

INTERVENTION STRATEGY

FOR PREVENTING AND COUNTERING
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**SPEAKING UP AND TAKING ACTION
TO ENSURE THAT VICTIMS
ARE NO LONGER ALONE**

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For more information:

Renseignements généraux
Direction des communications
Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
1035, rue De La Chevrotière, 28^e étage
Québec (Québec) G1R 5A5

Telephone: 418-643-7095
Toll-free: 1 866-747-6626

This document can also be consulted on the Ministère's website:
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A WORD FROM THE MINISTER



As a woman, a mother, a Quebecer and Minister responsible for Higher Education, I cannot allow sexual violence to continue to traumatize students and cause them to drop out of school. Such violence has many harmful consequences for those who experience it as well as for the people around them. When victims are students, it can have serious repercussions on their schooling and may even cause them to fail or drop out.

It is vital that we speak up and take action to ensure that victims are no longer alone, and that we stand together to fight this phenomenon. The consultations on preventing and countering sexual violence on Québec's college and university campuses revealed a strong determination to join forces to address this problem.

With this intervention strategy, we will be instituting measures that will enable institutions of higher education to become places where everyone can study, work and live free from sexual violence, secure in their right to respect for their dignity and physical well-being. We are firmly committed to a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence in institutions of higher education and will take all necessary steps to prevent and counter such acts. We have a vision and are giving ourselves the means to make it a reality.

I have announced my intention to table a bill to prevent and counter sexual violence in institutions of higher education. This intervention strategy is part of that approach and paves the way for this legislative measure.

I would like to thank all those who helped develop this strategy. Your efforts will allow Québec to become a leader in the fight against sexual violence.

Hélène David
Minister responsible for Higher Education

BACKGROUND

The fight against sexual violence in institutions of higher education reflects a determination to ensure healthy and respectful study and work environments for all Quebecers. In addition to satisfying a social imperative, it must foster a change of culture in these institutions.

This intervention strategy is consistent with the Québec government's 2016-2021 strategy to prevent and counter sexual violence. The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur is already responsible for implementing the following measure from the earlier policy:

Adopt a policy framework or framework law ensuring that colleges and universities take the necessary measures to prevent and counter sexual violence against students.

As part of her mission under the *Act respecting the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie* (CQLR c. M-15.1.0.1), the Minister is to develop policy directions and policies in the areas within her jurisdiction and propose them to the government. She is supported in this mission by the *General and Vocational Colleges Act*, the *Act respecting private education* and the *Act respecting educational institutions at the university level*.

Thus, the Minister is empowered to table bills governing institutions of higher education in the National Assembly. But first, it is important to define the issues at hand and to measure and evaluate the most appropriate solutions for each institution.

For this reason, in 2016-2017, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur held consultations with all higher education stakeholders. More than 75 briefs were submitted, and nearly 400 people participated in five days of discussions on how to prevent and counter sexual violence on college and university campuses in Québec. Participants included representatives of educational institutions, student associations, unions, community organizations involved in the fight against sexual violence, police departments and health care services, as well as victims of sexual violence.

These consultations helped identify various measures aimed at fighting sexual violence (such as prevention policies, better physical security measures on campuses, effective complaints management mechanisms). The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur also studied research papers on the subject, in particular *Sexual Harassment and Violence in the University Context* (Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire 2017) and *Violences sexuelles en milieu universitaire au Québec: Rapport de recherche de l'enquête ESSIMU* (ESSIMU 2016). Research and experience in other countries have shown that, if we are to obtain concrete results, the problem must be viewed from a global perspective and all the measures taken must be part of a comprehensive strategy. The deployment of such an intervention strategy entails investments on many fronts to complement existing services and tools. It also requires the active and collective commitment of all members of the college and university communities.

Action can take many forms, from legislative intervention to financial support for educational institutions. However, before we do anything we must learn more about the nature and scope of the problem within each institution. Once we have a full picture of the situation, the choice of tools and actions will become clearer.

