

StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey Report



Advancing Women's Equality
Partnering to Transform the Context and End Sexualized Violence



Authors

Breanna O’Handley

Gender and Sexual Diversity Advisor
St. Francis Xavier University

Annie Chau, M.Ad.Ed

Project Coordinator, Advancing Women’s Equality
Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association

Katherine Reed, M.Ad.Ed

Project Assistant, Advancing Women’s Equality
Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association

All questions regarding the StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey Report can be directed to Breanna O’Handley (bohandle@stfx.ca) or Annie Chau (annie@awrcsasa.ca).

Investigators

Margaret MacKinnon, M.A., R. Psych.

Director of Health, Counselling and Accessible Learning
St. Francis Xavier University

Annie Chau, M.Ad.Ed

Project Coordinator, Advancing Women's Equality
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association

Katherine Reed, M.Ad.Ed

Project Assistant, Advancing Women's Equality
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association

Breanna O'Handley

Gender and Sexual Diversity Advisor
St. Francis Xavier University

Karen Blair, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
Department of Psychology
St. Francis Xavier University

Authors' Note & Acknowledgements

We want to thank all the students who volunteered their time to complete the StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey. Their participation will be invaluable in informing future sexual violence prevention efforts at StFX. As the first of its kind in Nova Scotia, this survey can help inform other campuses in the province to conduct this research on sexual violence in their campus communities as well.

We also want to acknowledge the work of the StFX Project Committee for Advancing Women's Equality in Rural Nova Scotia: Partnering to Transform the Context and End Sexualized Violence (i.e. AWE Project), who provided expertise, energy, and dedication to making this survey happen.

The AWE Project Committee Members for the 2017-2018 Academic Year were:

Alison Armstrong
Annie Chau
Augy Jones
Breanna O'Handley
Jacqueline De Leebeeck
Jennifer Swinemar-Murray
Johannah Black
Katherine Reed
Kelsey Jones
Margaret Elliot
Margaret McKinnon
Megan Fogarty
Mikayla MacDonald
Naima Chowdhury
Nancy Forestell
Rebecca Mesay
Robert Chatterton
Sam Gan

In addition to this report, the findings will be translated in multiple formats for distribution, such as infographics and videos. They will also be shared in presentations on campus and off campus.

Finally, we recognize that one of the limitations of this study was that it did not leave space for important and much-needed discussions on the issues. Seeing this gap, the AWE Project is planning narrative-based focus groups in the next academic year, 2018-2019. These groups will offer campus community members the opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions about the climate at StFX (ways that the climate may be favourable to rape culture and ways that it may be unfavourable) through eliciting and analyzing stories from students, faculty, and staff.

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Summary

In the spring of 2018, St. Francis Xavier (StFX) University launched the Sexual Violence Climate Survey as a task of the Advancing Women's Equality (AWE) Project in partnership with the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association. The StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey was modeled after the University of New Brunswick (UNB) Sexual Assault Climate Survey, which was presented by Dr. Rice Fuller at the 2017 annual meeting of the Canadian Sex Research Forum. The UNB Sexual Assault Climate Survey was launched in the fall of 2015 and was based on recommendations made in *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault* (White House Task Force, 2014a). The StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey was modified to include more in-depth measures of consent and bystander behaviours. The current report will discuss the results of the StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey.

The StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey was conducted as part of a needs assessment of the StFX community for the AWE Project. The current survey sought to assess the climate of sexualized violence at StFX University by measuring students' attitudes and perceptions regarding sexual violence at StFX and how they believe the university responds to such violence. Additionally, the survey examined the prevalence of sexual violence (coercion and assault) at StFX, awareness and understanding of sexual assault resources and policies at StFX, and the willingness of students to intervene when observing sexual violence or actions that could lead to sexual violence. To achieve these goals, the current survey used measures of the following constructs: general campus climate, perceptions of university reporting and policies, consent behaviour engagement, rape myth acceptance, sexual assault experiences, use of sexual assault services, and bystander attitudes and behaviours.

Sexual violence is a prevalent issue among college and university communities in Canada and the U.S. The Association of American Universities (AAU) found that 23% of female and 5.4% of male undergraduates had experienced sexual assault through use of physical force, violence, or incapacitation (Cantor et al., 2015). Undergraduate women are at an increased risk, as women aged 18 to 25 have been found to be three times more likely than women of all other ages to experience sexual violence (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Canadian statistics show that 35% of female first-year students in university reported having had at least one experience of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault since age 14 (Senn et al., 2014). Despite such high prevalence rates of sexual violence, very few survivors of sexual violence opt to report to law enforcement (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2015) or to campus authorities (Fuller, O'Sullivan & Belu, 2017).

Sexual violence can have many detrimental psychological impacts on survivors that can last for years after the incident of violence occurred. The experience of sexual assault has been found to be associated with generalized anxiety, eating disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, alcohol and substance abuse, sexual dysfunction and avoidance of sex (Carr & Szymanski, 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2016; Sarkar & Sarkar, 2005). Experiencing sexual victimization can also impact survivors' academic performance (Jordan, Combs & Smith, 2014; Stermac, Horowitz & Bance, 2017). Therefore, sexual violence prevention and the support of those who have survived sexual violence should be a priority of universities so as to protect students from violence and reduce the impact this violence may have on students.

Overview of Methodology:

- 611 StFX students were surveyed from March 2018 through April 2018.
- Overall, 1111 students accessed the survey and 611 completed the survey.
- The current sample is a convenience sample and was recruited via email, poster campaigns, an information booth and social media.
- All surveys were anonymous and completed online.
- Participants had the opportunity to be entered to win one of five \$100 Visa gift cards.

Key Findings:

General Campus Climate

- Generally, student participants expressed feeling connected to StFX and feeling they belonged at StFX, as measured through multiple items.
- Most respondents (72.2%) reported feeling safe on campus.
- Just over half of participants felt that staff and administrators treat students fairly, are concerned about students' welfare, and respect what students think.
- Respondents were unsure of StFX's ability to respond well to difficult situations or crises.
- Less than half of participants (44.1%) believed university officials do enough to protect the safety of students.

Consent Behaviour Engagement

- Student participants provided relatively accurate definitions of sexual consent.
- Almost all respondents reported engaging in "stopping" consent behaviours (e.g. I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says "wait").
- Fewer participants reported engaging in "asking" consent behaviours (e.g. I ask "does this feel good?").

Perceptions of University Reporting and Policies

- Most participants were moderately confident that StFX would respond in an appropriate and supportive way to a report of sexual assault, as measured through multiple items.
- Fewer participants reported being confident that StFX would take corrective action against an offender (53.2%) or take steps to protect a student making a report from retaliation (49.1%).
- Student respondents were less likely to know where to get help in the case of a sexual assault **on campus** at StFX (53.7%) than **off campus** (72.8%).
- It was more common for participants to report that they did **not** know where to go to make a report of sexual assault at StFX (49.6%) than to report they did know where to go at StFX (34.7%).
- It was more common for student respondents to indicate that they do **not** understand the process of what occurs when a student reports a sexual assault at StFX (57.6%).
- Fewer than half of participants (43.5%) reported having confidence that the formal procedures to address complaints of sexual assault are administered fairly by StFX.

Bystander Attitudes and Behaviours

- Most respondents indicated that they are likely to engage in positive bystander behaviours, but fewer participants reported being likely to engage in behaviours that require them to educate themselves more on sexual violence or to engage in community efforts to stop sexual violence.
- Women were more likely than men to indicate that they would engage in positive bystander behaviours.

Bystander Experiences

- 27.3% of participants reported they had observed a situation this academic year that was, or they believe could have led to, sexual assault; of these, 80.2% took some sort of action to intervene.
- Student respondents who took action to intervene in such situations were most likely to act by asking if the person being victimized needed help (39.4%), separating the people involved (13%) or creating a distraction (9.2%).
- Participants who did not take action to intervene in a possible bystander situation most times did not intervene because they did not know how (63.6%), they did not feel comfortable intervening (45.5%), they felt it was not their business (36.4%) or they did not want to confront the person causing the situation (36.4%).

Rape Myth Acceptance

- There was low to moderate endorsement (i.e., not strong rejection) of rape myths noted in the findings.
- Men indicated higher rates of rape myth acceptance than women.
- Rape myths that were least likely to be identified as false by student participants perpetuated beliefs that men sexually assault people when they are unable to control their sex drives, that women “call rape” when they have a regretful sexual experience, and that when a man is drunk he may “unintentionally” assault someone.

Sexual Assault Experiences

- 44.9% (269; 12 participants did not respond) of participants indicated that they had experienced some type of non-consensual sexual activity before coming to StFX.
- 39.9% (244) of respondents reported experiencing some form of sexual coercion (verbal pressure or aggression to engage in sex) during their time at StFX.
- 44.5% (272) of participants reported experiencing some form of sexual assault since becoming a student at StFX.

