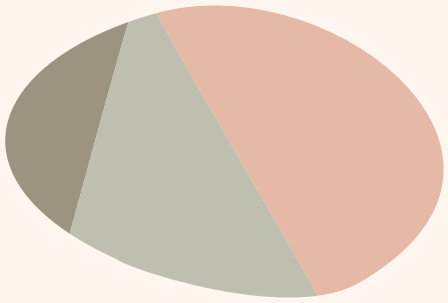
Approaches for evaluating strategies that address rape culture

Toolkit with
key considerations,
and discussion



Bibliothèque et centre d'informatique Atwater Library and Computer Centre

Women and Gender Equality Canada
Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

Table of Contents:

Acknowledgments

When evaluators study a strategy,
they examine the parts but sometimes lose the whole
for the thread that weaves the missing link was the human soul.
Adapted from Goethe, Faust, Part 1

The Atwater Library team acknowledge that this work is taking place on and across the traditional territories of many Indigenous nations. We recognize that rape culture and gender-based sexual violence are one form of violence caused by colonialism that is used to marginalize and silence Indigenous peoples from their lands and waters. Our work on campuses, community groups and in our communities must strive to recognize and centre this truth. We commit to engaging and continuing to learn how to take an anti-colonial and inclusive approach to our endeavours.

The focus of this toolkit is on approaches to evaluating strategies that have been developed by institutions to address rape culture and sexual violence on campus. It is intended to help evaluate with an approach to supporting those who are developing, implementing and participating in strategies. Evaluation often evokes connotations of doing things correctly or incorrectly, right or wrong, pass or fail. This toolkit is designed to challenge those dichotomies and to help conduct evaluation that is collaborative, empowering and that contributes to answering some of the complex and nuanced questions about effectiveness, and perhaps on occasion, even bringing the 'unknown, unknowns' to light.

In the spirit of this approach, this toolkit was created in a collaborative process, drawing upon the experiences, expertise, and generosity of our partners as we developed evaluations for strategies across multiple campuses. We begin every meeting or collaboration by asking, "What do you need?" and "How can we help?" Evaluating strategies to address rape culture and sexual violence is important and valuable work. However, how you do it is equally if not more important. This is why the toolkit is focused on helping evaluators engage in evaluation in a participatory, trauma-informed and survivor-centered way that takes into consideration the diversity of goals, objectives and contexts that we encountered at our fieldsites.

The Atwater Library and Computer Centre acknowledges the contributions of some of the people who participated in creating this toolkit:

Shanly Dixon: Lead writer, ethnographer and weaver of ideas and experiences.
Cassandra Jones: Writer, researcher, compiler of research and gatherer of content that shaped the direction of the toolkit
Eric Craven: Networker, manager and organizer of events that brought the toolkit to life.
Hayley R. Crooks: Theorizer, writer of feminist approaches.
Sandra Weber, JD Drummond, Nathalie Hazan: Readers and wise advisors
Antonia Hernández: Graphic artist who takes words and transforms them into beautiful tools for action.

The Atwater Library and Computer Centre acknowledges the contributions of some of the strategies that we engaged with and drew upon in developing this toolkit:

Growth on the Horizon: Arts-based Healing Practices Addressing Rape Culture & Gendered Violence on Campus an arts-based project aimed at understanding, addressing, and healing from rape culture and gendered violence on campus through bridging institutional divides (McGill University over +30 workshops, and collaborative and interactive community art and art-installations with 500 in attendance). Key collaborator in organization of this event.

Atwater Forum Theatre: an interactive theatre performance designed to help students identify and practice productive responses to the toxic masculinity they encounter in their everyday lives. Performances at McGill University, Vanier College, John Abbott College, l'École Nationale d'Aérotechnique (Cégep Édouard Montpetit), Concordia University, Get to the Point at Bâtiment 7 (James Lyng High School). Developed strategy, wrote all the scripts, performed pieces and developed evaluation.

Concordia University's It Takes All of Us: a mandatory online sexual violence awareness and prevention training. Consulted on evaluation of online training.

Addressing Sexual Violence and Rape Culture: Building Inclusive strategies Across Campuses: conference at Concordia University organized in collaboration with Concordia University's Sexual Assault Resource Centre. Advisor and collaborator on many events around evaluation including a panel on 'Exploring the complexities of evaluating strategies to address sexual violence on campus'.

Dawson College's Resist Violence: The Resist Violence project is an integrative educational approach to responding to the violence in our communities. Consultation and collaboration on evaluation.

Facilitators Handbook for Addressing Campus Rape Culture Through Media Tools: a workshop curriculum designed to help college students identify and respond to rape culture through digital media. Developed and facilitated curriculum and conducted evaluation in collaboration with Vanier College, McGill University, Concordia University as part of EFECT project.

PortraitX: Raison d'art's youth-driven classroom program that propels technology through art and media to educate adolescents on how to build healthy relationships. Consultation and collaboration on evaluation.

Courage to Act: a two-year project to address and prevent gender-based violence at post-secondary institutions in Canada. We participated in a community of practice for engaging men on college campuses.

Queen's Creation (Underpressure): Atwater Library developed an evaluation strategy for this multi-day event which included a facilitated discussion around the experiences of female-presenting persons in hip-hop culture participants and panelists were invited to a scenario-based workshop to delve into the topic of gender-based violence in hip-hop. We provided Consultation and an Evaluation Framework

Intercollegiate Meeting Series on Stand-Alone Sexual Violence Policy. Organized meeting series and facilitated discussions on making evaluative processes collaborative and participatory.