Intervention by the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur and initiatives by institutions of higher education can be divided into the following broad areas:

AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

- Raise awareness of the problem of sexual violence.
- Adopt appropriate policies and programs to raise awareness and prevent sexual violence in all its forms.

HANDLING OF DISCLOSURES AND COMPLAINTS

- Ensure the confidentiality of the process.
- Discuss victims' options with them (disclosure, administrative or police complaint).
- Offer a variety of services adapted to victims' needs.

SUPPORT

- Set up and organize guidance and support services based on victims' needs.
- Encourage people to take action by fostering a feeling of belonging to the community and a sense of collective responsibility in dealing with sexual violence.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Educate staff about sexual violence.
- Implement various measures, in particular technological measures, to increase people's sense of safety in the places where they study, work and live.
- Inspect the security systems in place.

This intervention strategy is based on collaboration with all stakeholders and proposes a rigorous framework, including eventual legislation to ensure proper implementation.

Québec is not alone in the fight against sexual violence. Other jurisdictions have implemented measures intended to prevent sexual violence, ensure the physical safety of those they serve, and handle complaints in such a way as to meet victims' needs and guarantee the confidentiality of the process. This intervention strategy is based on practices that have proven effective in countering sexual violence in institutions of higher education elsewhere in Canada and around the world.

This intervention strategy is unique in that it takes into account all those who frequent institutions of higher education, including staff members. It also considers the special needs of students with disabilities, members of cultural and Indigenous communities, and sexual and gender minorities.

THIS INTERVENTION STRATEGY IS INTENDED FOR CEGEPS, PRIVATE COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND ALL OTHER GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS. THE TERMS “INSTITUTION” AND “INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION” IN THE TEXT REFER TO ALL OF THESE.

SUMMARY

VISION Ensure that institutions of higher education are recognized as healthy, safe and proactive environments in the fight against sexual violence, and places where everyone can achieve their full potential.

I. Awareness, prevention and knowledge development	CHALLENGE	1. Review the concepts and terms associated with sexual violence.	Fall 2017
	Awareness and education	2. Support the development of awareness-raising tools with the help of institutions of higher education and their partners, and evaluate their effectiveness.	Starting in Fall 2017 and ongoing
	ORIENTATION	3. Support projects aimed at educating people on college and university campuses about sexual violence and the best practices for handling disclosures.	Starting in Winter 2018 and ongoing
	Foster the emergence of a culture of respect and personal responsibility	4. Support research on sexual violence in institutions of higher education.	Starting in Fall 2017 and ongoing
II. Handling of disclosures and complaints	CHALLENGE	1. Support the establishment of a “single-window” reception, guidance and referral service for victims of sexual violence in each institution of higher education.	2017-2018 2018-2019
	Effectiveness and efficiency in handling disclosures and complaints	2. Support the establishment of an advisory committee to examine any questions arising from the handling and/or follow-up of disclosures and administrative complaints.	Starting in Fall 2017
	ORIENTATION	3. Look at opportunities for improving online services.	2018-2019
	Improve the handling of disclosures and complaints	4. Study opportunities to adopt a visual reference or universal symbol to identify intermediaries, safe spaces and specialized resources.	2018-2019
III. Support	CHALLENGE	1. Support institutions of higher education in implementing academic accommodations for victims who disclose sexual violence.	No later than Fall 2019
	Victim support	2. Support institutions of higher education in facilitating access to existing psychosocial services or in setting up such services in collaboration with external sexual-violence resources, and ensure that they are adapted to cultural, sexual and gender diversity and the special needs of certain students, such as those with disabilities.	2017-2018 and ongoing
	ORIENTATION		
	Provide rapid support for victims of sexual violence in order to limit the impact on their personal and school life		

