



CONSENT TEA TOOLKIT

Thompson Rivers
University



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

TRU's Kamloops campus is situated on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc within Secwépemc'ulucw, the traditional territory of the Secwépemc people.

When educating about sexualized violence and consent, it is especially important for us to recognize that we are living, working, and learning on these lands without consent. In parallel we honour the resistance of the Secwépemc people and other indigenous folks whose cultures are surviving despite historic and ongoing violence.

To learn more, see Resources

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SUMMARY

Taking inspiration from the viral “Tea Consent” video in 2015, Thompson Rivers University (TRU) developed a ‘Consent Tea’ event fashioned after a tea party. It innovatively approaches conversations about consent, sexualized violence, and healthy relationships in a trauma-informed, anti-oppressive, and survivor-centered way. The Consent Tea has become an annual event and has morphed into an activity-based, peer-led learning opportunity that engages over 100 face-to-face participants each year.

Our toolkit was developed to support others delivering consent and sexualized violence education. It offers some of our experiences and is meant to be adapted for different contexts. We would love to hear about how others are implementing the event and if we have missed anything in developing this resource!



*Toolkit written by Chelsea Corsi and Meaghan Hagerty.
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TRU CAMPUS CONTEXT



APPROXIMATELY

15,000

ON-CAMPUS STUDENTS

46% female • 52% male • 2% unreported



Primarily a commuter campus with approximately 7% of students living on-campus



Almost 60% of students working part-time hours while studying



Average student age is 25 years



13% Indigenous students



34% International students

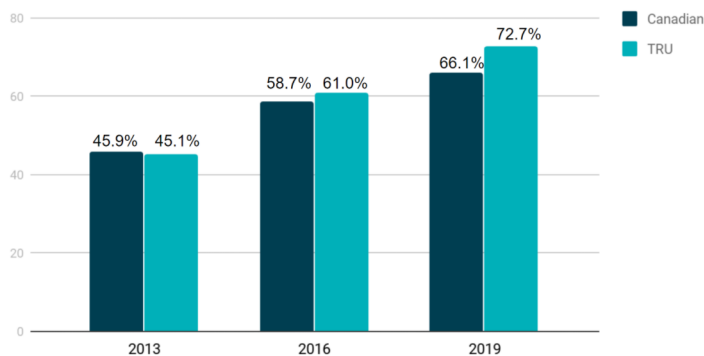
Programs offered through 8 Faculties and Schools:

Adventure, Culinary Arts & Tourism • Arts • Business & Economics •
Education & Social Work • Law • Nursing • Science • Trades & Technology

BACKGROUND

Sexualized violence is a critical health issue impacting university culture. According to recent data, up to 25% of females report experiencing sexualized violence during their time in post-secondary education. While this statistic is staggering, it is also an underestimate as it does not capture other gender identities or those who choose not to disclose for a variety of reasons.

% of student respondents who said they were interested in receiving information about sexual assault/relationship violence prevention



National College Health Assessment II, Canadian Data Report and TRU Data Report, (2013, 2016, 2019)

Students at Canadian post-secondary institutions are showing an increased interest in receiving information about sexualized violence from their school.

In parallel many post-secondary institutions are building capacity to respond to disclosures of sexualized violence, and there is much work to be done upstream in order to prevent it.

Consent education is recognized as a cornerstone to preventing sexualized violence; however, talking about consent and sexualized violence can be uncomfortable, intimidating, and difficult.



INSPIRATION

The viral “**Consent is like Tea**” video inspired the ‘Consent Tea’ event, which we shaped to innovatively approach important conversations in a trauma-informed, anti-oppressive, and survivor-centred way.

Approachable + plain language = entry point that resonates with any level of knowledge

Downton Abby was popular on Netflix at the same time, and popular culture can be a helpful tool in health promotion.

The inaugural Consent Tea was held in November 2015.



TARGET AUDIENCE

The primary target audience for this event is undergraduate students. Participation from other student demographics as well as staff and faculty is encouraged and welcomed.

