

Trauma-informed, trustworthy,
collaborative, and culturally responsive

TRANSFORMING MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY'S INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO DATING, DOMESTIC, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS



**A CALL TO ACTION
APRIL 2020**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Dating, Domestic, and Sexual Violence Advisory Committee gratefully acknowledges that our ability to do this work is grounded in our presence on the traditional territories of the Siksikaitsitapi nation of the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani people of the Blackfoot Confederacy; the Tsuu T'ina nation; the Îyârhe Nakoda nation of the Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley people; and the Métis Nation, Region 3.



WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF TREATY 7 TERRITORY.

Dating, Domestic, and Sexual Violence has always compounded and been embedded within the violence that colonialism has used to marginalize First Nations and Indigenous peoples, and that awareness must be part of this work in order for it to be successful.

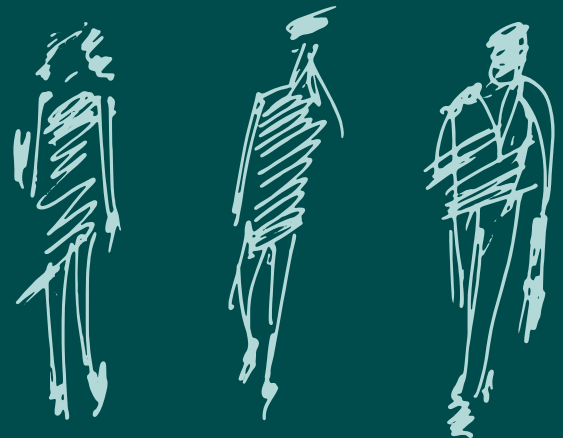


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INTRODUCTION

The **Dating, Domestic, and Sexual Violence (DDSV) Advisory Committee** was formed at the end of 2019, to collect the wisdom of the academic and professional knowledge and lived experience that exists on the Mount Royal University (MRU) campus community across staff, faculty, and student groups. We have created this document in order to provide a shared vision of best practices and most effective next steps that will enable MRU to build on existing strengths and continue to transform its approach to the issue of dating, domestic, and sexual violence on campus. This paper references and builds on the foundation of a great deal of academic and front-line expertise in the field of DDSV and **gender-based violence (GBV)** across Canada. The continually expanding conversation around responding to and working to end DDSV and GBV makes clear that “calls to action must go beyond service on an individual basis: they require a holistic framework that addresses policy, procedures, and prevention” (Khan, Rowe, & Bidgood, 2019, p. 7), and our hope is to aid the development of such a framework for MRU.



Although this committee began its work in 2019, this call to action document has largely been developed during an extraordinary time in the story of MRU, Alberta, Canada, and the global community. As of March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has been catalyzing transformative change in all of our systems and processes while this document was forming, and while some of these changes will be temporary, what we have learned is that transformative change can happen quickly and thoroughly when the will to make change exists at leadership levels. Change may require dedicated resources, and the will to enforce a shift in institutional values and culture through skilled and informed policy-making, timely response, and transparent accountability.

ABOUT THE DDSV ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF SAMRU

The DDSV Advisory Committee was formed to submit a report of recommendations to MRU on ways in which they can improve education and prevention strategies regarding DDSV.

This **advisory committee to the Vice-President Student Affairs (VPSA) of the Students Association of Mount Royal University (SAMRU)** aims to aid the VPSA in the creation of a set of recommendations regarding the institution's approach to DDSV concerning students. These recommendations will address policy and procedures, prevention, intervention, and response to DDSV.

The appointed members of the 2019-2020 term include Kainat Javed, Vice-President Student Affairs of SAMRU's Representation Executive Council (REC); Shayla Breen, President of SAMRU's REC; Gaye Watson Warthe, Associate Dean Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Health, Community, and Education; Cari Ionson, Sexual Violence Response and Awareness Coordinator; Bob Lambert, Manager, Residence Life; Ashley Schreiner, Student at Large. Shereen Samuels,

Director of Student Services at SAMRU, acted as facilitator and amanuensis. As of May 1, 2020, Spirit River Striped Wolf stepped into the role of President of SAMRU's REC, and Camille Rhose Tabacla stepped into the role of SAMRU's Vice President of Student Affairs.