IV. Personal safety	CHALLENGE		
	Personal physical and psychological integrity	1. Share best practices for ensuring the safety of people and the security of premises.	2018-2019 and ongoing
	ORIENTATION	2. Consider funding to create safer campuses within the framework of the Plan québécois des infrastructures.	2018-2019
	Improve campus security and foster a sense of safety	3. Identify safety measures that municipalities can take, and share them with municipal authorities.	2019-2020
V. Collaboration	CHALLENGE		
	Shared vision of the problem of sexual violence	1. Adopt a declaration of commitment to counter sexual violence.	No later than Fall 2019
	ORIENTATION	2. Make available tools and resources from public, parapublic, and community and research organizations to victims of sexual violence in institutions of higher education, their families and friends, perpetrators and all other people on college and university campuses, and encourage their use.	2018-2019 and ongoing
	Promote coherence and collaboration in interventions by ministries, organizations and other partners	3. Consult the various higher education stakeholders in implementing the intervention strategy.	Starting in 2017 and ongoing
VI. Framework	CHALLENGE		
	Effective implementation of the intervention strategy	1. Support every institution of higher education in adopting a code of conduct and a policy to counter sexual violence for all staff and students.	No later than Fall 2019
	ORIENTATION	2. Encourage every institution of higher education to offer the services recommended in the intervention strategy.	Starting in Fall 2019 and ongoing
	Ensure that the intervention strategy is monitored and implemented in a transparent manner	3. Encourage every institution of higher education to implement the measures set out in the intervention strategy.	Starting in Fall 2019 and annually thereafter

ALL OF THESE MEASURES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION ET DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR IN COLLABORATION WITH INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND OTHER MINISTRIES OR ORGANIZATIONS, WHERE APPLICABLE.

**AWARENESS,
PREVENTION AND
KNOWLEDGE
DEVELOPMENT**

The incidence of sexual violence in institutions of higher education and the increasingly heated debates in the media in recent years point to the need for a change in college and university culture. Such a change requires that all stakeholders, not just institutions of higher education, be made aware of the problem and potential preventive measures. The first and fifth orientations of the Québec government strategy to ensure gender equality for 2021 (Together for Equal Socialization and Education, Without Stereotypes or Sexism, and Together for a Society Free From Violence Against Women) will help change institutional culture in the years ahead.

In institutions of higher education, such a change requires that all stakeholders be made aware of the problem of sexual violence and share a willingness to prevent and counter it. Raising awareness among the entire community, including administrative personnel, teachers, professors, students and intervention professionals, is a key challenge predicated on the acquisition and sharing of knowledge.

ORIENTATION

Measures focussing on prevention, community awareness and knowledge development will foster the emergence of a culture of respect and personal responsibility.

MEASURES

1. REVIEW THE CONCEPTS AND TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Preventing and countering sexual violence relies on various areas of expertise. Awareness-raising tools must use a common vocabulary and cover the same concepts to ensure concerted action. Also, the terms used must be consistent with current knowledge, government orientations on sexual assault¹ and the Québec government strategy to prevent and counter sexual violence.²

This document contains definitions of *sexual violence*, *disclosure* and *complaint*. As other documents are produced within the framework of this strategy, these definitions may be revised and others added.

Sexual violence includes all forms of physical or psychological violence that involve sexual practices or are sexually related, as well as other types of sexual misconduct.³

In this strategy, disclosure means that a person reveals that he or she has been a victim of sexual violence. Disclosure does not necessarily lead to a formal complaint.

1 Québec, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *Orientations gouvernementales en matière d'agression sexuelle* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001).

2 Québec, Secrétariat à la condition féminine, *Stratégie gouvernementale pour prévenir et contrer les violences sexuelles*, http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/publications/Violence/Brochure_Violences_Sexuelles.pdf.

3 Based on Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire, *Sexual Harassment and Violence in the University Context: Report From the Task Force on Policies and Procedures Pertaining to Sexual Harassment and Violence (GT-PHS)* (Montréal: Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire, 2016), 9.

