you have done any of those studies first.

Mr. Sean Madden: In short, no, we haven't done any studies with that. It's tricky for a third-party organization such as ourselves to survey on such a sensitive topic. It's hard to clear kind of institutional protections around that for somebody like us. So that is part of the broader narrative about limited data on these things.

To address the notion of sort of assault or pressure arising from an imbalance-in-power relationship, it's certainly not unique to this sector, but there's definitely a possibility for it. I think the answer within universities is the same as outside, in that we need clear processes by which a student or any staff—really, anybody in a university campus community—can disclose and feel that they will be believed and that their interests will be

protected as the investigation rolls out. People just really need to believe in that process.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I think we can say that there's a conventional wisdom—or media—about sex assault on campus, whether it be drunken parties or whatever. That's why I think it's important that we actually understand what's going on on campus. If there are any direct policies right at the present time that, as far as you're aware, deal with sex assault between faculty and students—are you aware of any unique or different policies in that regard?

Mr. Sean Madden: Danielle may be able to elaborate a little bit more, but in many cases it's sort of a component of the employee code of conduct or human resources documents that exist at institutions. It's acknowledged and spelled out that this isn't appropriate, but it's not really tied in to a process for recourse or resolution. It's just sort of a “Thou shalt not,” and there's not a whole lot to follow that up.

But you can probably elaborate on that.

Ms. Danielle Pierre: I think that this issue goes back to our call for stand-alone policies. What a stand-alone policy allows us to do is draw together employee codes of conduct, the Human Rights Code, the Criminal Code of Canada and student codes of conduct into one comprehensive document that anyone can turn to, whether it is a victim of sexual violence of any kind or a bystander, and see what the institution's stance is on that and what procedures are in place to help, be it your peers or yourself.

I guess we are really at a time of trying to bring everything together, coalesce and really make these implicit assumptions that the relationship between a faculty member and a student—if a power imbalance occurs and then if a violent incident occurs, we can't just implicitly assume that everyone knows this is inappropriate. It's about calling things out and saying that this is inappropriate, and we have this document that says why and how we will address it.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much for your presentation this afternoon, Mr. Madden and Ms. Pierre. I invite you to join our audience if you wish to.

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MS. HEIDI NABERT

MR. STEVEN DOLK

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): I would call on our final presenters this afternoon. They are Steve Dolk and Heidi Nabert. If you could please come forward. Thank you.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Chair, I have a research-related question.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Okay. Do you want to ask that right now?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Sure, if you wouldn't mind.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Ms. Jones, you have a question for our researcher.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Yes. I see that we did get an answer back from the Ministry of Labour about inspectors. It's a little vague, because I actually asked it based on concerns raised by Clare from the Interval House of Hamilton and her issue with the hospitality industry. Hospitality isn't even mentioned. I wonder if I can then rephrase the question as to how many inspections were made in the hospitality industry in—I mean, pick 2013 and 2014, just so we get some indication of what kind of coverage is happening within that spectrum.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you. We'll have our researcher look into that.

Mr. Randy Hillier: And just to follow up on that: We might add that it might be worthwhile to consider having the director of enforcement and compliance for the Ministry of Labour come to the committee after—I think we'll wait until we get some of that information. But just to put it on the table for consideration: What sort of enforcement goes on in the hospitality industry?

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): We'll look at that after our interim report. Thank you, Mr. Hillier.

Welcome to our final guests today. You will have 15 minutes to speak to our committee, and that will be followed by questions by our committee members. Please begin by stating your names, and begin any time.

Ms. Heidi Nabert: Thank you, Madam Chair and committee members. I wanted to just clarify that my last name is Nabert, first name Heidi. I believe there's an extra R in what you have on record. I'm the director of Fathers Resources.

Steve?

Mr. Steven Dolk: My name's Steven Dolk. I guess you could say I'm a stand-alone citizen who's coming to participate. I spoke here about two weeks ago, giving some of my life experience as a victim of domestic violence. I'm also involved in trying to find solutions, to participate in finding some resolve for covering the issue of violence itself, overall, for everyone.