The DDSV Advisory Committee's mandate is "to collaboratively work together to promote safe learning, develop strategies, and recommend initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of respect and putting an end to sexual violence on campus." The committee committed to "research, write, and publish a report of recommendations for MRU to act on that are based in prevention, intervention, and response to dating, domestic, and sexual violence.

Recommendations will:

- Be informed by and reflect the needs of those impacted by DDSV
- Be trauma-informed and keep the person who has experienced DDSV at the centre;
- Respectful of the diversity of people's lived experiences;
- Focus attention where people's experiences and voices have traditionally been suppressed or marginalized" (DDSVAC Terms of Reference, January 2020).

THE GOALS OF THIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ARE TO:

- 1** Establish what gaps exist between current state and effective education, prevention, and response at Mount Royal University;
- 2** Provide recommendations to MRU's administration regarding how the institution can work to address the gaps using realistic and pragmatic measures;
- 3** Provide ongoing monitoring of MRU's progress in implementing these recommendations.



MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY'S WORK THUS FAR

- Established the position of Coordinator, Sexual Violence Response and Awareness
- Developed the Sexual Violence Response Policy (2017)
- Initial training to the University Leadership Group (ULG) on sexual violence - December 18, 2017
- Created a team of DDSV response advocates who are frontline student service support staff and are regularly trained on DDSV related topics and respond to students
- Created and are members of two community of practice groups, one regional community of practice meets monthly and one Western Canada community of practice group meets biannually
- Asking questions about DDSV incidence and prevalence at MRU on the National College Health Assessment since 2008 (Warthe & Tutty)
- Established Stepping Up, a peer facilitated program focused on the prevention of DDSV and the promotion of healthy relationships at MRU including the development of a 24-hour resource card and a website with MRU and community resources (Warthe, Carter-Snell, Kostouros, & Tutty, 2010)
- Hosted Family Violence Prevention month activities at MRU since 2008
- Participated in the Survivor Love Letter Campaign for Sexual Violence Awareness Month since 2018
- Hosted the first provincial Post-Secondary Institution Knowledge Exchange on Sexual Violence in 2017
- Hosted Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI) training for campus investigators across the province in 2018



- Partnered with the Centre for Sexuality in offering Consent and Bystander Trainings to students
- Collaborated with Centre for Sexuality for the #CalgaryGetsConsent campaign
- Collaborated with Handsome Alice Theatre in creating a performance with their artist and students about dating, domestic, and sexual violence
- Hosted A Chitenge Story a play on healing from trauma and Zambian identity for Black History Month
- Hosted Rape is Real and Everywhere a comedy show written and performed by survivors of sexual assault
- Partnered with Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA) in offering Conversations on Positive Masculinities to students
- MRU Sexual Violence Response and Awareness Coordinator sits on the Calgary Police Service's Unfounded Advisory Committee
- Training for students, Security, SAMRU Clubs, Career Services, Field School Leaders, Residence RAs, Student Leaders, and SAMRU volunteers on responding to disclosures of abuse
- First post-secondary institution to become an "I Believe You" campus in Alberta (Docherty and Warthe spoke at the initial media launch of the campaign)
- Provides Safewalk program for students and employees
- CCASA providing counselling on-site for MRU students
- Responding to Disclosures workshop provided on campus to students and employees in Fall and Winter Semesters
- The creation of the Consent Colouring Book, a collaboration with SAMRU
- The creation of the DDSV Resource Folder in collaboration with SAMRU, to be made available in classrooms
- Partnership with Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Services to deliver a 2-day Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Assault and Childhood Sexual Abuse training at MRU. Three staff members at MRU have been trained as facilitators. This training is offered twice a semester

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DDSV Advisory Committee was formed by SAMRU's Representation Executives, with the purpose of collaboratively developing a call to action to MRU's leadership, exhorting them to take concrete steps towards promoting a culture of respect and ending sexual violence on campus. The committee committed to publish this call to action that includes recommended strategies that are focused on prevention, intervention, and response to dating, domestic, and sexual violence.