A *complaint* is the formal process of reporting a situation to an educational institution or the police. The purpose of an administrative complaint is to have the sexual misconduct or harassment officially recognized, and sanctions imposed on the perpetrator. A police complaint implies that a criminal offence may have been committed. Victims who wish to report a criminal act or incident must be immediately and systematically referred to the police so that an investigator experienced in such matters can take their statement.

2. SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF AWARENESS-RAISING TOOLS WITH THE HELP OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THEIR PARTNERS, AND EVALUATE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

The Ministère and institutions of higher education must have a strong and visible commitment to countering sexual violence. Tools must be designed with a view to genuinely raising public awareness so that all study, work and living environments adopt a culture of respect for others and a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of sexual violence.

For example, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur provides the “Ni viande, ni objet” campaign with the support it needs to carry out its activities and to develop new services for its partners. Since 2016, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine has been funding the “Sans oui, c'est non!” campaign, as provided for under Action 10 of the 2016-2021 government strategy to prevent and counter sexual violence. As an extension of this commitment, the Secrétariat à la jeunesse supports the deployment of this campaign in colleges and assists members of the college community in their efforts to prevent sexual violence.

The new tools must complement those that already exist, and they must be shared with members of the college and university communities.

3. SUPPORT PROJECTS AIMED AT EDUCATING PEOPLE ON COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND THE BEST PRACTICES FOR HANDLING DISCLOSURES

Preventing and countering sexual violence in higher education means raising awareness among students and other members of the college and university communities: administrators, intervention professionals, teachers, professors, students and support staff. If victims of sexual violence are to confide in members of college or university communities, the latter must be trained to react appropriately to disclosures of sexual violence and be familiar with the available internal and external resources.

Awareness-raising activities for first-year students must also be incorporated into welcoming activities, in order to convey the institution's values and policies and inform students about the resources available.

The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur will support the development of training programs for the various professionals concerned, in conjunction with partner ministries and organizations.

4. SUPPORT RESEARCH ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

We still know little about sexual violence in institutions of higher education. The Enquête Sexualité, Sécurité et Interactions en Milieu Universitaire (ESSIMU)⁴ collected data in six Québec universities. However, further research is needed to obtain an overall picture of sexual violence throughout Québec's higher education system. The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur will support a similar inquiry in the public and private college education systems.

This research will document best practices in preventing and countering sexual violence, the various initiatives in place in institutions of higher education in and outside Québec, and current trends and issues related to sexual violence, in particular cyberbullying.

For example, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur supports the “Sans oui, c'est non!” campaign in its documentation of at-risk situations and best prevention and intervention practices in welcoming activities (integration, orientation, initiations).

4 M. Bergeron et al., *Violences sexuelles en milieu universitaire au Québec: Rapport de recherche de l'enquête ESSIMU*. (Montréal: Université du Québec à Montréal, 2016).

HANDLING OF DISCLOSURES AND COMPLAINTS

The appropriate handling of disclosures and complaints of sexual violence helps to ensure the credibility of policies and their application. It also bolsters victims' confidence in the process, the institution of higher education, and the justice system, if the case goes to court. Research shows that one reason why incidents of sexual violence on college and university campuses are underreported is that victims have little confidence in their educational institution. Thus, handling disclosures and complaints effectively and efficiently is essential in the fight against sexual violence.

Disclosure of sexual violence is an informal process and often takes the form of a request for assistance, guidance or accommodation. A complaint is more formal and can lead to sanctions. It can be administrative (internal to the institution) or can lead to legal proceedings.

However, it is important to remember that institutions of higher education cannot replace the police or the justice system in handling formal complaints of sexual violence. Sexual violence is a serious crime and, as such, should be reported to the police: no other body can take witness statements, conduct a formal investigation and ensure the victim's safety. Thus, at any time, and especially when they report a criminal offence, complainants must be systematically referred to the police or to a recognized victim-support organization, such as a crime victims assistance centre (in French, CAVAC) or a sexual assault prevention and assistance centre (in French, CALACS), to learn what options are available to them, the procedure to follow, and so on. While an institution of higher education can take administrative measures to protect the victim, filing a complaint with the police and taking legal action enables a court to issue in a timely and effective manner an order protecting the victim of the alleged offence along with other potential victims, as the case may be.