Ms. Heidi Nabert: I'll begin. I'm the director of Fathers Resources International. We're based out of Toronto. My husband, Danny Guspie, founded Fathers Resources in 1994. He has since passed away, in January of this year, of cancer, and I have taken over the full operations. We actually co-chaired Fathers Resources. We offer many different types of services specifically for fathers and men who are going through separation or a divorce.

Just to give you a little bit of history as to how Fathers Resources was founded, both myself and my husband are survivors of our own parents' divorces many, many years ago. We realized that, in many respects, fathers in particular had no understanding of what children go through when there is a separation or a divorce. Hence, we founded, initially, a support group specifically for fathers and then expanded by offering services as well.

We've run a free support group in Toronto for over 20 years, founded a similar support group in Hamilton in 2001, and then in 2004 expanded into Cambridge, the Niagara region and Woodstock, and eventually came up

with a much more effective means of offering this service and launched a virtual support group in 2006. We had participants across Canada, the United States and as far away as the UK and Fiji. We subsequently closed down Cambridge, Woodstock and Niagara region and still maintain a live meeting in Hamilton, Ontario, and a weekly meeting in Toronto—these are all free—which we fund ourselves.

Now, one of the things that we've found over the years of working with fathers is that about 25% of these fathers were actually victims of sexual abuse as children and have never had the help needed for them to get over this type of trauma. It's the typical "Take it like a man," "Big boys don't cry," "Get over it," and most often, they don't disclose at all.

The cost of not having that kind of assistance for that type of trauma—it is no less traumatic for a little girl than it is for a little boy. I speak to this specifically as a survivor of being molested as a child, between the ages of five and nine, by someone in my home.

The bottom line comes down to this: I don't believe this is a female-victim issue. This is a victim issue of both genders. Men and women, boys and girls are victims of sexual abuse. Although I'm applauding the work that has been done so far, specifically for girls and women, I think we have greatly lacked in assisting boys and men who are victims of this same type of trauma.

Getting back to the work that we do with fathers, it trickles down to the point where these fathers are so handicapped, having not gotten past their own PTSD as children, that they're inadequate in terms of how they are able to father their children, and the cost of that is enormous and usually results in a divorce, which has its own costs.

I'd like to share with the committee a personal story of the kind of education that I think is dramatically needed.

I actually applaud the woman, whose name I don't know, who spoke earlier. I think what she's doing is unbelievably important, and I certainly applaud the education aspect of it.

I'd like to share an experience of my stepson, who, at the age of 11, asked a very important question that I frequently use as an example in our support groups and with fathers I work with personally.

We'll call him John, for his privacy. He had been separated from his father at the age of two. His biological parents were extremely violent with each other. There was a little bit more physical violence from the father, but there was certainly enough retaliatory violence from his biological mother. Subsequent to that, his parents split up, and his biological mother married my future husband. So he now has a stepfather.

There was some verbal abuse, let's say, going on in that home, but no physical abuse. Then that marriage failed, and there was a separation. For the time being, he was living with his stepfather, my future husband. I was looking after his stepson and his biological daughter while he was going to school to become a law clerk.

One night, after I had done the dishes and taken care of the kids with dinner, this young 11-year-old asked me

a question, and said, "I don't understand your relationship. You guys don't love each other."

I said, "Well, why would you say that?" He said, "Because you don't fight." How profound is that?

Of course, I explained to him, "I understand what you're saying, but what you don't understand is, you have a choice to re-create"—I mean, this is an adult discussion now. "You have a choice to re-create your biological parents, your second family, or the relationship you're seeing right now."

Had he not been exposed to all those different types of relationships, he would have, without a doubt, not broken the chain—and he has. He's in a relationship that is not violent and is very loving, and he's a wonderful father. He's 35 years old now.

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I point to that as an example of an opportunity to teach children in a classroom what violence really looks like because they may not recognize it. Children see their world as defined by the home that they live in, not anything beyond that. I think we have an opportunity in schools to teach that to children, that there are many different types of relationships and that they have an opportunity to understand what true violence is, whether it's sexual, physical or verbal, and that this is not something that's acceptable.