Use of Sexual Assault Services at StFX

- Of those respondents who had experiences of sexual violence at StFX, 52.4% expressed that their incident of sexual violence has had long lasting negative impacts on their lives.
- 82.2% of participants who experienced sexual violence had told someone about the incident, usually a close friend or a roommate.
- Participants rarely disclosed to health care providers, campus authorities, law enforcement, or security, often because they were trying to forget about it, felt it was a private matter, felt it was not serious enough, or did not think it would help.
- Fewer than half (45%) of respondents who experienced sexual violence were aware of the formal procedures to report sexual violence at StFX.
- Only 5.3% of participants who experienced sexual violence reported the incident through formal procedures at StFX.

Recommendations and Next Steps:

The findings from this survey will provide StFX and the AWE Project Committee with valuable information about students' perceptions regarding sexual violence, as well as their understanding of policies and reporting procedures, their awareness of sexual violence resources on and off-campus, and their thoughts on what StFX can do to improve their response to and prevention of sexual violence. The findings reported here also give important insight into the prevalence of sexual coercion and sexual assault on campus and the contexts in which these incidents occur. Moving forward, this data will help the AWE Project Committee identify where sexual violence prevention efforts should be focused and what topics should be targeted for further education, through training and awareness campaigns (e.g., consent education, rape myth debunking, highlighting sexual violence resources and procedures). The current data will also be used as a baseline measure for any future sexual violence prevention work conducted by the AWE Project Committee and/or StFX as a whole.

Introduction

The StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey was conducted in the 2017-2018 academic year. The climate survey was designed as part of Advancing Women's Equality: Partnering to Transform the Context and End Sexualized Violence, the AWE Project, which is coordinated by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association, and funded by Status of Women Canada. The StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey was carried out as part of a needs assessment for the AWE Project. The project's aim is to inform policies and systems to respond to and prevent sexualized violence at StFX.

There were 5148 students enrolled at StFX University during the 2017-2018 academic year, 4624 of which were undergraduate students and 524 who were graduate students. This report describes findings from responses of 611 of those students (11.87%) to a survey examining their attitudes, perceptions, knowledge, and experiences concerning sexual violence at StFX.

It should be noted that the current sample was a convenience sample, meaning that the sample was not truly random and therefore not representative of the student population as a whole. It is likely that the 611 students who completed the survey were students who were interested in, educated in or already had a stake in the issue of sexualized violence at StFX University. Therefore, the findings of this survey will likely be an overestimate of certain measures, such as the proportion of students who have experienced sexual violence, but will underestimate other measures, such as the proportion of those who endorse rape myths.

Where relevant, we have reported both the percentage and actual number of participants so as to emphasize the actual number of incidents, where percentages may be less informative. For example, 44.5% of our sample reported experiencing sexual assault during their time at StFX. This does not mean that 44.5% of all students at StFX have experienced sexual assault during their time at StFX, but it does mean that at least 272 students at StFX have experienced sexual assault at StFX in the last four years.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey was to assess needs and provide a baseline measure for efforts at StFX in how the institution responds to and works to prevent sexual violence. The AWE Project Committee sought to determine the prevalence of sexual violence at StFX University, StFX students' attitudes and experiences surrounding sexual violence, as well as their awareness and knowledge of sexual violence resources and reporting procedures.

The objectives of the survey were to:

- determine students' attitudes towards and feelings of belonging at StFX University and their trust in university officials to respond well to difficult situations;
- examine students' definitions of sexual consent and their self-reported engagement in various consent behaviours;
- investigate students' perceptions of leadership, policies, and reporting relating to sexual violence at StFX;
- determine students' knowledge and awareness of sexual violence resources and reporting procedures at StFX;
- assess students' bystander attitudes and behaviours when witnessing sexual violence between other students;
- assess the extent to which students endorse, or fail to reject, rape myths; and
- investigate the rates of sexual coercion and sexual assault experienced at StFX among students surveyed and their likelihood to disclose the experience and/or engage in help-seeking behaviours.

Sexual Assault-Related Services at StFX University

StFX University provides various resources to survivors of sexual violence, which include:

- immediate and ongoing counselling from the StFX Health and Counselling Centre;
- immediate connection to a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner;
- connection to trauma-informed counselling and support services at the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association;
- immediate and ongoing medical care at the StFX Health and Counselling Centre;
- residence and academic accommodations (e.g. exam deferrals, residence housing changes);
- connection to the local RCMP, if police reporting is chosen by the survivor; and
- on-campus disciplinary process through the Student Life Code of Conduct, if institutional reporting is chosen by the survivor.

Methods

Ethics Approval and Consent

Ethics approval for this survey was obtained from the Research Ethics Board (REB) of St. Francis Xavier University. Students aged 18 years and older who accessed the online survey were first asked to read in full an informed consent page that provided: information about the study, resources that participants could access in case of distress triggered by the survey, the potential risks and benefits of participating, the voluntary and anonymous nature of participation, and contact information for the investigators and the REB. Potential participants were encouraged to seek out the researchers and/or ethics board if they had any questions or concerns about the survey.

Following the consent page, participants were asked to check “I agree and wish to participate,” equivalent to providing an electronic signature, if they had read the consent form in full and still wished to participate. Only participants who provided consent were entered into the online survey.

Participants were told that they could withdraw their consent at any time without penalty by closing their browser and that they were not required to answer any questions they did not wish to respond to.

Sampling

Students were recruited to participate through an email from the Health and Counselling Centre to the student listserv that included an invitation to participate and the survey link (www.svclimatesurvey.ca). Students were sent a reminder email throughout the month the survey was live.

There was also an information booth for the survey that student members of the AWE Project Committee ran for the first two weeks the survey was live. The booth was located in the main lobby of the StFX Students Union Building, which is an area of StFX campus that sees a great deal of student foot traffic. Students at the booth handed out cards that advertised the survey. They also engaged in conversation with students passing by, asking if they had taken the survey and if not, explaining the purpose of the survey.

The cards were also distributed in various classrooms and student spaces on and off campus. Cards were placed in mirrors in washrooms, on tables in various study areas on campus, and at the main desk of the Health and Counselling Centre. Along with these cards, posters were printed to advertise the study and were hung up in various buildings around campus.

The link to the survey was also shared on various StFX and student social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram. Additionally, the student newspaper *The Xaverian Weekly* published a story written by a contributor that discussed the aims and importance of the survey.

Procedure

Survey responses were collected between March 13, 2018 and April 25, 2018. Data was collected using Survey Gizmo, an online survey platform. Those who completed the survey were eligible to enter a draw to win one of five \$100 Visa Gift Cards with their identifying information (i.e., their email address) collected through a separate link to maintain anonymity. Winners were randomly selected after the closing of the survey and prizes were sent through mail. Participants were also given the option to be contacted for future studies related to sexual violence at StFX and/or sexual violence prevention efforts at StFX.

Measures

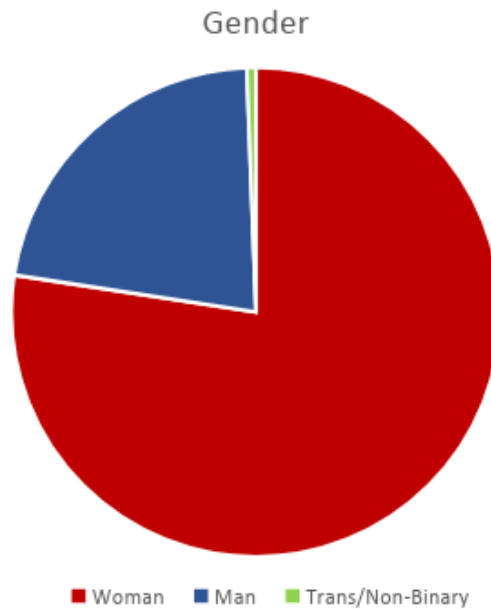
The survey was modelled after the University of New Brunswick's Sexual Assault Climate Survey (Fuller et al., 2017), which itself was designed with guidance from *Not Alone: The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault* (White House Task Force, 2014a). Some measures were modified, added, and/or created to better suit StFX's campus and the objectives for the survey, such as including a measure of consent knowledge and behaviours.

Measures examined participants' sense of belonging on campus (McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002; Peterson, Speer & McMillan, 2008; Whitlock, 2006), their trust in university support systems (Sulkowski, 2011), consent practices, as well as perceptions of StFX's leadership, policies, and reporting processes (DEOMI, 2014; Rankin and Associates Consulting, 2008). Students also were asked to respond to measures regarding bystander attitudes (Baynard et al., 2014) and behaviours (McMahon et al., 2014), as well as rape myths (McMahon, 2010; Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999). Participants were then asked about their specific experiences of sexual coercion and sexual assault as a student at StFX University (Koss et al., 2007).

Sample Characteristics

Gender

Many more cis women (n = 471, 77.5%) than cis men (n = 134, 22%) participated in the survey. A few students identified as trans men (n = 1, 0.2%), trans women (n = 1, 0.2%), or non-binary (n = 1, 0.2%).