ORIENTATION

The strategy is intended to improve how institutions of higher education handle disclosures and complaints, in order to help increase victims' confidence. It is also aimed at raising awareness, among education professionals in institutions of higher education of the importance of referring victims of crime to the appropriate resources.

MEASURES

1. SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A “SINGLE-WINDOW” RECEPTION, GUIDANCE AND REFERRAL SERVICE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN EACH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Having all of the resources and information needed to handle disclosures and administrative complaints in one place will allow institutions of higher education to provide more adequate support for victims of sexual violence. Victims will not have to repeat their story to different authorities, which will limit the risk of their giving more than one version of the events or having to interrupt certain administrative processes or even start them all over again. It is essential that all victims of criminal sexual violence be systematically referred as soon as possible to the police so that they can meet with a specialized investigator. Victims must also be referred to specialized services such as a crime victims assistance centre (CAVAC) or a sexual assault prevention and assistance centre (CALACS).

Single-window services can take many forms, notably at the level of victim support and guidance, and can be adapted to a variety of institutions and situations. For example, an institution of higher education could set aside a space for a properly trained support team or have one professional in this area, or in special cases, make use of an external resource (CAVAC, CALACS, health care system, etc.).

Trained specialists at single-window services will take into account cultural, sexual and gender diversity along with the special needs of certain students, such as those with disabilities.

Some victims may wish to remain at the level of support without proceeding as far as an investigation. Institutions will therefore have to ensure that victims have the option of not having an administrative investigation and, if one is conducted, the right not to participate in it. The police, however, are not bound by the victim's choices with respect to an administrative investigation. It is important to point out that all documentation related to an administrative complaint can be used in criminal proceedings, if applicable.

2. SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE ANY QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE HANDLING AND/OR FOLLOW-UP OF DISCLOSURES AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS

The process of handling disclosures and administrative complaints must be part of a framework that presumes the innocence of those accused of having committed acts of sexual violence. Procedural fairness requirements and the confidentiality of legal sanctions can often create a sense of injustice and powerlessness among those who have experienced sexual violence.

This is a delicate and complex issue. The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, together with the Ministère de la Justice and other partners, will set up an advisory committee tasked with studying certain issues, for example: possible administrative sanctions to be applied; ways of dealing with perpetrators; means of reconciling legal imperatives with victims' need to know what sanctions have been imposed, or may be imposed, on the perpetrator. Once the committee has completed its task, institutions will be provided with guidelines on handling disclosures and administrative complaints, and with appropriate mechanisms for referring victims of crime to the police.

3. LOOK AT OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING ONLINE SERVICES

According to some statistics, only five percent of sexual assaults are ever reported.⁵ In light of this, it might be appropriate to review the services available online. Victims could go online to obtain information about their rights and recourse, file a complaint with the police, or receive support from a resource person.

The site <http://agressionssexuelles.gouv.qc.ca/en/index.php> provides relevant information and resources for victims of sexual assault. However, complementary measures adapted to the situation in institutions of higher education could also be developed.

5 Canada, Statistics Canada, "Victimization Incidents Reported by Canadians, by Reporting to the Police and Type of Offence, 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2014," <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241/tbl/tbl09-eng.htm>.

4. STUDY OPPORTUNITIES TO ADOPT A VISUAL REFERENCE OR A UNIVERSAL SYMBOL TO IDENTIFY INTERMEDIARIES, SAFE SPACES AND SPECIALIZED RESOURCES

If adopted by all institutions of higher education, a visual reference could make it easier to identify resources where sexual violence can be disclosed, and where referral to the appropriate services can be made, starting with the police and recognized support organizations.