Each year we have had participation from student, staff, and faculty of diverse gender identities, ages, and cultural backgrounds.



LEARNING GOALS

The main goal is to create an intentional space for peer-led dialogue about consent, healthy relationships, and sexualized violence.

Specific objectives

- ✿ To increase knowledge of the definition and practice of consent.
- ✿ To increase awareness of campus and community supports with regards to sexualized violence and consent.
- ✿ For student leaders: to increase facilitation and dialogue skills, especially when discussing difficult topics.



Choosing Student Facilitators/ Leaders

It is helpful for students to have training in responding to sensitive situations, facilitating dialogue rather than debate, and baseline knowledge about sexualized violence (i.e. definitions, policy, resources).

It is also important to be intentional about inviting diversity in student facilitators.

Our facilitators came from the Student Wellness Ambassador Team (SWAT), and practicum students in Nursing, Social Work and Human Services.

Training and Supporting Facilitators

Before the event: Being a SWAT leader requires 20+ hours of on-boarding training including NASPA's Certified Peer Educator program. Two weeks prior to the event everyone attended a specific Consent Tea training session that covered sexualized violence information/supports, rape myths, consent, responding to disclosures, and responding to harmful or xenophobic comments (see Appendix for more details).

During the event: The Wellness Coordinators and Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response Manager were in attendance throughout the event. Also, a student facilitator folder, support resources, and tent cards outlining "Consent Tea Etiquette" were at each table.

After the event: Individual and group debrief sessions were offered, support-seeking and self-care were encouraged and facilitated.

PEER LEADERS



**S
W
A
T**

The Student Wellness Ambassador Team (SWAT) works with the Wellness Coordinator throughout the academic year to develop and implement health promotion programs, as well as to provide peer support for a range of concerns brought forward by students in the TRU Wellness Centre.



Timing & Space

Drop-in basis from 11:00am - 2:00pm

Space: Central, open, high traffic, existing hang out space, and a nearby Starbucks.

Participants could engage in a planned or spontaneous way and for any length of time that worked for them.

Food (The universal incentive)

We offered a variety of tea options, cookies and gluten-free brownies that we sourced through Campus Catering.

Most effective set-up: tea station separate from the conversation tables, treats directly on the tables, replenishing as needed.

The Set-up

General area:

Large posters referencing the Consent Tea video and the Don't be That Guy campaign, large posters with general information about consent, background music - relaxed/acoustic/coffee shop vibes - playing from student created playlist, conversation tables (8), separate resource table, and separate tea station.

Conversation tables:

Fresh flowers, vintage candlesticks, treats on decorative plates, tent cards with a territorial acknowledgement on one side, and "Consent Tea Etiquette" on the other, printed material with support options, and activity supplies (pens, paper, books, etc.).

Student Facilitator folder:

Various visual, written, and activity-based aids to prompt courageous conversations, challenge rape myths, and information on how to support survivors.

EVENT LOGISTICS

Marketing

Before:

Posters
Social Media
Campus TV screens
Slides for use in classes

During:

Live social media posting
Attendance from campus influencers (Student leaders, Deans, President, etc)

After:

Institutional, industry and local news [stories](#)

Budget

This can be variable but is an outline of what we spent in 2018:

Fresh flowers	\$50
Food/drinks	\$650
Promotional printing	\$50
Activity Supplies	\$60
China and Linens	\$190
Decorations	in-kind
Total	\$1000