Age/Year of Study

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 58 years old, with the median age of the sample being 20.0 years. The majority of participants (81.0%) were between 18 and 22 years of age.

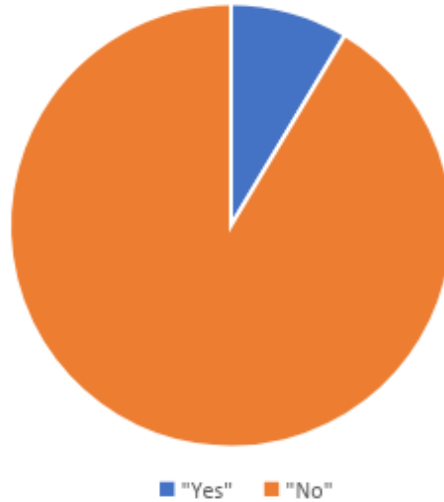
International

Most participants did not report being an international student at StFX (n = 585, 96.4%); however, 22 students (3.6% of participants) indicated they were international students.

Visible Minority

Most students (n = 554, 91.5%) did not identify as a visible minority; however, 52 students (8.6% of participants) did identify as a visible minority.

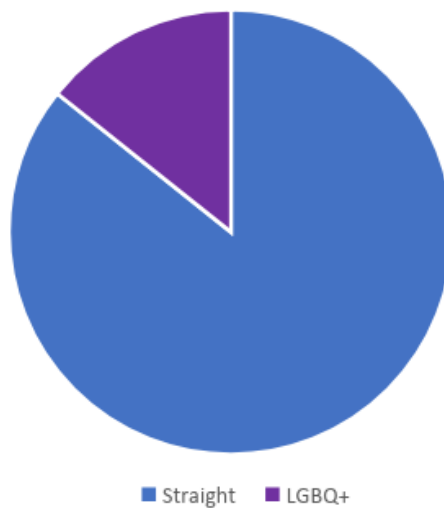
Do you identify as a visible minority?



Sexual Orientation

The majority of students identified their sexual orientation as straight (n = 510, 83.9%), while 82 students (14% of participants) identified as some sexual orientation other than straight, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer, or questioning. In the remainder of this report, these students will be referred to as “queer.”

Sexual Orientation

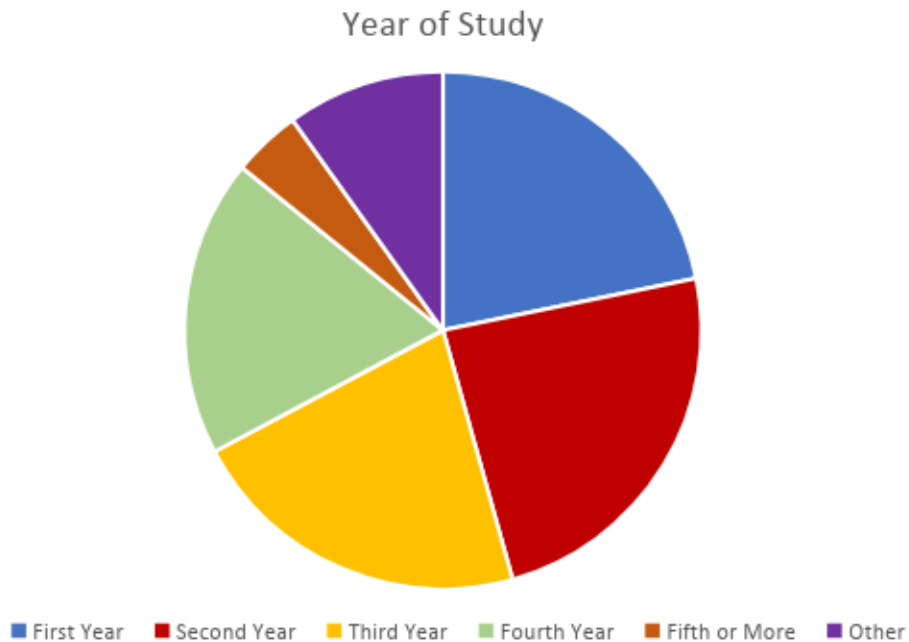


Place of Residence

Participants were almost evenly split between living on-campus in residence (n = 256, 42.2%) and living off-campus in a house or apartment (n = 349, 57.5%).

Year of Study

The sample was made up of almost even numbers of first, second, third, and fourth year undergraduates, with a small number of students reporting other years of study. The sample included: 131 (21.8%) first year undergraduates, 144 (23.9%) second year undergraduates, 130 (21.6%) third year undergraduates, 112 (18.6%) fourth year undergraduates, 26 (4.3%) fifth or more year undergraduates, 36 (6.0%) graduate or professional degree students, 1 (0.2%) diploma or certificate students, 3 (0.5%) students not seeking a degree, and 19 (3.2%) “not listed” students.



Student Leader

Some students (n = 82, 13.5%) reported that they were “student leaders” at StFX University, such as community advisors, house presidents or vice presidents, a member of the Students’ Union, etc.

Athlete

While most participants (n = 514, 84.8%) indicated they were not student athletes, 92 students (15.2% of participants) reported being a varsity or club athlete at StFX.

Findings

All differences reported here were found to be statistically significant through independent samples t-tests and to have at least a medium effect size. A difference was considered statistically significant if the alpha level was found to be less than 0.001, which means that there is less than a 0.1% chance that the difference was found by chance. Effect size was measured using Cohen's d and is a measurement of how meaningful a statistical difference is by quantifying the size of the difference between two groups.

General Campus Climate

The StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey used a **General Campus Climate (GCC)** measure adapted from three different measures of university campus climate (McNeely et al., 2002; Peterson et al., 2008; Whitlock, 2006) to examine students' feelings of belonging at StFX and perceptions of StFX's response to difficult situations. **Table 1** displays the percentage of participants who reported that they "disagree" or "strongly disagree" in contrast to the percentage of those reporting that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with each item. **Table 1** also displays the proportion of students who indicated they felt "neutral" about each statement.

The results in **Table 1** indicate that generally participants feel a connection to StFX and feel part of the StFX community. However, just over half of respondents feel that staff and administrators respect what students on campus think (57.1%), and believe that staff and administrators are genuinely concerned about students' welfare (54.2%). These findings imply that student respondents unanimously feel they are not valued by staff and administrators. Participants are not necessarily considering the relationship between staff and administrators and the general student body as positive, as compared to a seemingly more positive relationship between faculty and the general student body.

The items of the GCC that are featured in **Table 2** focus on participants' perceptions of StFX University's ability to respond to difficult situations, protect the safety of students, and support students. These items were adapted from the Trust in College Support System Scale (Sulkowski, 2011). **Table 2** displays the proportion of respondents who reported that they "disagree" or "strongly disagree" compared to the proportion who indicated they "agree" or "strongly agree" with the items. Once again, there is a separate column for participants who indicated they felt "neutral" about the statements included in this measure.

The results found in **Table 2** indicate that less than half of participants have confidence in university officials to protect students' safety, handle crisis well, respond quickly in difficult situations, and handle incidents fairly and responsibly. Almost half of respondents (48.5%) reported believing there is a good support system on campus for students doing through a difficult time. Low rates of agreement for these statements suggests that most participants do not have trust in the university to handle crisis well.

Table 1. Attitudes indicating feelings of belonging and connection to StFX; N = 610.

	% Disagree-Strongly Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree-Strongly Agree
I feel valued in the classroom/learning environment at StFX	3.4	10.2	85.8
Faculty respect what students on this campus think	8.5	18.4	72.8
Staff and administrators respect what students on this campus think	18.7	24.1	57.1
I can have an influence on other people in my campus community	8.2	21.8	69.7
People in this campus community are good at influencing each other	3.8	15.1	80.8
I think faculty are genuinely concerned about my welfare	9.7	20.7	68.7
I think staff and administrators are genuinely concerned about my welfare	18.6	26.6	54.2
I feel close to people on this campus	10.2	14.4	74.7
I am happy to be at StFX	6.0	12.5	80.5
The faculty at this school treat students fairly	8.8	21.5	69.3
The staff and administrators at this school treat students fairly	11.8	28.1	59.6
I feel safe on this campus	8.0	19.2	72.2

Table 2. Perceptions of StFX's ability to respond to difficult situations; N = 610.

	% Disagree-Strongly Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree-Strongly Agree
University officials (administrators, campus security, student life, health and counselling) at StFX do enough to protect the safety of the students	28.6	25.6	44.1
If a crisis happened on campus, StFX would handle it well	34.4	28.4	35.7
StFX responds quickly in difficult situations	33.3	29.3	36.0
University officials handle incidents in a fair and responsible manner	30.9	31.1	36.9
There is a good support system on campus for students going through a difficult time	23.3	27.0	48.5

Consent Definitions and Behaviours

Participants were asked to provide a definition of consent in an open-ended textbox in the survey. Most gave relatively accurate definitions of consent. Included in many definitions was that consent is “voluntary,” can be “withdrawn at any time,” can be “verbal or non-verbal,” and is a “sober agreement.” Some responses indicated that alcohol sometimes makes consent challenging. One respondent said, “it should be vocal, clear and in a good state of mind, but the line gets blurry with alcohol...”