The Atwater Library and Computer Centre acknowledges the contributions of some of the institutions that we collaborated with in the course of our Addressing Rape Culture on Campuses Project:

Cégep Édouard Montpetit, Concordia University Dean of Students Office, Concordia University's Cégep Partnerships, The Office of the Provost and VP, Academic, McGill University's Sexual Assault Center of the McGill Students' Society, McGill University's IMPACT Project, Vanier College, Dawson College. John Abbott College.

The Atwater Library and Computer Centre acknowledges the contributions of some of the people who we collaborated with in the course of our Addressing Rape Culture on Campuses Project (in alphabetical order):

Alanna Thain, Alexandre Lang, Andrea Palmer, Anne-Marie St-Louis, Brittany Sweet, Brenda Lamb, Carrie Rentschler, Charlotte Di Berardo, Chelsey Weir, Curtis Legault, Dawn Lybarger, Eileen Kerwin Jones, Emilie Martel, Ginny Iaboni, Jean-Louis Dagenais, Kate Asterlund, Kim Simard, Kimberley Ryan, Maggie Kathwaroon, Melissa Proietti, Pascale-Amélie Giguère, Pat Romano, Peter Shaw, Samantha Leger, Sandra Gabriele, saŝa Buccitelli, Sofa Misenheimer.

Why this Toolkit?

The need for evaluation

In response to **widespread gender-based violence occurring in educational institutions**, Quebec passed Bill 151 in 2017 to mandate that all post-secondary institutions in the province be required to implement and evaluate policies and procedures to combat and prevent sexual violence on campus. This bill created **a specific demand for evaluation materials** as educational institutions are now required to develop and evaluate strategies to address gender-based sexual violence on campus. Additionally, community organizations are also developing project-based strategies to address gender-based sexual violence. These institutions and organizations are often called upon to evaluate their strategies in order to justify implementation to boards, directors and funding organizations. **Most significantly, people who are developing and implementing strategies often want to evaluate them so that they can improve their strategies and understand where to most efficiently allocate resources.**

Over the past several years, the Atwater Library and Computer Centre has been working with many post-secondary institutions and community groups **on developing, implementing and evaluating strategies to end rape culture on campus**. The strategies range in scope from grassroots, participant-led initiatives to broader strategies that inform institutional change. We observed that there are many effective, innovative and creative strategies addressing sexual violence and rape culture across campuses. **However, there was very little assessment being done to determine which strategies were effective at addressing specifically stated objectives.** Our stakeholders often had opinions or feelings about the effectiveness of the strategies they were implementing, but many times they lacked the data to support their observations or impressions. **Creating opportunities for evaluation that helped stakeholders answer their questions about the issues or situations on campus that contribute to gender-based sexual violence and rape culture, understand the effectiveness of strategies from the perspectives of the people most impacted, and determine what aspects of the issue to address next became of focus of our project.** Many of our partners do not have the resources necessary to evaluate their strategies in order to understand whether they are creating the change that they are hoping to achieve. **Evaluation frameworks thus became the central theme of our work and we developed this toolkit to support the evaluation of strategies used to address sexual violence and rape culture on campus.**

In our work **developing and implementing strategies to address social issues**, we have often observed that **participants, facilitators and organizers alike can sometimes be resistant to evaluation.** Although they want to know whether their strategies were effective and have questions that an evaluation would answer, **the evaluation process itself sometimes feels challenging**. For organizers, it often feels like an extra chore to 'add on'. Evaluation is often done towards the end of a project when energy may be low and evaluation may feel overwhelming and overly complicated. Organizers and facilitators may fear 'failing' at evaluation. Facilitators and participants sometimes feel that evaluation takes time away from the strategy, that it's

boring or meaningless. Often organizations do not have the time, resources or institutional expertise to engage in the evaluation they want or are required to do and end up giving it only cursory lip service.

In acknowledgement of **both the importance but also the challenge evaluation poses**, our goal here was to design **an evaluation toolkit to address and support the specific and unique requirements of stakeholders** who are implementing and evaluating strategies to address rape culture and gender-based sexual violence in their institutions. In our search for ways to make evaluation a more positive and essential experience, we have found that employing arts-based, participatory approaches can help mitigate the negative perceptions and experiences around evaluation and can make evaluation a more relevant, less onerous and seamless aspect of their programs. **This toolkit will provide guidelines and practical suggestions on how to use these approaches by presenting feminist, trauma-informed, survivor-centered, participatory, art-based, and ethical tools for evaluating strategies and programming.**

Introduction to Toolkit

Trauma-informed approach

Because trauma is such an endemic, powerful, and lingering aspect of gender-based sexual violence, **trauma-informed evaluation has emerged as a central element of this toolkit.** Trauma is multi-faceted and complex and is more pervasive in our communities then we might think with 76% of Canadian adults reporting having been exposed to some sort of trauma (Trauma-informed Practice Guide, 2013). Although, all of this trauma is not specifically related to sexual violence and rape culture, taking a trauma-informed approach to doing this challenging work can only be beneficial to those who have experienced any sort of trauma. Administrators, professors and students have repeatedly expressed to us the heavy emotional impact of listening to other people describe their experiences or of trying to articulate or reflect on their own personal experiences and responses. Frontline workers struggling to provide resources to students voiced their profound frustration and exhaustion. **The pervasiveness of trauma combined with the complex and multifaceted ways in which trauma manifests throughout the various components of work addressing sexual violence makes employing a trauma-informed approach to evaluation essential and ethical.**

We need to acknowledge and make room for trauma as we design and conduct evaluations. There is no downside to making every effort to do no harm, to minimize re-triggering traumatic responses. We hope this toolkit contributes to helping stakeholders understand and recognize underlying causes of trauma and potential strategies to conduct evaluation in a trauma-informed way.