SAMRU and this committee acknowledge and applaud the work MRU has done to date regarding DDSV on campus, while also recognizing that much more work is necessary to truly further this work in a meaningful and sustainable manner. Current statistics demonstrate that consensual sexual safety continues to be a significant issue for students on this campus, and that stigma still exists around this subject that makes it difficult for people who have experienced sexual violence to have timely and equitable access to the resources they need. SAMRU is committed to working collaboratively to identify strategies and solutions that will make the campus safe for all.

MRU's 'small-classes/strong community' reputation positions the campus to develop high-trust relationships with students, and part of earning that institutional trust is the development and implementation of transparent, consistent, and easily navigable policies and procedures. MRU's awareness of the need for focused attention on improving the response to DDSV has not been fully translated into action, as evidenced by the delayed development of institutional structures and processes around foundational and preventative work, as well as slow and confusing response at the point of first contact and throughout the reporting process. The burden of MRU's often tedious, unclear, and inconsistent structures and processes is currently put on the students reporting experiences of DDSV.

Within this report, the committee provides an analysis of barriers and critical success factors for this work at MRU. Current barriers are generally positioned to become critical success factors should the institution focus attention on them. These barriers/critical success factors are presented in five overarching categories: institutional commitment, institutional context, focus on student experience, shifting landscape/emerging opportunities, and inclusive cultural and theoretical approaches.

Based on the findings in critical success factors and barriers, the committee recommends the following strategic opportunities for consideration by the leadership of MRU:

Appropriately informed leaders and decision makers

As a foundation for the rest of the work, it is critical that MRU develops leaders and decision makers with an understanding of trauma-informed response, and must examine and update the existing policies impacting DDSV response using a trauma-informed lens. This will have a cascading impact on increased effectiveness institution-wide.

Trustworthy and transparent systems and processes

A key element of easily navigable and equitable procedures and processes is the trust and clear understanding that students have in the institution, both in terms of what MRU can do and what its limitations might be. In order to be seen as trustworthy, MRU needs to demonstrate transparency from the outset of engagement with students, elements of which range from explicit interim measures to maintain safety to sanctions commensurate with the reported violation; and regular review with key stakeholders with an explicit framework for incorporating feedback.

Culturally responsive and inclusive approach

Every person who experiences sexual violence comes from a distinct cultural context. In order to be inclusive and culturally responsive, MRU needs to offer skilful alternative approaches to resolving trauma incidents. As well, policy development must acknowledge and honour the fact that MRU's students are diverse and intersectional, and embed culturally responsive and inclusive practices to increase equitable access for all.

Collaboration, partnerships, and Communities of Practice

In order to be consistent with shared language and understanding of concepts, MRU needs to continue working with acknowledged provincial leaders and local and provincial organizations supporting this work. Partners and champions within MRU need to be identified and brought together in an official committee capacity, and the existing provincial/regional Communities of Practice need to be sustained and strengthened.

RECENT HISTORY AND CURRENT CONTEXT

MRU HAS MADE STRIDES IN ADDRESSING DDSV IN RECENT YEARS.

The creation of a dedicated **Sexual Violence Response Coordinator** role has allowed the institution to provide a more informed and consistent response to reports on campus, and has also allowed the development of a much clearer understanding of the issues being faced by students particularly on campus, issues that require a coherent framework for response on the part of the institution.

As well, MRU has offered a DDSV prevention project called **Stepping Up** since 2010 (Warthe, Carter-Snell, Kostouros, & Tutty). The project has received funding from the

Alberta Government Community and Support Services, Family Violence Prevention Grant since 2013. This peer facilitated project contributes to increased awareness of DDSV that occurs in the context of relationships and supports peer facilitated discussions about healthy relationships.

MRU has been collecting data on the incidence, prevalence, and impacts of DDSV since questions were added to the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) beginning in 2008 by Warthe and Tutty. This data helped to support the development of a prevention project and highlighted the need for a dedicated Sexual Violence Response Coordinator and a sexual violence policy that includes supporting students and employees that have experienced DDSV.