Institutions of higher education could also add as much information as possible to their syllabuses for every level, such as links to the institution's policy and the resources available.

SUPPORT

Effective implementation of an intervention strategy to prevent and counter sexual violence depends largely on the ability of institutions of higher education to support victims and to exercise due diligence in the event of a disclosure or complaint.

The main purpose of these actions is to protect and support the victim, and is separate from the process of handling complaints, the purpose of which is to protect the rights of the victim and the alleged perpetrator and to impose any necessary sanctions.

ORIENTATION

Provide rapid support for victims of sexual violence and offer them the psychosocial services needed to limit the impact of the incident on their personal and school life.

MEASURES

1. SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN IMPLEMENTING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR VICTIMS WHO DISCLOSE SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Institutions of higher education should implement measures aimed at quickly limiting any repercussions on students' studies after an incident has been disclosed or a complaint filed.

More specifically, institutions should provide support to victims to refer them to the appropriate resources; or quickly separate the victim and the alleged perpetrator as soon as sexual violence has been disclosed.

The institutions should also limit the impact of disclosing sexual violence on the victims' schooling, by, for example, revising the rules for dropping a course after an incident has been disclosed so that the victim does not fail the course, or the rules for terminating a student lease.⁶

6 According to article 1974.1 of the *Civil Code of Québec*, a lessee may terminate a lease in the case of sexual aggression. The termination usually takes effect two months after the lessor has been notified. Under the *Crime Victims Compensation Act*, victims' rent during this period is paid by the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN ONTARIO AND THE UNITED STATES

The government of Ontario and the U.S. federal government have passed laws to help counter sexual violence. In both these jurisdictions, authorities at institutions of higher education are legally bound to take all necessary steps to prevent sexual violence on campus and to implement appropriate measures to deal with it when it occurs. They may also be required to follow up on incidents of sexual violence and to make the details public. Lastly, according to U.S. law, funds can be withheld from institutions that do not comply with laws governing the handling of sexual violence.

2. SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS IN FACILITATING ACCESS TO EXISTING PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES OR IN SETTING UP SUCH SERVICES IN COLLABORATION WITH EXTERNAL SEXUAL-VIOLENCE RESOURCES, AND ENSURE THAT THEY ARE ADAPTED TO CULTURAL, SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY AND THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CERTAIN STUDENTS, SUCH AS THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

Providing access to trained specialists is key in supporting victims of sexual violence. Institutions of higher learning should either hire such specialists or reach service agreements with competent external resources.

The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur intends to support the implementation of these services, relying as heavily as possible on existing expertise in the handling of disclosures and complaints, awareness-raising and training (e.g. CAVAC and CALACS), in order to avoid the duplication of services.

It is also important to make sure that the organization of services according to a single-window model is adapted to each institution and to all staff and students.

Institutions of higher education should also rely on the expertise of the student associations within their walls.

PERSONAL SAFETY

The great diversity of institutions of higher education entails a wide range of issues pertaining to personal safety from sexual violence.

Although some people may feel perfectly safe in their place of study or work, many others are concerned for their safety. In this respect, all organizations, including institutions of higher education, strive daily to improve the security of their premises and to increase occupants' sense of safety, which varies from person to person depending on their life experiences.

To ensure that the physical and psychological well-being of persons on college and university campuses is a primary concern, security services must collaborate with the community in which they work, including staff and students and take into account the different types of facilities, such as student residences, libraries and sports centres.

ORIENTATION

The intervention strategy proposes measures aimed at improving the security of institutions of higher education and the sense of safety of their staff and students.

MEASURES

1. SHARE BEST PRACTICES FOR ENSURING THE SAFETY OF PEOPLE AND THE SECURITY OF PREMISES

Best practices, and various other aspects related to the safety of educational institutions in study areas as well as in other areas frequented by students, must be addressed in collaboration with the institutions' security staff, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur and the Ministère de la Sécurité publique (police services).