While our overarching focus is on trauma-informed, survivor-centered evaluation, you will also find sections on arts-based evaluation, participatory evaluation, feminist evaluation, and some basic, practical suggestions for aligning goals, objectives and outcomes in evaluation design.

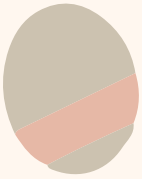
How to Use this Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to be used by anyone who is evaluating strategies to address gender-based sexual violence. While the toolkit was developed with campuses in mind, many of the tools and much of the content is applicable in community contexts. The sections are based on needs expressed by the stakeholders we collaborated with during the course of both of our projects, Preventing and Eliminating Gender-based Cyberviolence and Addressing Rape Culture on Campuses. The sections have each been designed with front-line workers in mind; each section is freestanding and can also be used in combination with other sections for the evaluation of strategies. We encourage you to jump to the section and tool that suits your needs.

As we were developing the toolkit, we were envisioning the following practical evaluation scenarios that are generalizations of common situations where the toolkit might be useful:

A front-line service provider needs to evaluate a strategy being implemented on campus. They have 3-student volunteers who have agreed to help them. They are preparing a training session. They print off the Trauma-Informed Evaluation section to review with their student volunteers in a training session. The tip sheet will not only provide a framework and jumping-off point for discussion during the training session, but will also ensure that the student evaluators have a quick reference guide to refer to during the evaluation process.

A professor (in any discipline) wants to include information about the pervasiveness of rape culture and how it manifests in society into their course content. As they integrate the content into their curriculum, the professor would like to understand how students are receiving this information and integrating knowledge. This toolkit can be used to help create pedagogical strategies that are also evaluation tools. Employing this combined effort allows one to go beyond a standalone evaluation strategy.



A director of a center that provides support and services for students and staff that have experienced gender-based sexual violence has developed an information session to help hard-to-reach student groups know about the services that are available. The director would like to use an arts-based evaluation approach because the student groups in question can be resistant to conventional forms of evaluation, such as questionnaires. The director uses this toolkit to explore whether an arts-based evaluation is suitable for this context, considering both the advantages and challenges of employing less conventional methods of evaluation. Upon choosing to use an arts-based method for the evaluation they then refer to the toolkit to help embed arts-based evaluation into their strategy.

A student organization develops an innovative strategy to address rape culture on campus. They want to evaluate their strategy and share the results with other student organizations on other campuses, so that their strategy can be replicated. They also want to use their evaluation data to support a request for additional funding from college administration. They are unsure of what approach to take or what questions to ask. They can use this toolkit to help set goals, objectives and outcomes for their evaluation. They review the approaches included in this toolkit and choose an approach that aligns with their objectives.

30,000-FOOT VIEW

Key considerations when doing evaluation

Re-imagining evaluation in our work: Incorporating it into the initial program design

Frequently, evaluation is an after-thought. We need to re-imagine how we think about evaluation, not as something we have to do at the end of the project, but rather as something that helps us develop and strengthen our work and is incorporated throughout the program. It is useful to develop a research plan at the start of the project that includes evaluation and to continuously revisit the plan to ensure that the project is staying on track. As a best practice, evaluation should be integrated and ongoing throughout the stages of the strategy, as such evaluation should be considered during the planning and development stage and carried out through the activities all the way to post-programming. The people involved in designing the program also need to be designing the evaluation in such a way that it is coherent with the program's values, methods, and approach.

Maximizing the effectiveness of programming

There are rarely enough resources, funding, and staff allocations for programming that addresses gender-based sexual violence. This makes it all the more important that we evaluate to see which of our programs are most effective at addressing our stated objectives so that we can allocate our limited resources to the most effective strategies. Conducting evaluation enables us to share data about what works and what doesn't. Maximizing limited resources is crucial as the consequences of gender-based sexual violence impact a wide range of issues on campus, including most notably the physical and mental health of students and staff, student success rates and overall perception of institutions.

Using a trauma-informed approach

Consider how your evaluation design reflects the overall sensitivities in your programming. Evaluation strategies need to echo and reflect the same level of care as your strategy does, with respect to being trauma-informed and survivor-centered. Unfortunately, evaluation can be an area where sensitivity to the participants is not in alignment with the overall strategy. This occurs because evaluation designs are not often considered at the time of program development and as a result important sensitivities can be overlooked. For example, a participant receives a post-programming survey that asks about gender-based sexual

violence in a triggering and/or upsetting manner because the people designing the evaluation are not in sync with the people developing the programming. Another example is that the facilitators conducting the strategies with participants have taken great care to create space that acknowledges peoples' prefered pronouns but the evaluation plan employs gender binary language.

Please see Trauma-informed section

Tips on establishing a safer space with the participants:

Ask participants to share their name and anything that they feel is important for others to know in order to feel comfortable (e.g., asking participants to share their preferred/affirmed pronoun). It is important for you to take the lead and briefly go over some key safer space concepts:

- *Non-violence*
- *No judgment*
- *Respect*
- *Confidentiality*
- *No assumptions*
- *Being mindful of how much space you are taking*
- *Being accountable to these rules*

Feminist Approaches to Evaluation

The first, second, third, and – now fourth– waves of feminism have ushered in new ways of thinking about the criteria we use to assess programming or strategies to address gender-based sexual violence and rape culture on campus, as well as asking us to re-define the variables themselves. What all of these waves share in common as they intersect with strategy evaluation is that they have asked us to pay more attention to how gender, race and class shape not only the participants' varied experiences of strategies but also the strategies themselves. Looking to feminist evaluation is one way to ensure your sexual violence strategy is responsive to the needs of those it seeks to serve. A feminist evaluator uses the opportunity for evaluation to work on correcting gender and identity-based inequities that are too often taken for granted. The following guide and checklist are informed by feminist evaluators that came before you (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002) and are intended to help you operationalize best practices of feminist evaluation.