Table 3 shows the participants’ engagement in various consent behaviours. There are “asking” behaviours, which require the participant to verbally ask their sexual partner for consent. There are also “stopping” behaviours, in which participants halt sexual activity upon verbal or non-verbal cues from their sexual partner. Participants were asked to check all the behaviours that they engage in to obtain sexual consent. The items of the current measure were adapted from consent workshops created and facilitated by the Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association for StFX residences.

Results in **Table 3** indicate that while almost all students reported engaging in the majority of “stopping” behaviours, much fewer students engage in “asking” behaviours. The fact that 32.4% did not indicate that they would stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says nothing (**Table 3**) is concerning and points to a misunderstanding of consent among participants, as only a “yes” indicates consent. Participants’ lower engagement in “asking” behaviours suggests that perhaps students would benefit from a more comprehensive consent education, which provides students with practical skills around sexual consent rather than a simple “no means no” and “yes means yes” education. This also suggests a sex positive approach.

Table 3. Engagement in “asking” and “stopping” consent behaviours; *N* = 611.

“Asking” Behaviours	% Reporting Engagement
I ask “are you ok with this?”	81.5
I ask “do you want to keep going?”	74.5
I ask “you look uncomfortable, are you ok?”	62.9
I ask “how far do you want to go?”	57.5
I ask “can I touch/can I kiss ... ?”	57.1
I ask “does this feel good?”	56.1
I say “you look uncomfortable, we should stop.”	52.6
I ask “do you like it when I ... ?”	49.2
“Stopping” Behaviours	% Reporting Engagement
I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says “stop.”	95.1
I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says “wait.”	94.8
I stop pursuing sexual contact when seeing body language that says no (e.g. someone moving away, someone not making eye contact, someone making facial expressions).	93.9
I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says “not right now.”	93.6
I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says “no/nah/nope.”	93.1
I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says “leave me alone.”	93.1
I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says “I don’t feel good.”	92.6
I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says “fuck off.”	92.1
I stop pursuing sexual contact when someone says “maybe” or “maybe later.”	88.6
I stop pursuing sexual contact when they say nothing.	67.6

Perceptions of Leadership, Policies, and Reporting

The survey adapted a measure of perceptions of leadership, policies, and reporting (DEOMI, 2014) in order to examine students' beliefs regarding how StFX would respond to the sexual assault of a student. **Table 4** displays the proportion of students who indicated they believed each statement was "not at all likely" or "slightly likely" in comparison to those who indicated they believed each statement was "very likely" or "moderately likely." The middle column reports the percentage of students who indicated they were "unsure."

In this section of the survey, sexual assault was defined for participants as the following:

"Sexual assault includes sexual contact that an individual was unwilling to engage in, or for which an individual did NOT give consent. Examples might include touching of a sexual nature (i.e. kissing or fondling), oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex, or anal/vaginal penetration by an object, or by a body part other than a penis or a tongue."

This is the same definition used in the University of New Brunswick's Sexual Assault Climate Survey (Fuller et al., 2017).

As seen in **Table 4**, more than half of participants believe StFX would likely respond in an appropriate and supportive way if a student were to make a report of sexual assault. However, fewer respondents seemed to be confident that StFX would take corrective action against an offender (53.2%) or take steps to protect a student from retaliation after they have made a report (49.1%). Participants seemed divided on whether or not the educational career of the person making a report of sexual assault would suffer, with 29.1% reporting this would be "not at all likely" or "slightly likely," 34.2% indicating they were "unsure," and 35.7% reporting this would be "very likely" or "moderately likely."

Women who participated rated StFX as less likely to respond appropriately to a report of sexual assault than men ($M = 37.88$ vs. 43.78 ; $d = 0.76$). Participants in their first year rated StFX as more likely to respond appropriately to a sexual assault report than those in their fourth year, with means of 42.09 and 37.15 respectively ($d = 0.60$).

Table 4. Beliefs about likely response of StFX to a report of sexual assault; N = 607.

	% Not at All Likely-Slightly Likely	% Unsure	% Very Likely – Moderately Likely
StFX would take the report seriously	16.5	20.1	63.5
If requested by the survivor/victim, StFX would forward the report outside campus to criminal investigators (e.g. the police)	13.0	21.1	65.4
StFX would take steps to protect the safety of the person making the report	18.2	18.7	62.6
StFX would support the person making the report	19.8	20.3	59.9
The campus community (e.g. other students, faculty, staff) at StFX would support the person making the report	11.5	13.7	74.6
StFX would keep knowledge of the report limited to those who need to know in order for the university to respond appropriately	11.6	21.3	66.6
StFX would communicate appropriate information to the campus community to maintain transparency and accountability	22.1	19.5	57.9
StFX would take corrective action against the offender	27.3	19.3	53.2
StFX would take steps to protect the person making the report from retaliation	19.4	31.1	49.1
The alleged offender(s) or their associates/friends would retaliate against the person making the report	19.0	42.2	38.3
The educational achievement/career of the person making the report would suffer	29.1	34.2	35.7

Participants were also asked to respond to a measure about their awareness of available sexual assault resources at StFX and off campus, as well as their understanding of the reporting process at StFX and off campus. This measure was adapted from Rankin and Associates Consulting (2008). **Table 5** displays participants' reported awareness of resources and processes at StFX. The results found in **Table 5** show that students are more confident that they know where to get help for (72.8% vs. 53.7%) and make a report of (70.2% vs. 34.7%) sexual assault off campus than on campus at StFX. Additionally, only a quarter of participants (25.6%) indicated they understand the process of what happens when a student reports a sexual assault at StFX and less than half (43.5%) have confidence that StFX administers formal procedures fairly. These results suggest that students are not very aware of sexual assault resources at StFX and most students do not understand the process of reporting a sexual assault, which is troubling. If students do not know where to access resources on campus or what the process of reporting a sexual assault at StFX is, they may not feel comfortable or able to make a report or seek help if they experience sexual violence at StFX.

There were no differences in awareness of resources and understanding of reporting procedures between first and fourth year students, indicating that StFX's attempts during orientation to make this information more accessible has not been impactful for new students.

Table 5. Awareness of sexual assault resources and understanding of reporting processes at StFX; $N = 607$.

	% Strongly Disagree- Disagree	% Neutral	% Strongly Agree- Agree
If a friend or I were sexually assaulted, I would know where to get help at StFX	30.8	14.8	53.7
If a friend or I were sexually assaulted, I would know where to get help off campus	16.8	9.9	72.8
If a friend or I were sexually assaulted, I would know where to go to make a report of sexual assault at StFX	49.6	15.0	34.7
If a friend or I were sexually assaulted, I would know where to go to make a report of sexual assault off campus	19.8	9.6	70.2
I understand the process of what happens when a student reports a sexual assault at StFX	57.6	16.8	25.6
I have confidence that StFX administers the formal procedures to address complaints of sexual assault fairly	27.1	28.9	43.5

The survey also examined participants' feelings of risk regarding sexual assault at StFX University and off campus in the surrounding community of Antigonish, Nova Scotia. **Table 6** shows participants' perceptions of prevalence of sexual assaults at StFX and off campus, as well as their perceptions of their own or their peers' risk of experiencing sexual assault. Students who completed the survey appear to perceive sexual assault as a prevalent issue both on and off campus and perceive sexual violence as a risk for themselves and/or their peers. About half of students believe other students would intervene as bystanders to incidents of sexual assault.

Women who participated were more likely than men to perceive that sexual assaults are prevalent at StFX and that they or their friends may be at risk for being sexually assaulted, with means of 19.40 and 16.68 respectively ($d = 0.82$).

Table 6. *Perceptions of prevalence and risk of experiencing sexual assault at StFX and off-campus; N = 607.*

	% Strongly Disagree-Disagree	% Neutral	% Strongly Agree-Agree
I believe that a low number of sexual assaults occur on my campus at StFX	70.6	15.8	13.2
I believe the number of sexual assault that occur off campus are low	70.4	19.3	9.8
I do not believe that I am, or any of my friends are, at risk for being sexually assaulted at StFX	69.7	14.0	16.3
I do not believe that I am, or any of my friends are, at risk for being sexually assaulted off campus	72.7	14.8	12.2
I believe that students at StFX would intervene if they witnessed a sexual assault occurring	19.4	27.0	53.0

Bystander Attitudes and Behaviours

The StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey assessed participants' level of endorsement of bystander attitudes and their engagement in bystander behaviours, indicating how likely they are to intervene as an active bystander in a situation that could be or is sexual violence. Bystander attitude and behaviour measures were modified from pre-existing scales (Baynard et al., 2014; McMahon et al., 2014).