It is important that student and staff representatives be involved in this process, since they are often in the best position to identify even minor changes that could have a substantial impact on students. For example, students can identify sources of danger on campus, which can help administrators determine the changes that need to be made. At the same time, sharing good practices could change what is perceived as important in the development of plans and specifications for new higher education infrastructures.

With respect to this measure, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur will make available to institutions of higher education a document to help them identify and implement measures to improve personal safety.

2. CONSIDER FUNDING TO CREATE SAFER CAMPUSES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PLAN QUÉBÉCOIS DES INFRASTRUCTURES

Although the fight against sexual violence is not primarily a question of better security measures, making adjustments to infrastructures could help. For example, institutions of higher education could improve lighting conditions or install emergency telephones and cameras in certain areas.

In its efforts to set out orientations concerning personal safety, the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur will hold more specific consultations aimed at identifying the types of infrastructure projects that might be considered in the future.

3. IDENTIFY SAFETY MEASURES THAT MUNICIPALITIES CAN TAKE AND SHARE THEM WITH MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES

Institutions of higher education are usually located within or just outside urban areas, and are inevitably at the heart of their communities.

Therefore, decisions made by municipal authorities can have an impact on students and staff at these institutions. Decisions about public transportation or municipal infrastructures can create areas that make people feel less safe.

Institutions of higher education should work together with municipalities to systematically adopt measures aimed at ensuring personal safety.

COLLABORATION

The participation of the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur in the activities of the Comité des sous-ministres en matière de violence conjugale, familiale et sexuelle will facilitate the necessary coordination in implementing the intervention strategy so that it is in line with the full range of the government's actions to prevent and counter sexual violence.

The strategy to prevent and counter sexual violence announced by the Québec government in October 2016 includes 55 government actions aimed at preventing and countering sexual assault and exploitation. Twelve ministries and organizations participated in the consultations that led to the development of this strategy. Each participant, in accordance with its mission and type of expertise, and with the help of its partners on the ground, is taking concrete action on a daily basis to prevent sexual violence and to protect those who have experienced sexual assault and exploitation. This major strategy is at the heart of government action in the matter, and reflects a shared view of sexual violence, one validated in recent years by studies, analyses and research projects conducted by researchers, ministries, organizations, research chairs and other concerned parties in Québec, other provinces and the rest of the world.

Given the broad scope of government and ministerial action, existing knowledge and research in progress, collaboration with partners active in this area is necessary in order to support the intervention strategy of the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. While this strategy meets the needs of Québec's higher education networks, it is essential to keep in mind that the development and implementation of its measures rely on existing expertise on the ground.

ORIENTATION

In order to increase its effectiveness, the intervention strategy of the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur will be implemented in a manner consistent with the interventions of all the partners.

MEASURES

1. ADOPT A DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT TO COUNTER SEXUAL VIOLENCE

For organizations, institutions of higher education, bars, restaurants, municipalities and all other places frequented by college and university students, adhering to such a declaration, which has already been signed by the Premier and the Minister responsible for Higher Education, is a strong signal that they are adopting a zero-tolerance policy with regard to all forms of sexual violence and that they will act in accordance with

this principle.

2. MAKE AVAILABLE TOOLS AND RESOURCES FROM PUBLIC, PARAPUBLIC, COMMUNITY AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, PERPETRATORS AND ALL OTHER PEOPLE ON COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, AND ENCOURAGE THEIR USE

Many existing tools and referral sites, as well as a help line, are already in place. Some resources are well known, others less so, and there are still resources to be developed. It is important that these resources be organized and made available so that they are used in the most optimal way possible and with the best outcomes, first and foremost for the well-being of victims of sexual violence.

3. CONSULT THE VARIOUS HIGHER EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE INTERVENTION STRATEGY

This intervention strategy is based on the needs of institutions of higher education and their occupants. The measures contained in it are intended to directly address the challenges inherent in the fight against sexual violence, whether these challenges pertain to the victims or the educational institutions that wish to support them. It is essential, therefore, that the intervention strategy meet the needs of Québec's colleges and universities.