Mr. Steven Dolk: Good afternoon, honourable members of the committee. I want to thank everybody for giving us this opportunity to sit before you and try to give what best input we can possible to try and pursue a collaborative effort to find solutions. My name is Steven Dolk and I'll just begin. I know we're short on time here so I'll just briefly read it off of my pages here.

It was the Honourable Lord Sankey who once stated that the constitution is "a living tree capable of growth and expansion." "The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours...." It is not "right to apply rigidly to Canada of today the decisions and the reasonings therefor which commended themselves ... to those who had to apply the law in different circumstances, in different centuries to countries in different stages of development."

This was in reference to the historic Edwards case, where on October 19, 1927—many of us know the name—Henrietta Muir Edwards and three other appellant women stood before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council challenging the question, do "the words 'qualified persons' ... include a woman, and consequently whether women are eligible to be summoned to and become members of the Senate of Canada"?

Today I sit before you with the evidence of progression. Before me are individuals which include women, as proof of your qualifications, your eligibility and inclusion as "persons" to take the commission of office to represent your fellow citizens, constituents and your communities as a whole. I commend you for taking this upon yourselves, every one of you. I am not trying to be sycophantic in nature—I'm not. At the same time that I commend you, I don't envy you. The positions you hold

have one of the ultimate challenges: that is to balance the communities' shares of benefits and burdens among the people.

Today, again, I have been given the opportunity to speak about the recent campaign that has come out on sexual violence. I have shared with you before, just two weeks ago, a bit about my life story. As a member of the community myself, I interact with various friends, colleagues and acquaintances who represent and identify themselves in association with other groups that identify themselves differently from, say, my own.

From sexual orientation to gender recognition: male, female, the gay and lesbian community, bisexual, transgender, gender neutral, heterosexual; from religious backgrounds such as Christian, Muslim, Hindu, a large array of others and even the non-religious; from different cultures and ethnicities; First Nations; socio-economic status; those with homes and those who are homeless; the young and the old—I'll loosely use "old"—from all differences, whether they are analogous or listed, there is nothing—nothing—that can take precedence over the fact that humanity and life continue to be dynamic. For this, the dialogue of the citizenship and the people—everyone—must never fall into a stagnant conclusion or solution. It too—the dialogue—must continue to change and tackle that ominous reality—Canada's, Ontario's and Toronto's immense diversity, and framing our identity, while simultaneously pursuing distributive justice, each and every one of us.

I am not trying to engage in a philosophical discussion; there is a point to be made. I have seen one of the videos for the campaign against sexual violence: #WhoWillYouHelp. My response will probably not be one anticipated by the video's producers. Yes, I felt sympathy for the reality that women have been and are victims of sexual violence. I know that it does not stop here. There is still so much more that women endure. Instead, I became afraid, afraid for many, not just for men, as the video unfortunately portrays us—and I have to say "us" because I identify myself under that category, as male—but for many others.

I myself was a victim of domestic violence, as I said two weeks prior. I was also regularly abused as a boy by a female caregiver. Of course, this has had a tremendous impact, historically, on my life, with my perception of women, and I can see why women who have been victims at the hands of men may default in their response similarly towards men.

I do not want to be stigmatized or pitted under the stereotype of what a man is, especially in a video such as this. See, the portrayal, such as what has been made in the video, has its ramifications that have been detrimental to my own life.

When I was abused, the police refused to believe me. Back then, I was almost 300 pounds. I was competitive in tae kwon do. One look at me back then, and I would get laughs. I would even get harassed or intimidated, because apparently I was the one who was the perpetrator. I was only revictimized time and again. If it wasn't by my spouse, it was by society or institutions.

Our last speakers elaborated on trying to define violence, which I appreciate, because there has to be strong emphasis on this. We have to make sure that we can define as concretely as possible the issue of violence and what it is, because—

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Mr. Dolk, you have one minute left.

Mr. Steven Dolk: Because I have one minute left.

In the courts, I pleaded for my children—and I will try and cut this short.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Give him extra time, and we'll just take less questions.

Interjections.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Go ahead.

Mr. Steven Dolk: I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

In the courts, I pleaded to see my children when I finally left the relationship, but even with shared custody and a custody order that granted me access, the official said to me, "Access to your children is none of my concern. I am only concerned that you maintain child support payments."