1. Examining the informal strategy structures that (re)produce inequalities

- What practices, policies or activities are embedded in this strategy that might be inadvertently reinforcing gender, race, and class inequality?
- Are you thinking about collecting data that will assess how the strategy is received by marginalized participants to determine if some groups (e.g., able bodied cisgender white middle-class women) are benefiting from the program more than other participants?
- If your sexual violence strategy uses popular culture examples to demonstrate points are you being sure to highlight the way that gendered and racialized folks are portrayed in the examples? (e.g., these often cut to the heart of rape myths as well as other myths underpinning gender-based sexual violence)

2. Be intentional about what kind of knowledge is produced

- Begin by asking yourself who knows about gender-based sexual violence? Was this strategy developed in conversation with these people?
- Ask yourself: what do I know about sexual violence and how am I positioning myself as an evaluator?
- Am I remaining attentive to the fact that knowledge produced through this strategy and the evaluation data being collected is contextual? (e.g., I cannot understand the responses I am getting as being universal; the results may be different in every context and for every person)

- Are you remaining constantly attentive to the potential risks for participants and placing their well-being at the top of your priority list?

- Is Knowledge being created about sexual violence co-created with the communities and individuals that have this knowledge? Is the foremost goal that the knowledge produced by the program and evaluation benefits survivors and the broader community? (see Survivor-centered and Trauma-informed Approaches to Evaluation)

- Are you being attentive to the fact that some forms of knowing are privileged over others? (e.g., be sure that you are building in alternative knowledge and that it is given equal weight to standard methods of evaluation such as questionnaires and surveys)

3. Recognizing that evaluation is a political activity

- Are you putting aside some time to think through context(s), personal perspective(s), and characteristics that you and your team are bringing to the evaluation process?

- Are you being conscious of avoiding the "scientific" approach to evaluation that assumes an objective, unbiased stance? (e.g., rejecting the assumption that an evaluator must (or can) be apolitical and neutral (Sielbeck-Bowen et al., 2002)

- Have you thought through the potential uses your evaluation data could be put to? (e.g., remain attentive to the fact that feminist evaluation data may be co-opted to the detriment of those the feminist evaluator is intending to serve)

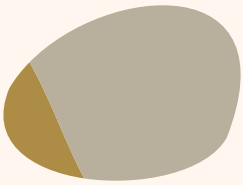
Participatory Approaches to Evaluation

Guide and checklist

What is *participatory evaluation*?

Participatory evaluation of strategies to end sexual violence on campus is a participant-driven, collaborative approach, involving stakeholders and community in the evaluation process. Using a participatory approach to conducting evaluation has become increasingly prevalent in evaluating strategies addressing sexual violence as evaluators recognize that community members have important insights and knowledge about key issues that can contribute to the successful implementation, and evaluation of sexual violence reduction programs.

Participatory evaluation can occur at any stage of the evaluation process. A participatory approach can be taken with both quantitative and qualitative data and underpins many methodological approaches. Participatory evaluation can offer a way to integrate the evaluation activity into programming or strategy itself.



How *participatory*?

There exists a continuum within participatory evaluation. Stakeholders have varying understandings of what participatory means and where they want to position themselves along that continuum. While including participants in all aspects of evaluation design and implementation may seem optimal it can actually be onerous to the participants. Participants may only want to participate in specific aspects of the evaluation process. For example, students may be eager to help develop an arts-based data gathering activity but may not want to code and analyze evaluation data. College administration may want to be involved in meetings and discussions throughout the evaluation process in order to be able to understand key issues and develop effective policy but they may not want to actively participate in the arts-based evaluation. Being open, accepting, and grateful for the varied levels of participation offered by stakeholders is important. Keep in mind that the key objective is to include the participant's insights, and perspectives respecting and privileging their voices and contributions. The focus of participatory approaches to evaluation is to design the evaluation in a way that creates opportunities for multiple perspectives from across the campus to be shared, and for those who might otherwise be excluded from conversation to be heard. The more mundane or applied aspects of the evaluation, such as organizing an activity or uploading data may not be where participants want to devote their attention or resources. When engaging in a participatory approach it's important to be inclusive while also being respectful of participants' time and energy.

Intersectionality in the evaluation process has concrete benefits.

Applying an intersectional lens, providing a voice to those not typically heard or included in the evaluation process are key objectives of a participatory approach. Including a wide-range of perspectives can make your evaluation more effective and diverse voices from marginalized or 'at risk' communities can provide insights about whether the strategies you are implementing are effective within hard to reach or deeply impacted populations.

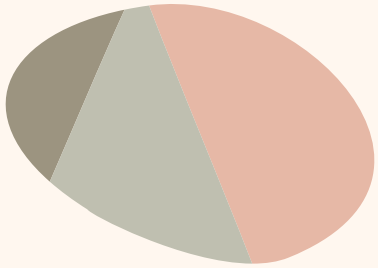
Inclusion can be empowering to stakeholders across campus sectors, who are ordinarily not consulted but who are essential to addressing sexual violence on campus. While participants may not have the resources, training or desire to conduct evaluation alone, they may have valuable expert knowledge about life as a student, staff or community member that can shape and guide participatory evaluation in significant ways. Through collaborative approaches participants can bring problems, issues of concern, methodologies, ways of understanding and doing, to the forefront that stakeholders from other capacities may never otherwise be aware of. As with most initiatives, combined intelligence leads to more creative, innovative solutions, fresh perspectives, and insights.