Some current context follows.

In the most recent administration of the NCHA in 2019, 1,310 randomly selected students responded to the survey. The NCHA, developed by the American College Health Association, is administered every three years at MRU and collects data on the health, behaviours, habits, and perceptions of students. Questions include students' experience of violence in the previous 12 months.

STUDENTS DISCLOSED THAT IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS:

- **13.9% experienced sexual touching without their consent**
- **7.3% experienced stalking**
- **12.2% experienced an emotionally abusive intimate relationship**
- **3.4% experienced a sexually abusive intimate relationship**
- **2.2% experienced a physically abusive relationship**

(American College Health Association, 2019, p. 5)

Additional questions added to the NCHA in 2019 (Warthe & Tutty) asked students if they had ever been a victim of stalking by a romantic or sexual partner or former partner. In total, 13.7% of students indicated that they had been a victim of stalking; the majority of respondents identified as women. Students were also asked if they had ever been in an intimate (dating, romantic, or couple) relationship that was emotionally or physically or sexually abusive. In total, 26.8% of respondents reported experiencing abuse in an intimate partner relationship; the majority of respondents identified as women.

Additional questions on help seeking reflects that 16% of respondents have ever asked for help from anyone for emotional, physical, or sexual violence in an intimate relationship. Respondents identifying as women were more likely to ask for help because they:

- thought it would be helpful;
- believed they could not manage on their own;
- knew who to ask for help; thought asking for help would contribute to their safety; and
- were aware of services available on campus

In a previous administration of the NCHA in 2010, Warthe and Tutty asked students about violence witnessed or experienced as children or adolescents. Approximately one-third of students witnessed violence in their home and 26% of students experienced violence directly (Warthe & Tutty, 2010).

DATING, DOMESTIC, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE AND AWARENESS STATISTICS

The Dating, Domestic, and Sexual Violence Response and Awareness Coordinator role was created in 2016.

The support and advocacy component of this role works directly with students, staff, and faculty who have been impacted by DDSV and are wanting to access support through disclosure and/or to pursue a formal reporting process within the University. These reflect information captured within this role from the disclosures that were received.



SEPTEMBER 2016–AUGUST 2017

15 disclosures were received,
with 4 formal reports made.

SEPTEMBER 2017–AUGUST 2018

33 disclosures were received,
with 4 formal reports made.

SEPTEMBER 2018–AUGUST 2019

45 disclosures were received,
with 1 formal report made.

SEPTEMBER 2019–AUGUST 2020

33 disclosures were received,
with 1 formal report made.

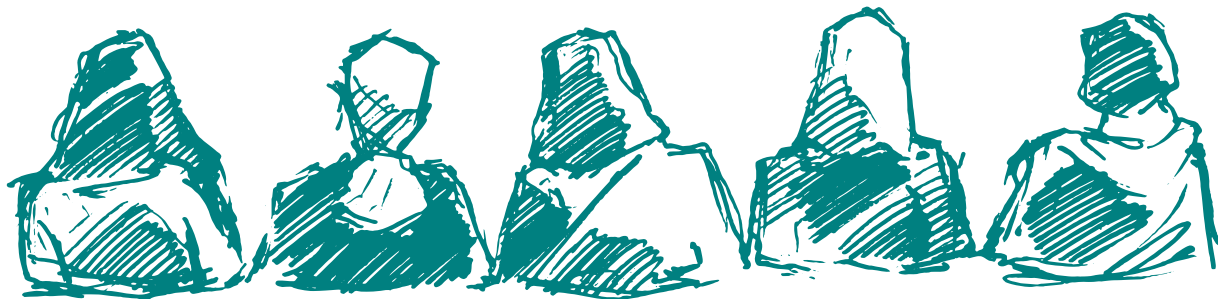
(lonson, 2016-2020)

These numbers capture solely what is seen within the context of the role of the DDSV Response and Awareness Coordinator. They are not reflective of the many more incidents of DDSV that we know are experienced by MRU community members, both reported to other individuals and offices or not formally disclosed at all. These numbers do not capture disclosures and reports that occur campus-wide, as disclosures may be taken or reporting processes may occur without informing or engaging this role. Also important to note when reviewing the above numbers is that if the violence either took place off campus or the person who caused harm is not a member of Mount Royal University, those disclosures are not considered reportable to MRU.