Examples of all printed materials can be found in the Appendix Drive

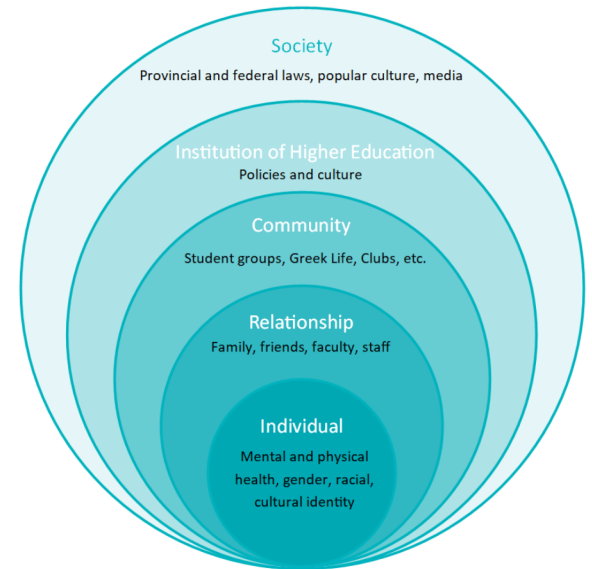
IN THEORY

Health promotion

A socio-ecological model (SEM) is a health promotion framework that recognizes the importance of intervention at multiple levels: individual, relationship, community, institutional and societal.

The Consent Tea addresses the first three levels of this model:

- * Individual: it encourages participants to learn more about consent, healthy relationships, and sexualized violence.
- * Relationship: the grounding in dialogue and peer-education allows relationships to form and build off of one another.
- * Community: holding this event so visibly is encouraging a broader culture shift normalizing conversations and messages centering consent.



[Click for larger version](#)

Trauma Informed Practice

Trauma-informed practice requires practitioners to understand the impacts of trauma; provide opportunities for survivor choice, voice, and control; and to avoid re-traumatization.

The Consent Tea actions these principles by:

- * Training peer-facilitators to have an understanding of trauma, helpful responses, and support resources available
- * Creating space for other participants to learn about how trauma can show up for folks
- * Structuring the event to allow for people to come and go as they want/need
- * Using activities where participants control their own narrative (i.e. blackout poetry)
- * Allowing participants to choose how or if they shared
- * Ensuring a variety of support options were available on and off-campus throughout and following the event

Peer-Led Learning

Peer-led learning has proven to be effective in a range of contexts as it can reduce power dynamics and foster active development of communication and critical thinking skills.

With topics that carry more stigma, and therefore require more vulnerability to talk about, peer-led learning can be an effective tool to truly engage students, to get at the real questions they are wondering about, and to disseminate information to those who may not seek it out otherwise. Intentionally recruiting and training diverse peer-educators can help to effectively address the intersections of identities and socio-political location with our health promotion messages.



Also, this practice carries additional benefits for the peer-educators as they are challenged to apply their knowledge and adapt the way they explain concepts, deepening their own understanding and critical thinking skills. Finally, even when compensating peer-educators for their work, it can be a cost effective way of providing wider and more relatable education.

True Dialogue Theory

True Dialogue Theory informs activities to increase empathy and understanding, promote self-reflection, and raise awareness that different cultures and communities have varying perspectives and practices.

The three fundamental elements of dialogue are: Openness to the Other, Questions not Answers, and The Concept of Possibilities

G O A L S **Dialogue**

- Inquire and learn
- Discover shared meaning
- Integrate multiple perspectives
- Uncover and examine assumptions

Discussion and Debate

- Tell, sell, persuade
- Gain agreement on one meaning
- Evaluate and select the best
- Justify and defend assumptions

✦ Learn more [here](#)



MOVING PIECES THAT CAN IMPACT SUCCESS



Budget: Our biggest budget item is food and tea. We normally order for 100 people from our campus food provider. Your budget will impact how many people you can feed, as well as what types of activities you can provide.

Questions to consider: What do you have to work with? Can you partner with other campus groups to increase your budget? How can you be creative in capitalizing on other events, initiatives, and existing resources?

Campus Readiness and Capacity: Each campus will have a different existing level of knowledge and programming, from those with longstanding recognition of the problem and sexual assault centres on campus, to those who have less time and resources to directly commit to sexualized violence work. Take some time to plot where you think your campus might be on a Stages of Readiness Scale ([like this one](#)), and tailor your goals to meet your community where they're at.

Questions to consider: How have other messages or events about sexualized violence or consent landed? Is your campus ready to host dialogues about these issues in a way that is respectful? How prepared are you to appropriately recruit, train, and support peer/staff leaders needed to coordinate and host such an event? What supports do you have from campus and community stakeholders to ensure you are creating a safe and caring environment that is trauma-informed and survivor-centered?