Having participants from within the community participate in evaluation can increase comfort and trust for those who are answering the evaluation questions, sharing their experience, and knowledge. Creating spaces for participants from the community to authentically shape and contribute to the evaluation can help evaluators understand which questions are important to specific communities, how to ask questions in ways that are relevant, appropriate, trauma-informed or culturally sensitive. Participatory approaches increase 'buy-in' from the community because the evaluation is viewed as more relevant and the evaluation results are often viewed as more credible.

Challenges of *participatory approaches*

However, balancing a variety of demands from funders and varied methodologies can make opening up evaluation for full participation challenging. Traditionally, research methods that are considered rigorous are top-down, privileging expert voices with little space for participants to collaborate and for participants voices to be heard and shape the evaluation. Balancing demands from funders or administrators, limited resources in terms of time or budget or limited capacity for a participatory approach in some methods can make opening up evaluation for full participation challenging.

The following is a step-by-step guide and checklist for program leaders and facilitators who want to incorporate some level of participatory evaluation in their assessment plans.



Checklist:

Allocate sufficient resources.

Have you allocated sufficient time and space for evaluation and for the process of including participants in discussing the research process, developing research questions, and making meaning of the data? All of these evaluation activities can take time when you are doing them in a truly participatory way. To be truly participatory you need to allow time for participants to contribute.

Build stakeholder participation into a project from the beginning.

Including community stakeholders in designing the evaluation provides a more robust evaluation that potentially asks questions that an external evaluator might not have the lived experience or insights to consider.

Examine the role of power in your evaluation plan.

Are you examining and challenging traditional researcher-participant, expert-layperson, and power dynamics? When working with young people are you challenging adult-child, teacher-student roles? For instance, if you are inviting young people to participate in evaluation, are you offering meaningful roles for them to participate in the evaluation process or is the participatory approach perfunctory? Does your evaluation plan include roles for participants in the governance structure or in a capacity that authentically shapes the evaluation? (e.g., have you considered assembling a youth or student advisory committee to engage in evaluation of the program or study, including them in the development process by eliciting ideas for what research questions need to be asked, how data could be gathered, what approaches and methodologies to employ, and who needs to be included).

Take an intersectional approach.

Include participation from individuals of diverse backgrounds (e.g., consider socio-economic status, age, gender, abilities, ethnicity, and religions, etc.). Actively creating opportunity for intersectionality within the evaluation provides an even more robust and credible outcome as a representative range of perspectives shape the evaluation.

Take a trauma-informed and survivor-centered approach.

It is important to use a trauma-informed and survivor-centered approach when eliciting or engaging with participants. A survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach to evaluation values and respects survivors, while working to acknowledge trauma with the sensitivity needed to provide effective evaluation. It is based in an understanding of trauma and "seeks to empower the survivor by prioritizing [their] rights, needs, and wishes" (UNICEF, 2010, as cited by the UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, 2011). Trauma-informed evaluation can be integrated and streamlined from initial evaluation design to the closing review, and prioritizes participants' subjectivity, by doing evaluation that is not (re)triggering, instead is grounded in compassion-based resiliency, builds rapport, and is effective in not only creating the change, but being the change you want to see on campus.

Please review the trauma-informed evaluation section of the toolkit, which defines the approach to evaluation, best practices, and specifics on how to design and conduct a trauma-informed evaluation, data collection from a trauma-informed point of view, as well as a checklist.

Keeping on Track

Aligning goals, objectives, and outcomes in evaluation design

Effective evaluation requires **ensuring that goals, objectives, outcomes, evaluation design, approach to data gathering and analysis are in alignment.** These processes need to be working together cohesively to meet the stated objective and to measure the effectiveness of the strategy at meeting that objective. Maintaining alignment is not as simple as it sounds. It is common that through the everyday process of developing, implementing and evaluating strategies a strategy can 'drift' out of alignment despite the best intentions of the organizers.

CASE STUDY TO ILLUSTRATE HOW EVALUATIONS AND STRATEGIES CAN DRIFT AND BECOME MISALIGNED

Below is an example of the ways in which even good projects, with clear objectives, strategies and evaluation conducted by committed stakeholders who have the best of intentions, can drift out of alignment and lose effectiveness.

Two front-line workers from Student Services want to develop and implement a strategy to address how to operationalize their college's sexual violence policy. Their objective was to take a participatory approach to refine, clarify and operationalize the policy with input from the campus community. As they engaged key stakeholders from administration, they were encouraged to develop an educational video for students. In order to keep the administration involved and supportive of the project they agreed. Throughout the process they consulted student groups about bystander intervention believing that this fulfilled the 'participatory' aspect of the approach. They then developed a video. At the last minute a professor was invited to develop some evaluation questions. 'Research creep' (like scope creep) resulted in large scale research agendas shaping both the questionnaire content and the method of data collection. Instead of evaluating whether the strategy was effective at achieving the stated objective of operationalizing policy, or if the video was effective at imparting information about bystander intervention, the questions evaluated the effectiveness of the strategy at increasing empathy, which was a particular research interest of the invited professor.

While this example may sound far-fetched it is actually very common. Projects become disconnected and fall out of alignment because stakeholders don't have a comprehensive, coherent plan from the start, they drift away from the plan as it is implemented, or because of scope (research creep) as other research agendas begin to take over. This is why developing an evaluation plan that aligns with the project's objectives and sticking with it is key to effective evaluation.