While some staff and faculty access this service, it is primarily used by students. The types of violence seen varies. The majority of cases seen are students who have been sexually assaulted within the past year. Other types of cases commonly seen are historical

sexual assaults, family violence both recent and historical (including childhood sexual abuse), sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and dating violence. Friends and family members who are supporting people who have been impacted by DDSV, as well as groups that are wanting to debrief an incident (e.g. a friend group impacted by DDSV) have also accessed this service. While the above numbers reflect how many cases are seen, the support that is required and given to each individual as well as their support network is ongoing. The majority of people who access support are seen year to year on a continuing and ongoing basis.

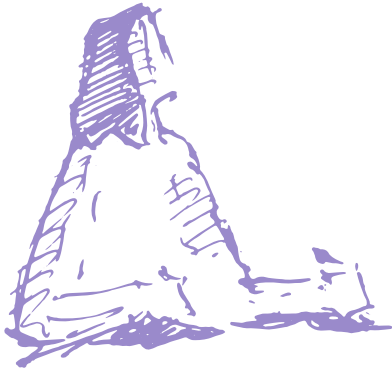
Finally, the primary concerns that people accessing this service have are around managing the emotional and academic impacts of DDSV. Generally, time will be spent discussing the traumatic impacts of DDSV, coping strategies, safety planning, academic accommodations, resources, referrals, policies, laws, and what reporting options are available.



FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

It is important to note that the findings section was largely written prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. DDSV was predicted to, and has, increased due to related conditions such as isolation, job loss, financial hardship, fear of accessing resources due to potential exposure to the virus. Because of this, the need for a consistent, timely, and informed response has only increased.

In an attempt to create a snapshot of the current context at MRU with regard to DDSV, the committee conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of MRU’s current approach to DDSV on campus. The results of the SWOT were organized into six major themes, and subsequently explored in terms of critical success factors (what is necessary in order for MRU to progress in their approach) and barriers (what is currently impeding MRU’s progress in their approach).



OVERVIEW

Although there continue to be entrenched misconceptions and a societal minimization of DDSV as a pervasive problem, this landscape is definitely shifting on post-secondary campuses.

While stigma is still high, it is more common than ever before that DDSV Survivors will speak out about their experiences, and demand a just and equitable experience when they report. There is also widespread expertise on the topic of DDSV locally, provincially, and nationally. In order to be understood as setting and maintaining a high standard in its approach to this work, MRU’s willingness to pay attention to the shifting societal landscape, and incorporate the best practices of the expert community is critical.

MRU’s externally imposed factors also create a context for this work; factors such as being a commuter campus, the physical location and accessibility of campus, and the fact that MRU is a small community with small class sizes, which leads to high cohesion between student members as well as faculty and staff,



all create a unique context on campus. This is an environment where MRU is positioned to develop high-trust relationships with students, and part of earning that high level trust is the development and implementation of transparent, consistent, and easily navigable policies and procedures. The burden of MRU's often slow, unclear, and inconsistent structures and processes is carried by students who are reporting experiences of DDSV.

A primary concern for the committee is that the awareness of the need for focused attention on improving the response to DDSV has not been translated into action. This is evidenced by the slowness in the development of institutional structures and processes around foundational and preventative work, as well as the institution's response at the point of first contact and throughout the reporting process.

Finally but fundamentally, a culturally inclusive and responsive institutional approach must also underpin all work in the area of DDSV. Violence is experienced at greater rates by members of racialized and marginalized communities, and any approach to this work must recognize and respond explicitly to this reality. This means embedding an understanding of colonialism, racism, and intersectional oppression into policies and procedures. It also requires recognizing that the institution cannot rely on people from marginalized, racialized, or equity-seeking communities to teach, advocate, and regulate others, while still having to protect themselves.