FRAMEWORK

Some participants in the recent consultations (Winter 2017) on preventing and countering sexual violence on Québec's college and university campuses mentioned that the success of any intervention will largely depend on strong leadership on the part of the government and a firm willingness to act on the part of each institution. The higher education networks have requested a framework, orientations and tools to help them take action. Although a number of institutions are very active on this front and are already using various tools, others have been unable to spend as much time as they would have liked discussing the best ways of dealing with this complex issue in their communities.

ORIENTATION

There will be an annual follow-up of the implementation of the intervention strategy.

MEASURES

1. SUPPORT EVERY INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ADOPTING A CODE OF CONDUCT AND A POLICY TO COUNTER SEXUAL VIOLENCE FOR ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS

The policy should contain certain elements that take local challenges and the specific situation of each educational institution into account: a definition of roles and responsibilities; the obligations of the educational institutions; the procedure for handling disclosures and complaints of sexual violence; interventions; training and awareness-raising activities; sanctions, etc.

Institutions of higher education should also adopt a code of conduct specifying the principles and guidelines that should govern intimate relationships between staff members in positions of authority and students.

ONTARIO'S ACTION PLAN TO STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

In March 2015, the Government of Ontario published *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*. It also passed the *Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters*. One of the statutes amended, the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*, now requires that all colleges and universities have a sexual violence policy that addresses several mandatory elements specified in the regulations, such as:

- the process for reporting incidents and filing complaints of sexual violence
- examples of measures that could be implemented to protect people who report sexual violence
- the process for deciding whether an incident or complaint of sexual violence will be investigated by the college or university
- a statement that the victim may choose not to ask the college or university to conduct an investigation and has the right not to participate in any investigation that may occur
- the investigation and decision-making process applicable if an incident or complaint of sexual violence is investigated.⁷

2. ENCOURAGE EVERY INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO OFFER THE SERVICES RECOMMENDED IN THE INTERVENTION STRATEGY

The adoption of a policy aimed at supporting and accompanying victims requires the deployment of well-organized services that offer all the necessary psychosocial support for victims and others requiring assistance. Because each institution is different, with its own diverse student population, the services available must be adapted to the specific needs of the community. Institutions should establish a permanent local committee with the mandate to develop and apply policy and the relevant accountability mechanisms.

7 *Sexual Violence at Colleges and Universities*, Ontario Regulation 131/16, section 2 (2).

A FEW FINDINGS IN THE REPORT FROM THE TASK FORCE ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE (BUREAU DE COOPÉRATION INTERUNIVERSITAIRE):

Regulations allow for clearly defining the values and behaviour expected by educational institutions, stating that victims will be well treated and provided the services they need, and explaining that perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions.

To be effective, a policy must be backed by the institution's senior administration and supported by all members of the university community.

It is essential that the university community be aware of and embody these policies.

To be effective, policies and regulations must translate into concrete prevention and intervention actions on campus.⁸

3. ENCOURAGE EVERY INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT THE MEASURES SET OUT IN THE INTERVENTION STRATEGY

Each institution of higher education should establish a simple and effective procedure to demonstrate in a serious and transparent manner the steps it will take under this intervention strategy.

To do so, institutions must agree on a common methodology for using relevant anonymized information in an effective and standardized manner. The Ministère intends to act with efficiency and discernment in its monitoring of sexual violence in institutions of higher education. An annual report on sexual violence in institutions of higher education could prove useful, in particular in terms of prevention, intervention and research. Such a report would also make it possible to document sexual violence with a view to observing trends, targeting prevention and awareness interventions, taking the appropriate action and supporting victims based on their needs.

8 Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire, *Sexual Harassment and Violence in the University Context: Report From the Task Force on Policies and Procedures Pertaining to Sexual Harassment and Violence*, 2017.

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