Is this a direct result of something like the campaign? Maybe not. But it still warrants the question of the harm imposed upon men and their children due to the stigmatization of men further revictimized through alienation and neglect by our institutions.

We have seen the tables turned against the women only 40 years ago, where the woman was the victim in the courts, in jeopardy of losing their child and stigmatized for being divorced, and they, too, were victims of domestic violence.

Justice Abella, a woman from the Supreme Court of Canada, herself reflected on these times but also highlighted that the oppositional processed series of events have thrown individuals such as myself into the mire that women had been struggling in before. Justice Abella herself stated the importance of bringing women into the man's world and delivering equality, but in the process not to kick out the existing inhabitants.

Through my life journey, I refuse to believe that any gender is my enemy. I have been very fortunate, unlike some victims, regardless of identity, who could not go on any further in life and in pain.

Not too long ago, I had to conscribe a paper about politics and the media. Neil Brooks would be my author of choice. He questions and challenges everything that the media produces, their intentions, political agenda and contrasts it with Canada's idea of democracy.

It has become Western practice for media to produce what heightens the emotions of the viewers, and for a brief period, but soon the viewers are then returned to their regularly scheduled programs.

It has been stated that the media is the oxygen of democracy. The media is crucial to the health of democracy, but this video for the campaign on sexual violence has unhealthy implications.

I am not speaking just for myself or men. I am representing, upon request, the voices of many others—people have asked me from transgender communities, the

gender-neutral, queer, aboriginal and many others who were actually too afraid to come with me today to show their faces in public or for fear of being harmed or threatened or harassed. For many of them, the greatest threat is media itself.

Repeating Lord Sankey again, the Canada of today is not of the ideologies from the Hobbesian or Lockean eras where gender determined role, acceptance and office, or of the utilitarian notion of Bentham being the greatest good for the greatest number. No. We are the Canada of today, of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka, who fight to define each individual and group on some egalitarian plateau while trying to implement a sense of libertarianism and, if there is no fit, to continue in a dialogue that remains inclusive of the dignity, respect, identity, tolerance and security of everyone.

“Wait, Steve. You only mentioned male authors.” You’re right. Consider Amy Gutmann or Iris Young, or how about, from another ethnicity, Amartya Sen.

I am in full favour of a campaign raising the awareness of sexual violence. However, care must be taken in our approach—that’s right, our approach. If we emphasize one group as victims and another as perpetrators, have we not made enemies? What about the others who are victims: the transgender, the gender-neutral, the aboriginal, the refugee, the recent immigrant or the socio-economically disadvantaged? None of this was portrayed in any way in the video.

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In concluding, please allow me to exhume some suggestions. I say this because I don’t want anybody thinking that I’m trying to throw a resumé in here. I’m just trying to participate.

This campaign isn’t in fact an absolute, but it affects everyone, so why not research different communities? Consider my case and community, the Centre for Human Rights. I come from York University. I am a student. We have the Centre for Human Rights. We also have the Centre for Aboriginal Students and the Centre for Women and Trans People. What about asking for involvement or input from the gay and lesbian community?

In speaking, and as a citizen, not only do I thank you for this opportunity to participate in speaking before you, but I am offering myself and my time, if you are willing, to be involved myself. Just as much as you, I believe, I want solutions, and I am willing to volunteer my own time to partake in a think tank, or maybe do research or fieldwork, or network, to get the pertinent information that is essential in putting out one large fire instead of further creating many more.

This is my last page.

As of this month, I graduate in political science, and by August, I will have two honours, one in political science and one in psychology as well. At present, I have the opportunity to potentially attend Osgoode and acquire my JD, or Glendon College, to further a master’s in public affairs and international studies.

I believe that a citizen has the due diligence to participate to ensure a direct and effective democracy to its full potential. Within the community of human rights and

academia, there is an army behind me with the same fervour.

I am aware that all of you here have values. One thing that I did notice was primarily family values. Each one of you has expressed the importance of your family and the time spent with them.

Imagine reducing further damages to families, children, and alienated fathers and mothers by reconsidering devising a campaign that potentially reinforces opposition, stigmatization or polarizes men and women.