Social and Political Climate: Windows of social and political opportunity can help make these events a success. Movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp have made conversations about violence and consent more mainstream. In 2016, the Government of British Columbia formally responded to concerns about the prevalence of sexualized violence within college and university communities with the Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act. This act mandated that each post-secondary institution (PSI) in the province create a standalone sexualized violence policy, including prevention efforts. This can also affect funding available for programming.

Questions to consider: How can the #MeToo and #TimesUp social movements facilitate dialogue about consent? How can you capitalize on these larger social justice campaigns to make it relevant for your campus? How do we keep momentum as the social and political climate changes?

Activity based: Starting a dialogue about consent and sexualized violence between campus members can sometimes be challenging, especially due to stigma, varying literacy levels, shame, and trauma. In our experience, having engaging activities that spark conversation and creativity have been very successful in inspiring dialogue between participants. We have also found that having an independent exercise, such as the black-out poetry activity described in this tool kit, was quite popular with all students, especially the ones who tended to be quieter and less willing to openly share ideas.



Questions to consider: How long does your activity take? Have you seen interesting or engaging activities in other contexts that could be adapted? What types of activities can you create that will engage students who are more comfortable with open dialogue, and those who aren't quite there yet?



Accessibility: Our space and tables were wheelchair accessible and learning tools were available in written or conversation form. There were student leaders who spoke multiple languages. Gluten-free treats were available, and due to the open layout it was easy for people to leave as they needed to. Other considerations could be to include contact information for accessibility requests on promotional material, activity content in different languages/formats, vegan food options, and an option for conversation space with less background noise.

Questions to consider: Are there flexible ways to participate in your activity or event? How can folks let you know if there are things that would facilitate their participation? Are stereotypes and assumptions being reinforced? Where are our "blindspots" or barriers we may not realize/see immediately?

ACTIVITY IDEAS

All printable supplies we used for these activities are attached in the Appendix



Year 1

Question prompts

For the inaugural Consent Tea, a True/False question prompt was used to start discussion and provide education. The question cards were printed and left at the tables for participants to use independently. Additional resources were included on the tables if participants wanted to learn more.

- * **Benefits:** requires less people-power to facilitate, can be made easily accessible for students to print and use if they are organizing a similar event with friends, and is useful for fact-delivery.

Year 2

Consent Pledge

We printed out a large banner (5 feet x 3 feet) with the pledge for participants to sign. It was then hung in a high traffic area for 2 weeks after the event, and can be brought to other events or hung permanently.

- * **Benefits:** quick engagement opportunity if folks don't have time to stop for tea but support the cause. It also acts as a visual reminder that the campus community is working toward building consent culture.

Snakes and ladders

We created these board games (see left) with trivia-style questions to facilitate discussion. When students landed on a snake or ladder, they pulled a question. Answering correctly meant you could go up the ladder or escape the snake. Answering incorrectly meant you couldn't go up the ladder or escape the snake - and more importantly you learned!

- * **Benefits:** requires a low-level of instruction, can engage participants for longer periods of time, and questions can be tailored to any message, theme, or learning goals you are focussing on.

Year 3

Media advertisements and song lyrics

In an effort to promote critical thinking in the social landscape around us, we sourced images from various advertisements and popular song lyrics as conversation starters. We had student leaders facilitate discussion about what folks saw/heard in these pieces, what kinds of messages that was sending and normalizing, and how we can disrupt some of these narratives.

- ✦ **Benefits:** easily updated to keep up with popular culture and current ad campaigns, can pull positive and negative examples, adaptable to any level of prior knowledge or recognition, meets people where they are at and challenges assumptions/passive absorption or normalizing of messages, and draws heavily on peer-led facilitation and learning.