A presentation of specific critical success factors and barriers follows. There are topics that are applicable across multiple themes; this document avoids repetition, but makes note of where such cross-applicability occurs.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS AND BARRIERS

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

Critical Success Factors:

Institutional buy-in at high levels is critical to the development of institutional expertise that infuses all leadership levels, and leads by example throughout the campus environment. Appropriately trained and experienced individuals need to be at the tables where decisions are made about structure and process.

In addition, our greatest success at creating this kind of change tends to come through collaborative effort between the institution, SAMRU, and the appropriate levels of government (particularly provincial).

Barriers:

Budget constraints are, of course, a constant and an increasingly critical barrier to change work of any kind. Current provincial government funding priorities mean that

additional funds to accomplish growth and movement in this area is very unlikely, particularly when viewed in the light of unavoidable competing institutional priorities.

A correspondingly problematic barrier is the continued lack of education and understanding about DDSV in the general population. Online, social media, and pop culture environments regularly normalize and minimize the impact of violence, making this topic seem in less pressing need of focused attention and mitigation.

A third historical barrier has been the challenges associated with making change in large institutions, specifically regarding changes to policy and processes. This is changing, creating a current atmosphere of opportunity to move this from the barrier category into the critical success factor category.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Critical Success Factors:

In order for MRU to be seen as skilled and nuanced in its approach to DDSV, it is crucial that the institution and its administration are seen as trustworthy by people experiencing and reporting sexual violence. Particularly in a small, close-knit community, trust is key to success. Trustworthiness in this context requires transparency, clarity, and honesty about the institution's approach and its limitations. It also requires institutional commitment to developing inclusive and culturally responsive institutional processes that consider the varied needs of community members, rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all response.

Ongoing student involvement in development, implementation, and assessment of processes and structures is key to ensuring relevance and effectiveness, and in this endeavour, MRU's ongoing collaborative relationship with SAMRU is invaluable. Examples of approaches that have been used with some success at MRU and could be enhanced for DDSV to improve MRU's perceived trustworthiness and effectiveness include (but are not limited to) employing peer-to-peer support models; utilizing online resources and educational opportunities to improve institutional knowledge and awareness; and aiming for an individualized experience for people engaged in reporting processes.

Barriers:

See Barriers in Institutional Commitment.

FOCUS ON STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Critical Success Factors:

The theme throughout this section is decision makers who are appropriately trained, skilled, and have expertise particularly in trauma-informed response. Trauma-informed decision

makers and upper administrators may be the most crucial of all the critical success factors noted in this paper. This knowledge is not just the critical response to reporting, it materially affects how decisions are made about structure and process. This requires a mutual

commitment to ongoing education on the part of both MRU and SAMRU, as trauma-informed student leaders will continue to hold MRU to account in a skilled and informed manner. It will also ensure that when policy is written, this lens will be applied. Additionally, MRU must prioritize having its topic experts consulted when policy is written in order to ensure the greatest possible effectiveness of the policy over time.

As well as trauma-informed skill and knowledge development among decision makers, a commitment to timely responses to disclosures of violence is essential.

Barriers:

Unfortunately, the critical success factors in this theme were drawn directly from the barriers that constitute current state. Currently, MRU has decision makers who are not trauma-informed; it consistently conducts drawn-out investigations that re-traumatize DDSV Survivors; unconscious or conscious biases and problematic attitudes lead to a lack of institutional buy-in and support for this work; reputational constraints and risk management concerns hinder the institution from taking an explicit stance; and bureaucratic stubbornness has mired the institution's processes in a glacial pace of change.

SHIFTING SOCIETAL LANDSCAPE/EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Critical Success Factors:

There have been many factors in the past few years that MRU as a campus community has gotten right in attempting to improve institutional response to DDSV. There has been a trend in the past few years at MRU of increasing student dedication to the work of improving institutional response to DDSV. In addition, the creation of a dedicated full-time staff position has significantly improved MRU's response to individuals seeking support. This forms a foundation on which further growth can be sustainably built.