Participants were provided with the following definition of sexual violence, which was modified from the UNB Sexual Assault Climate Survey (Fuller et al., 2017):

“Sexual violence refers to a range of behaviours that are unwanted by the recipient and include remarks about physical appearance, receiving unwanted sexually explicit images online, having nude photos forwarded to others without consent, persistent sexual advances that are undesired by the recipient, unwanted touching, and unwanted oral, anal, or vaginal penetration, or attempted penetration. These behaviours could be initiated by someone known or unknown to the recipient, including someone they are in a relationship with.”

Table 7 contains participants' responses to a measure of bystander attitudes and shows that most students view sexual violence as a problem at StFX that they can do something about and need to be thinking about. Participants overwhelmingly disagreed that doing something about sexual violence should be left up to university officials. Participants appeared to endorse positive bystander attitudes.

The only difference found in endorsement of positive bystander attitudes was by gender, with women who participated ($M = 16.43$) being more likely than men ($M = 15.05$) to endorse these attitudes ($d = 0.50$).

Table 7. *Bystander attitudes; N = 607.*

	% Disagree- Strongly Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree- Strongly Agree
I do not think that sexual violence is a problem at StFX	79.6	12.2	7.8
I do not think there is much I can do about sexual violence at StFX	61.7	24.1	13.5
There isn't much need for me to think about sexual violence	82.4	9.9	7.5
Doing something about sexual violence is solely the job of university officials (e.g. administrators, campus security, student life, health and counselling)	87.7	6.3	6.0

Table 8 displays the proportion of participants who indicated they would be “moderately likely” or “very likely” to engage in each positive bystander behaviour in comparison to those who indicated they would be “not at all likely” or “somewhat likely.” Generally, participants rated they would be highly likely to engage in most positive bystander behaviours; however, they were less likely to engage in behaviours that required them to educate themselves more on sexual violence or to engage in community efforts to stop sexual violence. These have been shaded in **Table 8**.

Table 8. *Self-reported likeliness to engage in bystander behaviours; N = 607.*

	% Not at all Likely-Somewhat Likely	% Neutral	% Moderately Likely-Very Likely
Check in with a friend who looks drunk and is going into a room with someone else at a party	4.9	1.3	93.4
Say something to a friend who is taking a drunk person back to their room at a party	5.5	4.0	90.1
Confront a friend who plans on giving someone alcohol to get sex	1.8	3.3	94.0
Confront a friend if you heard rumors that they had forced someone to have sex	4.3	6.8	87.4
Go with a female friend to the police department if she says she was sexually assaulted	1.0	0.8	97.5
Go with a male friend to the police department if he says he was sexually assaulted	2.0	1.3	96.0
Report a friend to police if I had heard rumors that they had forced someone to have sex	23.7	24.9	47.7
Tell a Community Advisor or other campus authority about information I might have about a sexual assault case even if pressured by others to stay silent	13.3	13.8	71.1
Visit a website to learn more about sexual violence	21.2	20.1	58.4
Join or volunteer with an organization that works to stop sexual violence	22.4	15.4	61.7
Participate in a rally on campus to stop sexual violence	20.2	12.8	66.4
Take a class to learn more about sexual violence	23.3	15.9	60.5
Ask for verbal consent when I am intimate with my partner, even if we are in a long-term relationship	14.7	8.3	76.5
Stop sexual activity when asked to, even if I am already sexually aroused	0.7	1.5	97.7
Stop having sex with a partner if they say to stop or imply to stop with their behaviour, even if it started consensually	0.5	1.0	98.4
Decide not to have sex with a partner if they are drunk	8.6	10.9	79.3
Express my discomfort if someone makes a joke about sexual violence	10.1	8.7	81.0
Get help and resources for a friend who tells me they have been sexually assaulted	1.3	3.3	95.2

Women who participated rated themselves as more likely to engage in positive bystander behaviours than men, with means of 77.90 and 72.80 respectively ($d = 0.55$).

Rape Myth Acceptance

Participants indicated their agreement with each of the 22 rape myths presented in the Rape Myth Acceptance scale that was adapted from two separate standardized Rape Myth Acceptance scales (McMahon, 2010; Payne et al., 1999). Students rated the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A reminder that due to the current sample being a convenience sample, and therefore not truly random, it is likely that rates of Rape Myth Acceptance are actually higher than what is exhibited here. This underestimate is due to the motivations to participate in the survey, participants were more likely to be interested and involved in the issue of sexualized violence at StFX.

As noted in the University of New Brunswick Sexual Assault Climate Survey Report, research indicates that it is very unlikely for students to report strong agreement with rape myths. Therefore, it is a common practice of researchers using these scales to report the percentage of participants who do not strongly disagree with each rape myth. By not strongly disagreeing, participants are indicating there is some ambiguity in their attitude regarding the rape myth they are rating.

While most participants strongly disagreed with each rape myth, there were a few rape myths for which almost half or more than half of participants did **not** strongly disagree. These rape myths have been shaded in **Table 9**. Rape myths that were most likely to be endorsed perpetuate beliefs that men sexually assault because they cannot control their sex drives, that women “call rape” when they have a regretful sexual experience, and that when a man is intoxicated he may “unintentionally” sexually assault someone.

Men who participated were more likely than women to endorse rape myths, with means of 39.64 and 31.78 respectively ($d = 0.64$).

Table 9. *Participants' endorsement of rape myths; N = 602.*

	% Who Did NOT Strongly Disagree (n)	% Strongly Disagree- Disagree (n)	% Neutral (n)	% Agree- Strongly Agree (n)
If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for what happened	21.8 (130)	95.5 (575)	2.7 (16)	1.7 (10)
When girls go to parties wearing revealing clothes, they are asking for trouble	17.4 (104)	94.2 (567)	4.0 (24)	1.7 (10)
If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped	15.6 (93)	97.2 (584)	1.8 (11)	0.8 (5)
If a girl hooks up with a lot of guys, eventually she is going to get into trouble	30.9 (186)	87.1 (523)	7.0 (42)	5.5 (33)
When guys rape it is usually because of their strong desire for sex	49.8 (277)	69.4 (416)	15.5 (93)	11.5 (69)
Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away	62.5 (359)	43.1 (373)	18.4 (110)	16.9 (101)
Rape happens when a guy's sex drive gets out of control	46.7 (267)	79.2 (474)	14.0 (84)	4.7 (28)
If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally	51.8 (292)	70.1 (420)	16.0 (96)	10.9 (65)
If both people are drunk, it can't be rape	38.7 (219)	86.5 (519)	8.2 (49)	3.1 (19)
It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk a didn't realize what he was doing	29.7 (172)	89.3 (536)	7.0 (42)	1.3 (16)
If a girl doesn't physically resist sex – even if protesting verbally – it really can't be considered rape	15.9 (91)	96.8 (580)	2.0 (12)	0.5 (3)
If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape	13.4 (78)	97.8 (585)	1.3 (8)	0.5 (3)
A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it	49.8 (282)	71.8 (429)	16.4 (98)	9.2 (55)
If the accused "rapist" doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape	9.0 (52)	98.2 (586)	1.3 (8)	0.2 (1)
Girls who are caught cheating on their partner sometimes claim that it was rape	55.2 (303)	65.8 (392)	17.1 (102)	12.7 (76)
If a girl doesn't say "no," she can't claim rape	30.3 (179)	89.3 (534)	7.5 (45)	2.8 (17)
If a girl says "no," it's still okay to try in a few minutes	20.5 (121)	96.0 (571)	3.5 (21)	0.3 (2)
Although most girls wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn on"	32.1 (182)	85.8 (513)	9.2 (55)	3.3 (20)
Many girls secretly desire to be raped	16.1 (88)	93.1 (557)	3.8 (23)	1.6 (10)
Girls tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them	16.9 (94)	93.3 (557)	3.7 (22)	1.8 (11)
A lot of girls lead a guy on, and then cry rape	30.4 (173)	88.0 (526)	7.4 (44)	3.2 (19)
Guys cannot be sexually assaulted because sexual assault only happens to girls	8.4 (49)	98.8 (591)	0.3 (2)	0.7 (4)