Developing an Evaluation Plan

Key Definitions:

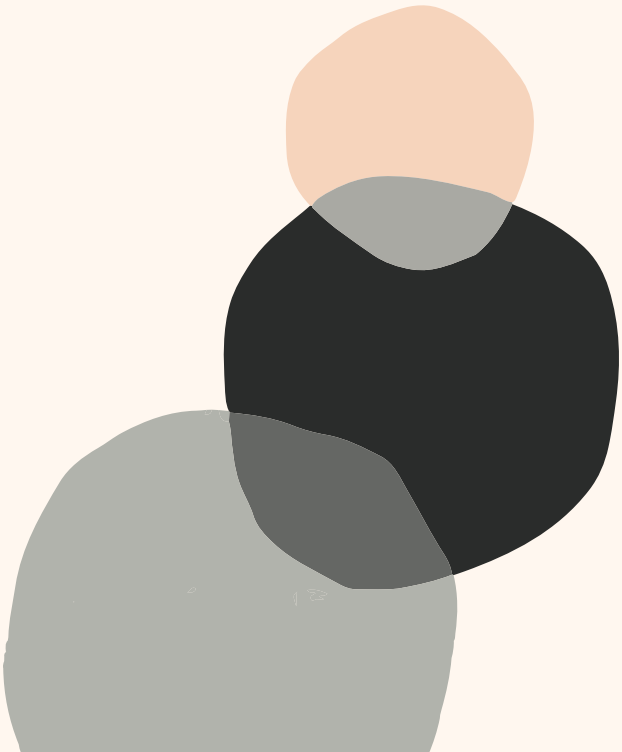
Goals are *general* while *objectives* are specific.

Goals are general intentions towards the attainment of something, they tend to be somewhat abstract, big picture and challenging to measure. While goals may be broad in nature, they signal an intention or a vision for the future. Goals are long term and are the end result. Once a goal is set, developing clear objectives is the next step towards achieving the desired outcomes.

An example of a goal would be to end rape culture on campus.

Objectives are precise actions for accomplishment of a specific task. Objectives operationalize the goal in measurable ways and have a defined completion date. Objectives are the means to the end. They are short or medium term. An example of an objective would be to create an online media tool to educate students about what rape culture is, how it manifests on campus, how to identify it and effective ways to intervene to respond to rape culture when identified.

Outcomes are the evaluation of the strategies results against their intended or projected results. Outcomes are what you hope to achieve when you accomplish the objectives. Outcomes are the evidence that objectives were achieved. When evaluating strategies to address rape culture on campus, the outcomes would describe or list measurable content or knowledge that participants have mastered, attitude or behavior change, skills or competencies that they have gained and can apply.



Some questions that may help pinpoint your *goals*, *objectives* and *outcomes*:

Is there a specific issue or problem you are addressing or hope to address with your strategy? Can you explain or describe the issue?

Who is the target audience for your strategy and why? Which specific groups would your strategy need to work with in order to successfully address the issue?

What do you hope to achieve or what could be different (in your chosen target group/in your classroom/on campus) if you successfully address the issue?

What specific changes do you hope your initiatives will help create in the participants, the community, or any other systems?

Ideally, what might be different in what you or others see or hear in the classroom or on campus as objectives are being met?

What are some of the short-term, mid-term and long-term outcomes that could be used as measures to ensure the strategy is on track to achieve the stated objectives?

What data can I collect or what can I observe that will measure whether objectives create the change I hoped for?

A BASIC EXAMPLE

Stakeholders had the **Goal** of creating a learning and working environment that is free of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual violence.

An **Objective** that they developed to support the goal was to create a curriculum that would educate the community about gender-based sexual violence; specifically increasing understanding(s) of consent, bystander intervention and how to safely intervene, and where to go to access services on campus.

There are a range of creative, collaborative, and participatory ways to measure outcomes. However, for the purposes of illustrating **Outcomes**, we could say that following the curriculum, participants were interviewed and were able to correctly define consent and explain key issues, describe 3 ways to safely intervene as a bystander, and were able to identify where and how to access services on campus.

Basic Steps in Creating an Evaluation Plan

1. Write a brief **description of the strategy** that is being evaluated.

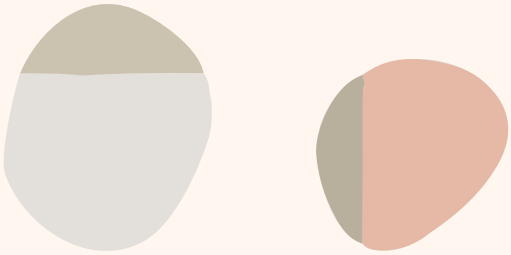
2. Ask why you are engaging in evaluation? What do you hope to achieve through the evaluation process?

3. Identify **Goals and Objectives**. This is an essential step in conducting evaluation. Without identifying a clear objective that the strategy is designed to achieve, it's unlikely that the evaluation will be effective. Many of our stakeholders were well into conducting their strategy but had not identified the objectives that they were trying to achieve. This results in evaluation questions that don't align with the strategy's objectives. Asking stakeholders to think about why they chose a specific strategy and what were they attempting to achieve helps in identifying objectives.

4. Identify the **Outcomes** that will be used to measure whether you have met your objectives.

5. Identify who you need to speak to in order to evaluate whether the strategy has been effective at meeting objectives. Look beyond the usual suspects. Often when stakeholders evaluate a strategy, they only include the students in the evaluation process. However, facilitators, professors and administration who have participated in the creation, organization and implementation of a strategy can also provide valuable insights regarding the effectiveness of a strategy or how it might be scaled, improved, etc.