Year 4

Blackout Poetry

This semi-structured art activity had participants tear a page from a book and re-purpose the words to create their own poem about consent and/or sexualized violence. Trained peer-leaders created safer space at each table, brought knowledge about sexualized violence, and helped facilitate meaningful dialogue. (Full instructions in Appendix.)

Postcards

A student leader suggested we send supportive postcards to Dr. Christine Blasey Ford because our event was happening on the heels of her testimony. This idea could be adapted for postcards to be sent to local sexual assault centres or community agencies working with survivors. Postcards could also be taken from the event and sent independently, or used in future passive education/art installations, similar to the [#dearsurvivor campaign](#).

- ✦ **Benefits of both:** introvert-friendly, adaptable to other languages, useful vehicle for health promotion, emotional expression, and sharing one's voice.



"Shockingly, the Consent Tea is where I had my first ever conversation about consensual sex."

-Angela Kadar, Consent Tea participant and SWAT Leader

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

Satellite events:

We partnered with our Student Residence Life Team to coordinate smaller Consent Teas in their buildings. This has been successful in bringing awareness into a context where students are already spending time and have relationships formed. It is a programming opportunity for residence staff and their relationships with students on their floors encourages participation.

This approach may also be used if specific faculties have hang-out spots or regular engagement programming.

Another option could be hosting a tea at a local coffee shop, especially if it's already known as a student favourite.

Scaled-down:

Colleagues at Camosun College in Victoria, BC, ran a similar event on their campus. Adapting to their time and staffing resources, the team there set up a walk-by station with tea, resources, and opportunities to connect with the Office of Student Support

The sky is the limit!

Get creative and do what works for your unique campus context. Classroom Consent Tea? Campus leaders and/or recognizable faces handing out tea with messages of consent? We'd love to hear about how you've adapted the program.

Student-hosted:

Especially for commuter campuses or those who with lower engagement, providing resources and funding, where possible, for students to host their own event can be effective.

This allows the ripple effect of consent education and conversations to leave campus and exist in spaces where folks may feel more comfortable having these kinds of discussions.

Encouraging these students to spread the word through social media posts, and inviting them to other initiatives can also help move the work forward.

Evaluation

Effective and intentional evaluation is the next step for our programming. To this point, we have not assessed Consent Tea past tracking number of attendees, collecting anecdotes and debriefing with student leaders. We typically see upwards of 100 people throughout the event each year, and have heard a lot of positive, informal feedback.

THE STUDENT LEADER EXPERIENCE

*Written by
Takara
Arnould-Butler*



Takara (2nd from right) facilitates Blackout Poetry and dialogue with her peers



Experience of facilitating a Consent Tea:

Our Consent Tea is an event that promotes student development and learning not just for those attending but also those facilitating the event. Peer leaders receive training on facilitating sensitive subject matter and are given the tools to exercise those skills through an enriching learning experience.

This experience may benefit the student leaders by informing their field of study or just by being a form of interactive learning through teaching. In participating as a peer facilitator, you are given the opportunity to both teach and learn from your peers. Participating in dialogue with fellow students provides a feeling of safety and mutuality to engage in a collaborative discussion on a sensitive subject matter. Not only is it an opportunity to practice facilitating discussions, it is also an opportunity to connect with fellow students on an important issue affecting campus culture.

From a student's perspective, participating in this event is not only an opportunity to gain experience but also fosters that feeling of generativity by giving back to the campus population. Taking part in our Consent Tea promotes a sense of community on campus and aids in the plight to combat sexualized violence. The Consent Tea event is an experience that participants and facilitators can share with friends, families, workplaces, etc.

Barriers to facilitation:

Sexualized violence is seldom an easy topic to talk about and the dominant discourse is just recently beginning to engage in consent dialogue. While taking on the role of a peer facilitator in discussions around sexualized violence and consent a number of manageable barriers may emerge in the process.