Bystander Incidents

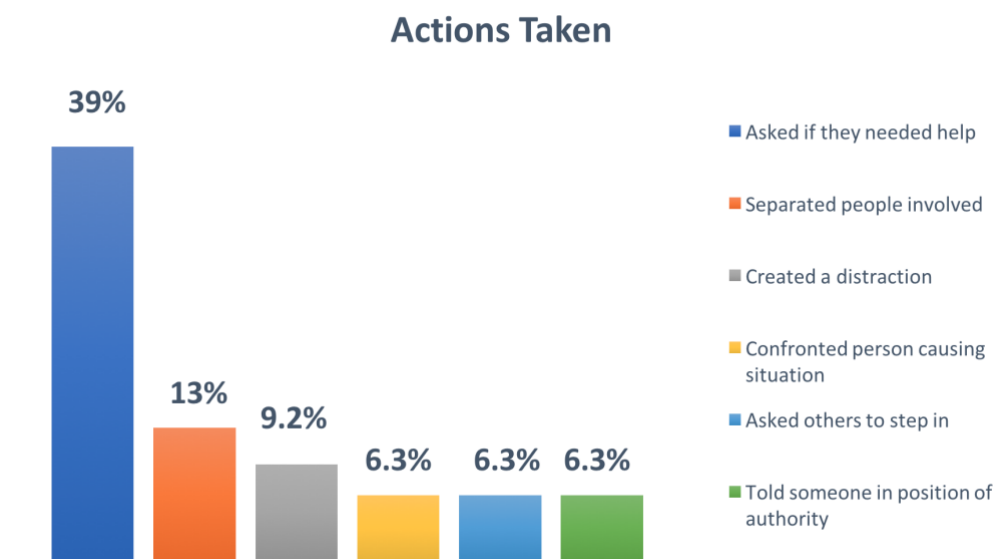
Recent Bystander Experience

Participants were also asked if they had observed a situation they believed was, or could have led to, a sexual assault since the start of the academic year. The majority of respondents (n = 441, 72.7%) indicated they had not observed such a situation; however, 166 participants (27.3% of participants) reported they had. Many participants who answered that they had witnessed a potential sexual assault reported observing more than one of these incidents.

Participants who reported having a bystander experience were then asked to briefly describe the situation that they had observed that they believed was, or could have led to, a sexual assault. Overwhelmingly, these responses described situations in which heavy drinking was involved. Oftentimes, the situations included intoxicated students attempting to go home from a party or bar with even more intoxicated students. Many situations described sexual harassment and/or unwanted touching at parties or bars. Some responses describe witnessing women being verbally harassed or catcalled late at night in Antigonish.

The target of the unwanted behaviours was most often a stranger to (45.8%) or a friend of (30.3%) the respondent, rather than an acquaintance (17.6%) or a student they recognized from class (4.2%). The majority of participants (80.2%) took some sort of action in response to a situation they observed. Of those who did not take action, 8.5% decided not to and 4.9% considered intervening but felt they could not safely do so.

Graph 1. *Actions taken to intervene in a situation participants believed was, or could have led to, a sexual assault.*



Of those who decided to intervene in the situation they observed, the most common strategies were to ask the person who appeared to be at risk if they needed help (39.4%) or to step in and separate the people involved (12.7%). Fewer students reported creating a distraction to disengage those involved from the situation (9.2%), confronting the person causing the situation (6.3%), asking others to step in as a group (6.3%), or telling someone in a position of authority about the situation (6.3%).

Graph 2. *Reasons participants decided not to take action to intervene in a situation that they believed was, or could have led to, a sexual assault.*



Participants who indicated they did not take any action were most likely to report that this was because they didn't know how to intervene (63.6%), didn't feel comfortable intervening (45.5%), felt like it wasn't their business to intervene (36.4%), or because they didn't want to confront the person causing the situation (36.4%). Fewer of these participants indicated they didn't intervene because they didn't want to turn into the target (18.2%), they re-evaluated and decided the situation wasn't an issue (18.2%), or because they would be going against their friends if they took action (9.1%).

Experiences of and Attitudes Related to Sexual Assault

Awareness of Peers' Experiences of Sexual Violence

Participants were asked about receiving disclosures from peers regarding experiences of sexual violence. About half of student respondents (n = 309, 50.9%) reported that since the start of the academic year, a friend or acquaintance told them they had had an unwanted sexual experience. Most of these disclosures were from women and many participants indicated they received disclosures from more than one person.

Definitions

The StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey used the following definition of consent, which was also used in the University of New Brunswick Sexual Assault Climate Survey:

Consent: A voluntary, positive agreement to engage in sexual activity with a partner(s). Nobody else can give your consent for you, and giving consent means that you are awake, conscious, sober, and able to make a deliberate, unforced and unpressured decision. You can change your mind at any time for any reason, and withdraw consent. Consent can be withdrawn verbally, or non-verbally through your behaviours. People in positions of trust, power, or authority cannot abuse their position to get you to agree to engage in sexual activity.

The study also provided definitions of different types of behaviours that participants were then asked about in the sexual assault experiences section of the survey:

Touching of a Sexual Nature: Kissing you, touching your private parts, grabbing, fondling, rubbing up against you in a sexual way, even if it was over your clothes.

Oral Sex: Someone's mouth or tongue making contact with your genitals, or your mouth or tongue making contact with someone else's genitals.

Vaginal Sex: Someone's penis being put in your vagina, or your penis being put into someone else's vagina.

Anal Sex: Someone's penis being put into your anus, or your penis being put in someone else's anus.

Anal or Vaginal Penetration with Object: With a body part other than a penis or tongue, or by an object.

Experiences of Sexual Assault Before Attending StFX

Participants were asked if they had experienced any of the five types of sexual contact described in the last section when they were unwanted or when they did not give consent before attending StFX University.

Over half of participants (n = 330, 55.1%) reported they had not experienced these forms of unwanted, non-consensual sexual behaviours before attending StFX; however, 269 respondents (44.9% of participants) indicated they had.

The following sections sought to measure the prevalence of sexual coercion and sexual assault using a revised victimization version of the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss et al., 2007).

Experiences of Sexual Coercion at StFX

Over a third of students who participated (n= 244, 39.9%) reported they had experienced at least one type of sexual coercion (via verbal pressure or verbal aggression) while they were a student at StFX University.

Sexual Coercion via Verbal Pressure

Participants were asked about their experiences of sexual coercion through the use of verbal pressure with the following question:

“Since starting at StFX, has anyone ever told you lies, threatened to end your relationship, threatened to seek sex outside of your romantic relationship, threatened to spread rumours about you, made promises you knew were untrue, or continually pressured you although you said you didn’t want to, in order to make you engage in [the previously described five types of unwanted sexual contact].”

The proportions of respondents who reported experiencing each of the five types of sexual assault as a result of verbal pressure are displayed in **Table 10**. Almost a quarter of participants (23.3%) reported experiencing unwanted sexual touching as a result of verbal pressure since becoming a student at StFX. Fewer respondents reported experiencing unwanted oral sex (13.2%), vaginal sex (13.7%), anal sex (5.6%), or penetration with an object (2.4%).

Table 10. *Experiences of sexual coercion via verbal pressure at StFX; N = 601.*

	1-2 Times (%)	3-5 Times (%)	6-10 Times (%)	10+ Times (%)	Suspected (%)	% Total (n)
Sexual Touching	13.1%	4.7%	1.8%	1.2%	2.5%	23.3% (140)
Oral Sex	8.0%	2.2%	1.0%	0.2%	1.8%	13.2% (79)
Vaginal Sex	8.7%	2.8%	0.7%	0.5%	1.0%	13.7% (89)
Anal Sex	3.2%	1.2%	0.2%	0.0%	1.0%	5.6% (33)
Penetration with Object	1.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	2.4% (14)

Experiences of Sexual Coercion via Verbal Aggression

Participants were asked about their experiences of sexual coercion through the use of verbal aggression with the following question:

“Since starting at StFX, has anyone ever showed displeasure, criticized your sexuality or attractiveness, or got angry (but didn’t use physical force), in order to make you engage in [the previously described five types of unwanted sexual contact].”

The proportions of respondents who reported experiencing each of the five types of sexual assault as a result of verbal aggression are displayed in **Table 11**. Similar to experiences of sexual assault via verbal pressure, almost a quarter of participants (24.4%) reported experiencing unwanted sexual touching as a result of verbal aggression. Fewer respondents reported experiencing unwanted oral sex (13.9%), vaginal sex (15.9%), anal sex (3.9%), or penetration with an object (2.1%).

Table 11. *Experiences of sexual coercion via verbal aggression at StFX; N = 602.*

	1-2 Times (%)	3-5 Times (%)	6-10 Times (%)	10+ Times (%)	Suspected (%)	% Total (n)
Sexual Touching	14.6%	4.7%	1.2%	1.2%	2.7%	24.4% (146)
Oral Sex	8.5%	2.8%	0.3%	0.8%	1.5%	13.9% (84)
Vaginal Sex	10.9%	2.5%	0.7%	0.5%	1.3%	15.9% (95)
Anal Sex	2.5%	0.8%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	3.9% (24)
Penetration with Object	1.2%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	2.1% (12)

Experiences of Sexual Assault at StFX

Participants were asked about their experiences with any of the three forms of sexual assault (via threat of physical force, via physical force, or via use of alcohol or substances) since they became a student at StFX University.

Almost half of students who participated ($n = 272$, 45.5%) indicated they experienced at least one type of sexual assault during their time at StFX University.

Experiences of Sexual Assault via Threat of Physical Force

Participants were asked about their experiences of sexual assault through the threat of physical force with the following question:

“Since starting at StFX, has anyone ever threatened to physically harm you or someone close to you, in order to make you engage in [the previously described five types of unwanted sexual contact].”