6. Determine how you will gather information about whether the strategy was effective. What approaches and methods are best suited or aligned to evaluate the strategy?



Stay Focused on Evaluation

Research and evaluation are not mutually exclusive; however, they are different things that often overlap. In order to navigate an academic landscape, we recommend creating a clear and separate path for evaluation.

Evaluation should not be required to follow the same protocol, methodologies and ethics reviews that are required for large scale research projects. For instance, being required to clear university ethics boards to evaluate an in-class activity to address 'consent' is a huge barrier for front-line stakeholders who need to evaluate strategies. In a similar vein, it's important to remember that evaluation is often being conducted by front-line workers to understand whether a strategy is effective and not as part of an extensive academic research project with the goal of contributing to a body of peer reviewed knowledge. You should contact your Research Ethics Board if you have questions as a robust evaluation strategy may need to be cleared by your Research Ethics Board.

The Atwater Library's '*evaluation of strategies to address rape culture on campus*' was largely conducted in academic environments where research is a primary focus. This resulted in a landscape where research was prevalent and where evaluation was often either conflated with research or under-valued. Prioritizing having a clear evaluation plan and being able to explain the difference between an academic research project and the evaluation of a strategy are crucial to successfully conducting evaluation in academic contexts.

When working in interdisciplinary contexts people define and use terminology in different ways. This can result in misunderstandings or confusion, as well as an amalgamation of research and evaluation. Because of the diversity of stakeholders involved in many projects, things may become unwieldy, overly complicated and research and evaluation become conflated or intertwined.

Evaluation is usually used to make decisions about whether a strategy was effective in a particular context, which strategy is most effective to achieve the desired goals and objectives, which factors increase the success of the strategy and how the strategy can be improved. In the Atwater Library's evaluation project, evaluation focused on strategies on campus that were developed to support Bill 151. Stakeholders were assessing evaluation findings for the purposes of comparison and decision making to help maximize limited resources and focus on what works best.

A key issue to watch for in evaluation is 'scope creep', which we like to call 'research creep'. In an academic environment, research questions can easily creep into an evaluation. Conducting evaluation of strategies requires engaging in some research activities. However, doing research doesn't necessarily require engaging in evaluation. In general terms, to evaluate strategies one is required to observe and learn (which are functions of research) but the key function of evaluation is to assess and make decisions. Evaluation of strategies has a different purpose than large scale academic research; the stakeholders are often different, and the timelines are often much shorter than in a research project.

The challenge that often emerges is that when using participatory, arts-based approaches it's often most effective to integrate the evaluation into the strategy's curriculum. Having the curriculum and evaluation align seamlessly is optimal. As a result, it becomes especially important for the evaluator to develop and implement a clear evaluation plan so that even when data overlaps, they are able to identify the data that is pertinent to the evaluation questions.

What to Evaluate

Evaluation can be daunting, but keep in mind that asking any questions about the effectiveness of the strategy you have employed is exponentially better than not asking questions at all, and even a few simple questions can provide valuable insights into increasing the effectiveness of your strategy.

Some key questions that can be evaluated

- Have participants deepened their awareness and understanding of the topic? Has knowledge been gained?
- Have participants expanded their vocabulary to discuss the issues across disciplines and through the campus community?
- Have participants developed additional resources/skills they can use to address the issues? e.g., How to intervene? How to ask for consent?
- Do participants perceive the intervention to have been effective?
- Have participant's attitudes changed? Has participating in the strategy resulted in their challenging social norms around gender-based sexual violence?
- Can participants recommend ways in which the intervention can be improved to increase potential effectiveness?
- Do participants view the interventions as having potential to change behaviors?

Potential goals around addressing sexual violence on campus

Some strategies clearly target attitudes, some target behaviors and some target both while other strategies have been shown to be ineffective at impacting either attitudes or behavior. It's important to keep in mind that changing people's attitudes doesn't necessarily result in a change in their behavior.

Much of the work around evaluation of strategy is based on the premise that identifying effective strategies for preventing sexual violence perpetration is the ultimate goal of sexual violence prevention efforts. However, through the course of our work on campuses it became evident that there can often be other important interrelated goals that support prevention efforts.

1. Changing attitudes and creating culture shifts

- Strategies that comprehensively address social norms, attitudes and behaviors,
- Provide education about gender-roles,
- Provide education about toxic masculinity, , toxic feminity and addressing rape myths and rape culture
- Increase understandings about what constitutes sexual violence,
- Educate about how gender-based sexual violence is manifested from acquaintance rape to the role of gender-based sexual cyberviolence,
- Provide education about intimate partner violence and teen dating violence, increasing understanding(s) regarding consent or building relationship skills

2. Creating a safer campus environment

- Identifying and addressing risk factors such as unsafe campus spaces,
- Increasing security and making the campus security accessible to students
- Educating campus security on trauma-informed survivor-centered, intersectional approaches,
- Increasing understanding(s) of possible risk factors, such as the role of alcohol consumption in sexual violence (both for perpetrators and potential targets),
- Encouraging bystander interventions through peer-to-peer training and skills building

3. Embedding strategy and evaluation in pedagogy and curriculums throughout the campus

- Integrating understandings of the macro forces that generate systems reinforcing exclusion and violence such as social forces, economics, globalization, patriarchy, colonization, the immigration system, the legal system, into course requirements across disciplines.
- Acknowledging the types of discrimination such as heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, ethnocentrism, ableism,classism, amongst other forms of discrimination, that can be key in influencing the ways in which individuals experience gender-based sexual violence on campus and influence the specific responses required.
- Consulting a range of individuals, student groups and campus organizations about the ways in which their individual needs can be best served through strategy and policy.