Other key success factors would be increasing the number of people (from one) dedicated to doing this work, and increasing the amount of awareness-raising and educational opportunities accessible to students. Particularly in the current context of the pandemic, all education initiatives must be adaptable to a variety of delivery platforms for greater accessibility.

The final critical success factor is that, with a dedicated team of experts in place, MRU decision makers are consulting with and listening to these experts, and their input is

being prioritized in creating changes to structures and processes.

Barriers:

In addition to barriers mentioned elsewhere, including a persistent lack of resources and inconsistent buy-in, commitment, and support across the institution for this work, another barrier has been a lack of sustained energy to move the work forward. The need

for consistent skilled response to victims coming forward doesn't ever stop, and improvement requires sustained dedication.



INCLUSIVE CULTURAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Critical Success Factors:

Although this appeared as enough of a repeated item to warrant being singled out as a separate theme, this concept underlies all the other themes. It has already been touched on in the institutional context and student experience sections, related to culturally responsive and inclusive processes. Creating such processes requires institutional recognition of biases embedded in the work due to entrenched systems of oppression. Navigating this fraught territory requires an institutional commitment to ongoing open, accountable dialogue with community members who have been impacted by DDSV and across departments, and demonstrating openness to the feedback received during these dialogues.

Having an explicit social justice grounding will allow MRU leaders and decision makers to develop the tools to respond appropriately and skilfully during policy and process discussions, as well as in the moment responding to disclosures.

Fundamentally, a shared language and understanding of concepts related to DDSV needs to be created. This foundation already exists in the broader expert community, and this conceptual understanding needs to underpin all other work.

MRU has an opportunity to extend its well-known openness to innovation into this field of endeavour. Elements of that opportunity need to include a shared commitment between MRU, SAMRU,

and government, and requires an ongoing openness to receiving and implementing feedback.

Barriers:

We recognize that academic freedom can become a competing priority in this matter. Other barriers that must be acknowledged are that decision makers tend to experience privilege along many intersectional axes, and that we are operating within a societal context of patriarchy, colonialism, and white supremacy that creates and normalizes rape culture.

In addition, our increasingly risk-averse culture privileges legalities and bureaucracy above clarity, particularly when it comes to

explicitly naming factors such as patriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy, rape culture, and privilege as barriers to effective response. Historically, then, organizations and institutions have relied disproportionately on people from marginalized, racialized, equity-seeking, and Indigenous communities to be the ones to teach, advocate, and educate others, while still having to protect themselves from an inimical environment. To create meaningful and sustained change will require high-level commitment to working to shift these cultural realities.



STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the critical success factors and barriers in the previous section, the DDSV Advisory Committee has developed the following strategic recommendations for Mount Royal

University's administration. In streamlining to eliminate repetition from the previous section, the recommendations fall into four main categories.

APPROPRIATELY INFORMED LEADERS AND DECISION MAKERS

Education

- In order to have trauma-informed decision makers MRU must invest in educational opportunities for university leadership, as well as for students as the primary users of MRU's processes and systems. Resources should be made available for student access in classrooms.

Policy Development

- MRU must examine and update the existing policies impacting DDSV response using a trauma-informed lens. This will have a cascading impact on increased

effectiveness, including the improvement of timely institution response.

- In order to create and demonstrate institutional commitment at the leadership level, MRU needs to include in policy clear and specific language that embeds trauma-informed practice as the foundational institutional approach to DDSV.
- In order to have an appropriately informed policy lens, MRU needs to consult with key positional stakeholders and topic experts, as well as consulting with those who implement the policy.

- In order to create a more inclusive institutional approach, MRU needs to embed into policy an understanding that MRU's approach must be culturally responsive and inclusive, working to increase cultural safety for people from marginalized, racialized, equity-seeking, and Indigenous communities engaged in MRU processes.
- In order to address the pressing lack of resources, MRU policy must reflect a commitment to education and prevention which would include identifying internal resources and expertise that the university can leverage.
- The policy needs to mandate at least one dedicated staff position (preferably two in accordance with best or better practice), in order to ensure ongoing institutional commitment.