The percentages of respondents who indicated they had experienced each type of sexual assault as a result of a threat of physical force are displayed in **Table 12**. Generally, very few participants reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact through threat of physical force, as can be seen in **Table 12**.

Forty-five respondents (7.4%) reported they had experienced any kind of sexual assault through threat of physical force.

Table 12. *Experiences of sexual assault via threat of physical force at StFX; N = 600.*

	1-2 Times (%)	3-5 Times (%)	6-10 Times (%)	10+ Times (%)	Suspected (%)	% Total (n)
Sexual Touching	2.3%	0.8%	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%	3.8% (23)
Oral Sex	1.3%	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	2.3% (14)
Vaginal Sex	1.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	2.4% (15)
Anal Sex	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	1.2% (7)
Penetration with Object	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	1.2% (7)

Experiences of Sexual Assault via Physical Force

Participants were asked about their experiences of sexual assault through the use of physical force with the following question:

“Since starting at StFX, has someone used force, for example held you down with their body weight, pinned your arms, or had a weapon, in order to make you engage in [the previously described five types of unwanted sexual contact].”

The proportion of participants who reported experiencing each type of sexual assault through the use of physical force is displayed in **Table 13**. Around one tenth of respondents (10.6%) indicated they had experienced unwanted sexual touching through the use of physical force and almost as many (8.0%) reported experiencing unwanted vaginal sex as a result of physical force. Fewer participants reported experiencing unwanted oral sex (5.1%), anal sex (1.5%), or penetration with an object (1.2%) through the use of physical force.

Ninety-two participants (15.1%) indicated they had experienced some form of sexual assault as a result of physical force.

Table 13. *Experiences of sexual assault via use of physical force at StFX; N = 602.*

	1-2 Times (%)	3-5 Times (%)	6-10 Times (%)	10+ Times (%)	Suspected (%)	% Total (n)
Sexual Touching	7.5%	2.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	10.6% (63)
Oral Sex	3.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	5.1% (30)
Vaginal Sex	6.5%	0.8%	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%	8.0% (48)
Anal Sex	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	1.5% (9)
Penetration with Object	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	1.2% (7)

Experiences of Sexual Assault via Use of Alcohol or Substances

Participants were asked about their experiences of sexual assault through the use of alcohol or substances with the following question:

“Since starting at StFX, has anyone ever taken advantage of you when you were too drunk or ‘out of it’ to stop what was happening, in order to make you engage in [the previously described five types of unwanted sexual contact].”

The percentages of respondents that reported experiencing each type of sexual assault as a result of the use of alcohol or substances are displayed in **Table 14**. Over a third of participants (38.1%) reported experiencing unwanted sexual touching while they were too drunk or ‘out of it’ to stop what was happening. Almost a quarter of participants (23.3%) indicated they had experienced unwanted vaginal sex through the use of alcohol or substances, and about a fifth (19.8%) reported experiencing unwanted oral sex through the use of alcohol or substances. Fewer participants reported experiencing unwanted anal sex (5.2%) or penetration with an object (2.7%) through the use of alcohol or substances. The most common experiences of sexual assault at StFX appear to involve the use of alcohol or other substances.

42.2% of participants (n=258) reported experiencing some form of sexual assault through the use of alcohol or substances.

Table 14. *Experiences of sexual assault via use of alcohol or substances at StFX; N = 600.*

	1-2 Times (%)	3-5 Times (%)	6-10 Times (%)	10+ Times (%)	Suspected (%)	% Total (n)
Sexual Touching	24.5%	7.2%	2.2%	1.7%	2.5%	38.1% (228)
Oral Sex	12.9%	3.5%	1.3%	0.3%	1.8%	19.8% (119)
Vaginal Sex	15.3%	4.0%	1.7%	0.3%	2.0%	23.3% (140)
Anal Sex	3.2%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	5.2% (31)
Penetration with Object	2.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7% (16)

Possible Experiences of Sexual Assault while Unconscious

Participants were asked about possible experiences of sexual assault while unconscious with the following question:

“Since starting at StFX, have you suspected that someone has had sexual contact with you when you were unable to provide consent or stop what was happening because you were passed out, drugged, drunk, incapacitated or asleep? This question asks about events that you think (but are not certain) happened.”

The majority of participants (n = 458, 76.1%) reported that they have not suspected someone had had sexual contact with them while they were unconscious; however, 118 respondents (19.6%) replied that they had.

Table 15. Total proportion of participants who have had at least one experience of each form of sexual violence while at StFX; N = 600.

Type of Sexual Violence	% Students That Have Had at Least One Experience (n)
Sexual Coercion	39.9% (244)
Sexual Assault via Threat of Physical Force	7.4% (45)
Sexual Assault via Physical Force	15.1% (92)
Sexual Assault via Use of Alcohol or Substances	42.2% (258)
Possible Sexual Assault while Unconscious	19.6% (118)

Specific Experiences of Sexual Violence

Participants who indicated in the previous section that they had experienced sexual violence were asked to answer a series of questions about an incident they perceived to be the “most serious.” The “most serious” was defined for participants as the incident that had “the greatest impact” on their life. Of those who participated, 296 participants (48.4%) reported experiencing an incident of sexual violence since becoming a student at StFX.

Type of Unwanted Sexual Contact

Participants were asked about the nature and type of sexual violence they experienced. More than half (59.5%) indicated their incident was attempted sexual activity without their consent, while the remainder (40.5%) had experienced sexual activity without their consent. Of the unwanted sexual experiences, 94.1% included touching of a sexual nature, 35.8% included vaginal sex, and 22.7% included oral sex. Fewer experiences of unwanted sexual contact included anal sex (4.3%) or anal or vaginal penetration with an object (5.7%). Almost all experiences (91.9%) involved only one other person, while 8.1% of incidents involved two or more other people.

Who was the Offender?

The individual who perpetrated the unwanted behaviour was most likely to be a friend of the participant (29.3%), a stranger to the participant (29.3%), or a casual acquaintance of the participant (23.8%). Fewer participants reported that the perpetrator of the unwanted behaviour was an ex-romantic partner (6.9%), casual or first date (6.9%), current romantic partner (1.7%), co-worker (0.3%), employer/supervisor (0.3%), university professor/instructor (0.3%), or family member (0.3%). Most of the offenders (67.4%) were students at StFX and the majority of offenders were men (90.0%).

Where did the Incident Occur?

Incidents were most likely to occur on campus ($n = 133$, 46.2%), as opposed to off campus ($n = 91$, 31.6%). In most incidents (55.2%), there were no bystanders aware of the situation. In 36.8% of incidents, there were one or more bystanders aware of what was occurring. In 8% of incidents, participants reported that they were unsure if there were any bystanders aware of the unwanted sexual experience.

Context of the Incident

Participants were asked whether their experience of unwanted sexual contact involved substance use, physical force, threat of physical force, and/or being drugged. The majority of incidents involved the participant drinking alcohol (79.1%) and/or the perpetrator drinking alcohol (75.8%). About a third of incidents involved the perpetrator using physical force against the participant (30%). Fewer incidents involved the perpetrator using drugs (18.3%), the perpetrator threatening physical force or using coercion (15%), the perpetrator using their position of authority or power (11.4%), the participant taking drugs (7.7%), and/or the participant being given a drug without their knowledge or consent (5.1%). Some participants indicated they didn't know if their incident involved any of the above behaviours (6.2%). Almost half of participants (42.7%) indicated they were unable to provide consent in the incident because they were incapacitated in some way.

Psychological Impact on the Survivor/Victim

The majority of participants indicated that the incident was extremely (41.3%) or somewhat (32.9%) stressful at the time, while some students expressed that the incident was only a little stressful (19.9%) or not at all stressful (5.9%) at the time.

They were asked about the effects their incidents had on them. The most common effects respondents' experienced are listed in **Table 16**.

Table 16. *Impacts that participants' experience of sexual violence has had on them.*

What effect did these unwanted behaviours have on you?	%
I avoided situations	68.5
I felt embarrassed/humiliated	58.1
I felt on guard or easily startled	54.4
It negatively impacted my self-esteem	53.0
I had recurring thoughts	51.9
I felt depressed or anxious	46.7
It affected my romantic/sexual relationship(s)	35.2
I felt numb/detached	32.6
I missed class or work	26.7
I had nightmares	25.2
I withdrew from other activities	23.7
My grades went down	19.6
I thought about leaving StFX	18.9
I had suicidal thoughts	15.2
I stayed off social media	14.1
I didn't finish class assignments or exams	11.5
I tried to complete suicide	4.8
Not listed	4.4

Just over half of participants (52.4%) reported that the incident of sexual violence still has a negative impact on their life. When asked to describe how the incident still impacts their life negatively, participants expressed being fearful to go to bars, having difficulty engaging in sexual activity when they wanted to, being anxious about running into their perpetrator, and being worried others would not believe them.