Because consent and sexualized violence can be awkward topics to discuss, student facilitators may experience discomfort, or notice discomfort in participants, when trying to encourage active dialogue. Leaders need to be aware that participants will share diverse perspectives, cultural differences, and have varying levels of health literacy about this topic. Student leaders must role-model empathy and understanding during dialogue facilitation in order to create a safe and encouraging environment. They also must be prepared to possibly address misogynistic, racist, homophobic, and or victim blaming language, and acknowledge the role of gender in the context of this topic. Student facilitators may also receive a disclosure of sexual violence during the course of the event; they must receive training and support on how to support the person disclosing.

As we know from statistics in Canada and on university campuses, male-identified folks are more often the perpetrators of sexualized violence and people of marginalized genders, such as female-identified folks, are more often the victims/survivors. As we begin to create a culture where consent dialogue is happening more openly and frequently, it is important to acknowledge that mixed gender participation during this event may bring discomfort or even triggers for some participants. With that being said, over the last 4 years all genders have participated in and played an important role in our Consent Tea. This demonstrates a commitment to learn and share more openly about consent and sexualized violence within a mixed-gender environment.

Overall, there are a plethora of things that could be the catalyst for a shift in dynamic during the event, whether positive or negative, such as personality types, communication styles (i.e. dominating the conversation), gender, culture, age, etc. It is pertinent for student leaders to be aware of the potential impact diversity can bring to this specific dialogue; ensure that they have created a safer space for dialogue to occur; to be intuitive to students involved and read social cues; and to shift the conversation when appropriate. With the proper training and supports student facilitators can comfortably and competently manage these conversation barriers if they arise.





Helpful Supports for peer leaders/facilitators

While facilitating discussions pertaining to sexualized violence and consent, a peer leader may feel overwhelmed with the thoughts and feelings shared with them during the Consent Tea. As we know from those doing work with survivors of sexualized violence, it is pertinent to practice self-care. People in the helping profession may experience vicarious trauma and it is vital to first support themselves in order to support others. Peer facilitators are given resources and training to practice grounding techniques and self-care.

Prior to the Consent Tea the peer-leaders are primed for facilitating the topic. They are provided with training on how to facilitate a true dialogue versus a conversation as well as how to receive a disclosure of sexualized violence so the person who is disclosing feels supported. With the possibility of inappropriate or offensive comments/discussions occurring, the leaders are given resources to address comments in a non-confrontational manner through empathetic and educational responses. This is to appropriately and calmly shut down any potential misogynistic, racist, homophobic, or victim blaming comments, as well educate participants about correct language and wording in a way that is not shaming.

Essential resources for peer facilitators are available throughout the entire process. At TRU our Wellness Coordinator and the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Manager (SVPRM) both supervise and participate in our Consent Tea and are available to support student facilitators during the entire event.

The tables are set up with a variety of resources to assist the leaders in creating a safe space for activity-based learning and thought provoking dialogue about consent to transpire. This past year each table had the supplies and instructions for the blackout poetry activity, Consent Tea etiquette sheets, which outline a trauma-informed guideline for appropriate behaviour, and question prompts and visuals to help initiate dialogue.

Following the Consent Tea, the group of student facilitators, the Wellness Coordinator, and the SVPRM always meet to debrief their experience of facilitating the Consent Tea. Having the opportunity to discuss and unload gives the student facilitators a place to digest the event as well as receive and offer support from and to their fellow peers. This also offers a space to share what other supports may have been helpful, vitally improving and expanding on what is available prior to, during, and after the event.

THEIR WORDS, NOT OURS

*Student
Anecdotes*



“As a peer mentor I have become aware that consent is still an ongoing topic that individuals are still struggling with, resulting in the need for it to be discussed more frequently and as openly as possible. **The degree to which sexualized violence occurs within the student population is often overlooked, underestimated, or hidden.** By hosting the consent tea each year, we are shedding light onto the subject of consent and providing a safe space for students to discuss their opinions and experiences. I believe that it is beneficial for all students to attend, and encourage everyone to take place in spreading knowledge and awareness about consent.”