Imagine, then, all of you here in the committee, honourable members, with all of your tremendous qualities and qualifications, that you could make history—all of us; we could make history—in rerouting a plan of action to subvert harm from everyone, including everyone, and constantly lies in wait to accept others as identities are discovered more and more in the dynamics of our humanity.

I want to thank you, everybody, for your time.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you. Your first questions are from MPP Dong.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Madam Chair. Steve and Heidi, thank you very much for taking the time and for doing this very heartfelt presentation.

I’m a parent to a young girl and a young boy, and I appreciate the fact that you are standing up for boys and men.

I know that the government actually funds support services for a program for male survivors of sexual abuse. I don’t know if you’re aware of this program. Anything specific that you would suggest that the government should be doing on that front? That’s my question to Steve and to Heidi.

Recently, we updated the curriculum in our education system. We hear supportive comments and some negative comments. I just want to hear from you, if you think it’s a step in the right direction and whether it’s adequate to teach our kids in school, our next generation, and whether it’s enough to protect them in the classroom.

Ms. Heidi Nabert: Do you want to go first, Steve?

Mr. Steven Dolk: Please go ahead, Heidi.

Ms. Heidi Nabert: In response to your question, I think it’s a good first step. I believe that we are still lacking in being inclusive for boys. I think boys are really lagging behind. I think that if we look just at the amount of enrolment in universities across Canada, we women are doing phenomenally well, and men are not participating to the same degree.

I think it starts in grade 1. You have to have that encouragement from the very beginning.

There is an opportunity to focus on different types of relationships. I know that there is an aspect to the sexual end of things, and that’s one aspect. But beyond that, you could incorporate the whole bullying aspect into what makes a good relationship. How do you negotiate past that kind of anger and potential violence that comes out of that?

I think there needs to be more work done in that area.

Mr. Han Dong: Okay, thank you. And to Steve?

Mr. Steven Dolk: Okay. First of all, for coming out for me, it's relatively new. Most of what I have learned for support has actually been relatively recent, within the last year and a half to two years. What you have explained to me about the support services available was not available for me.

First of all, I come from Wasaga Beach, so I'm way out in the middle of nowhere. Unfortunately, there's still a lot of social stigma out there, and even if support like that is provided, there still has to be more awareness created so that there's an understanding. Education is key. Education is crucial. I spent 20 years with people looking at me like I had two heads: crying; bleeding, in some cases; having injuries and asking for help. So I think education and awareness are the keys, first, before support.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our next set of questions for you is from MPP Hillier.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm not very aware of what programs there are for male survivors, but I did hear Heidi mention that there are a couple of your branches that you've closed up. I'm just wondering what sort of funding mechanisms are available to Fathers Resources International, and just an overall impression or understanding of what shelters or what programs are available for male survivors.

Ms. Heidi Nabert: I thank you for asking that. We did seek funding over 20 years ago, were turned down several times and eventually decided to fund it ourselves. I'm not privy to any current funding because we've never sought funding, since we were turned down so many times.

As far as shelters go, the only shelter that I'm aware of for men, period, would be the shelter that's downtown on Sherbourne Street, which is a hostel.

When it comes to fathers who are custodial parents, for example, who might be trying to flee from an abusive situation such as what Steve was going through and wanting to leave with the children—which is a scenario that we have dealt with on many occasions over the last 20 years; I can think of at least 50, which is 50 too many—they had nowhere to go. Men are not welcome at any shelter that's set up for domestic violence. They are specifically for women—which I again totally applaud. They're necessary, and I'm glad they are there for women who are going through that, and for the children who have to endure that kind of scenario. But there needs to be a similar place or places not only in Toronto but in northern Ontario. Northern Ontario is even worse than southern Ontario.

I can tell you, just in answering your question as to why we shut down the three areas—Cambridge, Niagara and Woodstock—we were getting phone calls from across the country wanting to know, "Where's the meeting in Calgary? Where's the meeting in Red Deer?" We finally came to the conclusion that the only way we could service the whole country on this issue was to go virtual. We kept the live meetings in Hamilton and Toronto

because there's a large enough community to support them. The virtual meetings have been put on hold since my husband passed away, but I will be re-launching them again mid-year. The response has been phenomenal.