Disclosure and Help-Seeking

The majority of respondents who had experienced sexual violence (82.2%) reported they had told at least one person about their experience. Disclosure usually happened within the first 24 hours of the incident occurring (60.9%), the first month (12%), or the first week (11.2%). Most participants told a close friend other than a roommate (62.9%), while some reported telling their roommate (31.4%), romantic partner (16.1%), and/or their parent or guardian (13.6%). Fewer participants indicated they told some other family member (8.2%), a non-StFX counsellor (5.4%), a StFX counsellor (4.3%), a StFX faculty member (3.6%), and/or a staff member from the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association (3.2%). **Table 17** displays who the participants disclosed their experience of sexual violence to and the participants' rating of how helpful this person was.

Participants rated a close friend other than roommate or a roommate as the most helpful people they told, as well as the least helpful they told, which suggests the significant role of those closest to the survivor/victim in providing support.

Those who did not disclose to anyone (n= 51, 17.8%) were asked why they decided not to tell anyone about their experience of sexual violence. **Table 18** contains participants' reasons for deciding not to disclose their experience of sexual violence.

The most common reasons participants did not tell anyone about their experience of sexual violence was that they felt it was a private matter they wanted to handle on their own (60%), that they didn't think what happened was serious enough to talk about (44.4%), and that they felt ashamed/embarrassed (40%).

Table 17. *Who students disclosed their experience of sexual violence to and rating of helpfulness; N = 220.*

	%	Rated as most helpful (%)	Rated as least helpful (%)
Close friend other than roommate	62.9	55.2	17.5
Roommate	31.4	23.3	11.1
Romantic partner (in cases where they were not the one who assaulted you)	16.1	6.9	4.1
Parent or guardian	13.6	8.2	5.5
Other family member	8.2	4.7	1.8
Non-StFX counsellor	5.4	3.0	0.5
Counsellor from StFX Health and Counselling Centre	4.3	0.9	2.3
StFX faculty member	3.6	1.3	0.9
Staff member from Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association	3.2	1.7	0.5
Doctor or nurse at StFX Health and Counselling Centre	2.9	0.4	0.0
Residence staff (i.e. Community Advisor, Residence Life Coordinator)	2.9	1.3	1.8
Not Listed	2.5	0.9	0.9
Doctor or nurse at a local hospital or medical clinic	2.1	0.0	0.5
Police	2.1	0.4	1.4
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program nurse	1.8	0.9	0.0
Student Life Office (i.e. Director of Student Life, Student Conduct Officer)	1.8	0.0	0.9
Staff member at StFX	1.4	0.0	0.5
Family Doctor	0.7	0.0	0.0
Campus Security	0.7	0.0	0.0
A help line operator	0.7	0.0	0.0
211 Nova Scotia hotline	0.4	0.4	0.5
Religious leader	0.4	0.0	0.5
Director of Health, Counselling and Accessible Learning at StFX	-	-	0.5
Student Life staff (i.e. Aboriginal, African Descent or Gender and Sexual Diversity Student Advisors)	-	-	0.5

Table 18. *Reasons for deciding not to disclose experience of sexual violence to anyone else;*
N = 51.

	%
It is a private matter; I wanted to deal with it on my own	60.0
I didn't think what happened was serious enough to talk about	44.4
I felt ashamed/embarrassed	40.0
I didn't think others would think it was serious	26.7
I wanted to forget it happened	24.4
I thought I would be blamed for what happened	24.4
I was afraid of not being believed	22.2
I didn't think others would understand	20.0
I was concerned others would find out	20.0
I had other things I needed to focus on and was concerned about (e.g. classes, work)	15.6
I didn't want others to worry about me	13.3
I didn't think others would think it was important	13.3
I didn't want the person who did it to get in trouble	13.3
I didn't have time to deal with it due to academics, work, etc.	11.1
It would feel like admitting I failed	11.1
I feared others would harass me or react negatively toward me	8.9
I thought nothing would be done	8.9
I didn't feel university officials (administrators, campus security, health and counselling) would solve my problems	4.4
I didn't know the reporting procedures on campus	4.4
I thought people would try to tell me what to do	4.4
I was afraid the person who did it would try and get back at me	4.4
I was afraid I would be punished for infractions or violations (such as underage drinking)	2.2
Not Listed	2.2

Just under half of participants who completed the sexual assault experiences section of the survey reported that they were aware of the formal procedures to report sexual violence at StFX (45%). Of these participants, only 15 (5.3% of participants) used StFX's formal procedures to report the incident of sexual violence they experienced. Of those 15 who reported via formal procedures, more than half (n = 8, 53.3%) indicated that the procedures did not help them at all, while some reported the procedures helped a little (n = 5, 33.3%), or helped but could have helped more (n = 1, 6.7%). Only one student who reported their experience of sexual violence through StFX's formal procedures felt the procedures completely solved the problem (n = 1, 6.7%).

Participants were then asked about which sexual violence resources at StFX and off campus they accessed after their experience of sexual violence and which resources they did not access but wished they had (see **Table 19**).

Table 19. *Support services that students visited or had not visited but “wanted to.”*

	Visited (%)	Did Not Visit but “Wanted to” (%)
StFX’s Health and Counselling Centre	54.4	57.0
StFX’s Residence Life Office	20.3	39.5
StFX’s Student Life Office	19.0	41.2
Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association	19.0	57.9
Not Listed	16.5	6.1
Campus Security	13.9	36.8
Non-StFX Mental Health Practitioner	12.7	40.4
Non-StFX Medical Health Practitioner	10.1	36.8
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program	8.9	44.7

Participants were then asked what prevented them from accessing resources they wished they had visited (see Table 20).

Table 20. *Reasons for not accessing support services.*

	%
I’m just trying to forget about it	41.3
It’s a private matter that I wanted to deal with on my own	40.4
What happened to me isn’t serious enough	39.2
I didn’t think it would help	26.3
I didn’t want to have to report it	20.0
I’m ashamed or embarrassed	18.8
I don’t want other people finding out	15.8
I don’t want the person who did it to get in trouble	13.8
I don’t want this information written down anywhere	10.8
Not Listed	10.8
I haven’t told anyone about the assault	10.0
I think I will be blamed	9.6
I didn’t know the Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association existed	9.2
I didn’t know StFX’s Health and Counselling Centre existed	8.3
I didn’t know the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program existed	7.5
I didn’t know StFX’s Student Life Office existed	5.8
I don’t want anyone to see me accessing these resources	5.0
I don’t want my romantic partner finding out	3.8
I didn’t know StFX’s Residence Life Office existed	3.3
I didn’t know Campus Security existed	1.3
I was threatened not to say anything	0.8

Conclusion

Understanding the aspects of a campus that make it favourable to sexual violence and those that make it unfavourable to sexual violence involves exploring “students’ knowledge about reporting policies and resources for victims, their attitudes about prevention, and their perceptions about how their community is addressing the problem of sexual violence” (White House Task Force, 2014b, p.1). To understand the campus climate and to foster a climate that asserts and practices a zero-tolerance stance, these are among the most critical pieces of information to have.

Through the use of evidence-based, campus-specific assessment tools, like the StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey, this critical information can be known and can be acted on. Without this, the scope and nature of the problems particular to each campus cannot be addressed appropriately or adequately, though campuses across the U.S. and Canada are tasked more and more to address them. As the White House Task Force (2014b, p.1) notes: “Sexual assault is a significant challenge for colleges and universities nationwide, affecting the health, mental health, and academic success of students. Many schools are working to address sexual assault, but lack assessment tools to understand the scope or nature of the problem.”

Evidence-based, campus-specific assessment tools, like the StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey, can provide a clearer understanding of the depth and breadth of the issues and solutions that are specifically relevant and resonant to the community members of any one campus (White House Task Force, 2014b). With such clarity, efforts to address sexual violence can be adapted, transformed, and created to meet the present needs of individual campus communities. Further, conducting these assessments repeatedly over time allows for the ongoing evaluation and development of these efforts. In this case, conducting regular climate surveys is considered to be a best-practice to respond to campus sexual assault (White House, 2014b). Further, when a campus addresses sexual violence, it creates a climate that is centered on the needs of survivors/victims, one where those who have experienced sexual violence might feel more comfortable coming forward (White House Task Force, 2014b).

The findings of the StFX Sexual Violence Climate Survey call attention to and inform areas that need to be strengthened in addressing sexual violence at StFX. These areas include: providing practical and positive education on consent and sex, dispelling rape myths, encouraging a positive bystander campus community, improving trust between students and staff and administrators, and improving access to and knowledge of on campus and off campus resources available to survivors/victims. Certainly, these are areas that are acknowledged and addressed in various ways by various on campus and off campus leaders already, and much of this work has been and continues to be collaborative in nature. These findings provide a baseline for all of these efforts. And all these efforts are important, much needed, and now themselves can be better understood in the context of the campus climate at StFX.

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