TRUSTWORTHY AND TRANSPARENT SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Accountability structures

- In order to be seen as trustworthy, MRU needs to be transparent about the institution's processes, particularly the limitations and possibilities (legal limitations, interim measures, examples of what sanctions are possible) at the outset of engagement with students.
- In order to be trustworthy, there need to be published interim measures to maintain safety and sanctions commensurate with the violation
- In order to be seen as trustworthy, MRU also needs to demonstrate accountability according to their processes, including timely policy review, and clearly communicating changes to processes to stakeholders.
- In order to ensure that the institution allows itself to be held accountable, MRU needs to have a planned review process with key stakeholders, as well as a framework for incorporating feedback.

Culturally responsive and inclusive approach

- In order to be inclusive and culturally responsive, MRU needs to offer

alternative approaches to resolving trauma incidents that are robustly and skilfully supported. Alternatives to the Colonial adversarial model can include modified restorative justice and community healing practices. These processes can be time-intensive, and skilled practitioners would need to be identified to provide guidance. These practitioners may very well emerge from inside the MRU community.

- MRU needs to review and refresh its inclusive processes regularly, including regular feedback from individuals who are most impacted by the current policies and practices set in place. Feedback processes must include an understanding of cultural safety, and not requiring vulnerable people to educate others.

Collaboration, partnerships, and Communities of Practice

- In order to be consistent with shared language and understanding of concepts, MRU needs to maintain existing relationships with provincial leaders and with local and provincial organizations supporting this work.
- In order to work effectively together, partners and champions within MRU need to be identified and brought together in an official committee capacity.
- In order to collaborate, innovate, and share knowledge, the existing provincial/regional Communities of Practice need to be sustained and strengthened, with connections made with student advocacy groups and internal champions.



DEFINITIONS

(From MRU Sexual Violence Response Policy)

Consent: The voluntary agreement to engage in the physical contact and/or sexual activity in question. It is an active, direct, voluntary, unimpaired, and conscious choice and agreement between individuals at the legal age of consent to engage in physical contact and/or sexual activity.

Disclosure: When an Individual who has experienced Sexual Violence shares information about their experience of Sexual Violence with a Member of the University Community who did not previously know.

Formal Report: A statement to the University by a Complainant seeking recourse pursuant to the violation of this Policy.

Respondent: The individual alleged to have violated this Policy.

Safety Plan: Anything that may assist the Individual who has experienced Sexual Violence to feel safer on campus. These actions may include academic accommodations, providing scheduled access to Safewalk, and/or changing residence location.

Sexual Harassment: Any unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Violence: Any violence, physical or psychological, carried out without consent through a sexual means or by targeting sexuality. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, Sexual Harassment, stalking and/or monitoring, indecent exposure, voyeurism, degrading sexual imagery, and distribution of images or video of a community member without their consent.

Student: Any Individual who maintains an affiliation as a learner in the University's educational community.

(Mount Royal University, 2017, p. 6-8)

(Used for Data Collection)

Dating Violence: A pattern or series of abusive behaviours used by one person to gain and maintain power and control over another person within the context of a dating relationship. It is a range of violent behaviours including verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual acts, harassment, and stalking that may occur in relationships. Dating violence can occur between individuals who are within, or may be

moving towards, an intimate relationship. Dating violence also occurs when someone tries to establish power and control over someone once the relationship has ended.

Domestic Violence (also called intimate partner violence (IPV), domestic abuse, or relationship abuse): A pattern of deliberate behaviours used by one partner to gain and maintain power and control over another partner within the context of an intimate relationship. It also occurs when someone tries to establish power and control over someone once the relationship has ended. Domestic violence can be emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual, and financial.

Sexual Assault: Any form of unwanted sexual contact done by one person or people to another person or people without consent. It can include forced or unwanted kissing, groping, and sexual touching, as well as attempted, unwanted, or forced vaginal penetration, anal penetration, or oral sex. Sexual assault can occur regardless of gender identity or relationship status.

(Inson, 2016-2020)

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