- Nicole Greenstreet

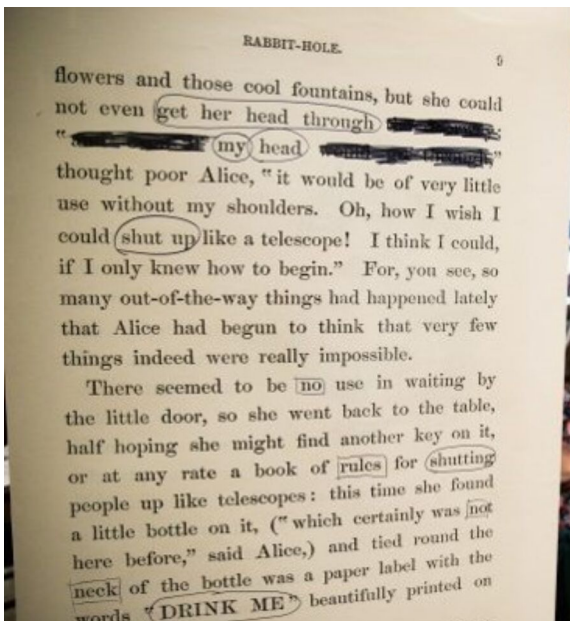
“ Shockingly, the Consent Tea is where I had my first ever conversation about consensual sex. I learned the basics about rape and assault in high school, but at 22 I found myself unsure of the true meaning of consent. **During the tea I was captivated by the bravery of the students who shared their stories, and so impressed by the nuanced and thoughtful discussions that took place.** The opportunity to share insights with my peers at this event gave me the education and confidence I needed to have a healthier understanding about sexual consent. I know that I was not the only one there learning about it for the first time, and for that I am grateful for the awareness that this event offers because the concepts I learned will have a lasting impact on my life.”

- Angela Kadar



“ One of the greatest takeaways for me was at times there was a table filled with such a broad range of knowledge on the topic of sexual violence and consent but when gathered in a safe space to engage in dialogue **people seemed to feel safe to ask the questions that I sometimes forget may not be common knowledge to everyone.** There was some participants who I perceived as hesitant to ask things at first but after realizing this was a space where there are no stupid questions I saw a lot of curiosity and eagerness to learn more about what we can do to combat sexual violence. I am deeply passionate about the role of education in combating sexualized violence and the biggest impact of being a facilitator was the opportunity to partake in advocacy through an innovative educational event.”

- Takara Arnould



RESOURCES

Black college women sexual health peer education at Clark Atlanta University. Francis, C., Bradley, J., Bass, C., Scipio, K., & Braithwaite, R. (2016). Journal of the Georgia Public Health Association.

Decolonizing the Roots of Rape Culture, by Dr. Sarah Hunt

- **Transcript:** https://www.academia.edu/30006930/Decolonizing_the_Roots_of_Rape_Culture_reflections_on_consent_sexual_violence_and_university_campuses
- **Audio recording:** <https://soundcloud.com/user-210912628/sarah-hunt-decolonizing-the-roots-of-rape-culture>

Echo Training: Information and resources for trauma-informed and resilience programming.
<https://www.echotraining.org/>

Effects of Peer Sexual Health Education on College Campuses: A Systematic Review. Wong, T., Pharr, J. R., Bungum, T., Coughenour, C., & Lough, N. L. (2018), Health promotion practice.

Land Body Defense: Learn more about the connection of violence on the land and the sexual and reproductive health of Indigenous women, Two Spirit and young people in North America.
<http://landbodydefense.org/>

NASPA Culture of Respect CORE Blueprint: "strategic roadmap to addressing sexual violence on college and university campuses. It offers six pillars that engage all stakeholders in implementing the leading practices to shift campus culture to one free from sexual violence."
<https://cultureofrespect.org/>

Peer Learning: Enhancing Student Learning Outcomes
<http://www.cdsl.nus.edu.sg/success/sl13.htm>

Responding to a Sexual Assault Disclosure: Practice Tips for Universities & Colleges, Ending Violence Association of British Columbia
http://endingviolence.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/EVA_PracticeTips_UniversitiesColleges_vF.pdf

Understanding Dialogue (2018), Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (See Appendix >> Theoretical information)