Again, as Steve was saying with the previous question, there isn't enough information available. I'm not aware of any sexual abuse assistance for men, and I would love to learn more about that because I do deal with men who are dealing with that on an ongoing basis. So I would certainly say that this is an area that is seriously lacking. The percentage of victims is likely much lower than that of women, but they're still there, and there are no services for these men.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you.

You wanted to comment on that?

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Mr. Steven Dolk: Just briefly, from my personal experience: It was just a little over five years ago when I left my relationship. I didn't initially live in Wasaga Beach. At the time, I actually lived somewhere else and I moved from the vicinity to escape the violence. I didn't have anything and actually ended up living out of my car for a while—from the stress and being unable to care for myself. Even though I held a job, nobody knew I had nowhere to live. I was a heavy equipment operator by trade. I ended up developing pneumonia in the hospital and so that's how I ended up getting shelter for the next couple of years before I could get established. Otherwise there was nothing there for me.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much. Our final questions for you are from MPP Natyshak.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Steve and Heidi. Heidi, please allow me, on behalf of the committee, to offer our condolences for the passing of your husband.

Ms. Heidi Nabert: Thank you.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thanks for continuing the work that you both started.

Ms. Heidi Nabert: Thank you.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Steve, thanks for sharing your story once again. It's weird, isn't it? As a man—you know, we know what's going on out there and we know the difficulty. It's an enormous wall to crawl over and an enormous amount of stigma. I refer back to just my own awareness. I think what brought about that level of awareness for me was the incident around Sheldon Kennedy and Theo Fleury. I'm a hockey player so I follow hockey. Those guys broke through a stigma that I think had not at that point been broken through for male figures.

As difficult as it was for them and as much exposure as that issue received, I still don't think it has caught on in terms of the ability or the pathway for men to be able to explain and share their stories.

The committee travelled to northern Ontario where we heard from men who still, to this day, have a difficulty

sharing their stories. There's an issue with under-reporting. It's very, very clear. What would the biggest impact be that the province could undertake to address the issue of under-reporting? What assistance can we give? We know the resources are starting to be delivered. We know that awareness is starting to be there. We know that the government has launched into some pretty hard-hitting awareness campaigns. But what else could be done to specifically target that? Imagine: It's difficult and there's so much stigma already attached. What do you think that role can be for the province to specifically support men in reporting their abuse?

Mr. Steven Dolk: I really appreciate this question because that's something I've thought about and actually discussed with my partner many times before. I'm not trying to skirt my answer and shortcut it to say it's education, but there are crucial institutions that compound the issue of domestic violence. One of them, I'm sorry to say, is law enforcement and the family courts.

When you have the police come and report to a scene of an incident and they see somebody who—like I said, myself six or seven years ago, a larger man—is crying because he feels powerless and for them to laugh, or even an officer come and suspect that you're the perpetrator—“But he's bigger than you”—and actually is trying to make you lose your cool because he thinks you're the one who is the loose cannon. I think there has to be some sort of mandatory training on that, because times have changed. Times have changed. We've seen work go in with the same situation like I mentioned earlier in my speech where there has been training about understanding the issues of domestic violence against the spouse,

against the woman. We're seeing that come into play, but now we're forgetting that there's a possibility that a man could be a victim as well. If he's crying, he's more than likely crying wolf.

I think that in areas of enforcement, to give that man his sense of dignity and a sense of security is huge. Take a man of any strength or size and take away any sense of being able to defend himself, and he feels completely powerless. You feel absolutely powerless, because there's nobody there who can stop it, nobody who can put an end to it.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): We thank you very much for coming and speaking to our committee today and sharing your experiences with us. We would ask that you join our audience now, if you wish to.

To our committee members, we are going to adjourn until next Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Chair, could we ask research to find the committee a list of any and all support programs under way, funded by the provincial government, that are specifically targeted for male victims of sexual assault?

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you.

Mr. Natyshak, I just want to inform you that we are moving to morning and afternoon sittings beginning on April 29, just so you know.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Just to reiterate, we are moving to morning and afternoon sittings beginning on the 29th.

We stand adjourned until next week, April 22.

The committee adjourned at 1726.

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