Survivor-centered and Trauma-informed Approach to Evaluation on Campus

A **survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach** is increasingly being recognized as essential in evaluating strategies addressing sexual violence and rape culture. **Valuing and respecting survivors and acknowledging trauma is at the heart of this approach.** The sensitivity and values that underpin the way in which this work is conducted directly impacts both the lives of participants and the effectiveness of the evaluation.

A survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach to evaluation values and respects survivors, while working to acknowledge trauma with the sensitivity needed to provide effective evaluation. It is based in an understanding of trauma and "seeks to empower the survivor by prioritizing [their] rights, needs, and wishes."[1]

Doing evaluation with a survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach can provide examples of how strategy and policy should be informed by the perspectives and insights of people with lived experience, as well as those who may be most impacted by sexual violence strategies and policy. In addition to increasing the chances of the evaluation being relevant, this approach provides a more ethical and empathetic methodology, which may contribute to broader cultural shifts within the community. **There is no downside to a trauma-informed evaluation.**

1 (UNICEF, 2010, as cited by the UN Women Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, 2011).

Guiding Principles

1. Realize that traumatic experiences are *widespread*

Consider the statistical reality that the people you are working with could be survivors and/or perpetrators. Participants may show signs and symptoms of trauma, but often they present with none. Additionally, participants may have suffered related trauma that remains undisclosed (witnesses, friends and/or family of survivors or perpetrators). Evaluation should take this into account by being sensitive to these potential experiences.

2. Understand that a safer environment is *key to empowerment*

Acknowledging that no space can be completely safe, but striving to create a non-judgmental and compassionate environment is a key ingredient to creating a 'safer' space that recognizes the participation and contributions of survivors.

3. Be conscious that participation and disclosure are *personal decisions*

Decisions regarding the degree to which participants choose to engage with evaluations should always be respected. Participants should never be made to feel judged or pressured to answer evaluation questions (either online or offline). For example, resending unsolicited questionnaires into inboxes could be viewed as triggering.

Participants choosing to disclose during evaluation make a personal decision with complicated ramifications. Some participants who are survivors choose to speak openly about their trauma, while others choose not to. The decision is always their own. Take care not to encourage participants to disclose during evaluation, but be well prepared if disclosure happens.

4. Prioritize survivors' *perspectives, rights and needs*

Participants, and particularly survivors', voices should be included in the entire evaluation process, acknowledging that their contributions are central to the evaluation design and development. The wellbeing, rights, needs, and wishes of participants are a high priority.

5. Acknowledge both the *importance*, as well as *difficulties and challenges*, of evaluating strategies to address sexual violence on campus.

Be aware that researchers and facilitators can also experience trauma in doing this work. Create opportunities for the evaluation team to support each other and to access resources.

Steering Questions

1. Realize that traumatic experiences are *widespread* and *far-reaching*

- Have you considered how participating in the evaluation might affect participants, particularly survivors?
- Are there any benefits and/or risks to participation?
- Are participants and survivors included in a discussion of benefits and/or risks?
- Are participants and survivors consulted about how to increase benefits of participation and mitigate risks?
- Have you provided participants with a robust list of resources in their community should they require support during or after the evaluation process? (For example, offer participants additional hours of student counseling services if needed).

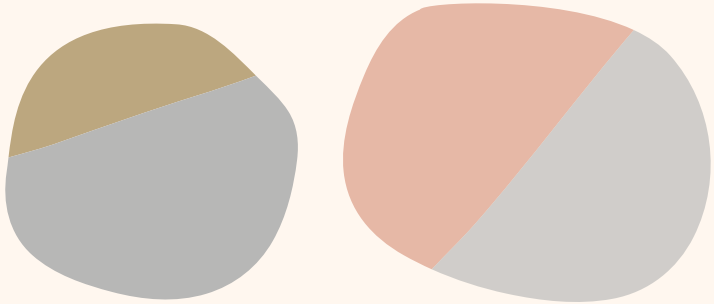
2. Understand that a 'safer' environment is *a key to empowerment*

- Is this a 'safer' space for the voices of survivors? (For example, have you built in space for survivor-centered moments, prioritizing survivor's voices and experiences?)
- Are you asking questions from a survivors' perspective, taking into account their knowledge and personal stories?
- How will the evaluation findings be shared with survivors?
- Will the evaluation methodology authentically reflect the experience of participants and will it provide an opportunity for participants to provide the information that they choose to provide in the way they choose to share it?
- Will the evaluation reflect the needs of participants and in particular the needs of survivors?
- Is the evaluation empowering? Does it return agency and control to the participant?
- Are there spaces in the evaluation that provide opportunities for participants to share information that is important for others to know in order to create a comfortable space. For instance, asking participants to share their name and anything that they feel is important for others to know in order to feel comfortable (e.g., asking participants to share their preferred/affirmed pronoun) in a non-threatening, welcoming way.
- Is this a participatory approach to evaluation?

Read about participatory approaches to evaluation

- Are all of the evaluators and the related team trained in the ethics, terminology, and skills of survivor-centered approaches? (For example, active listening and ensuring that survivors know that they are believed).
- Does the evaluation integrate knowledge about trauma, to attempt to be as trauma sensitive as possible?
- Do evaluators recognize the dynamics of power in design, data collection, analysis, and communication of findings?
- How is power being shared in the evaluation process? What steps have been taken to address power differences in the evaluator-participant dynamic?
- Are survivors included in the entire evaluation process? For instance, establishing an advisory committee, that includes survivors, to actively contribute to the development of the evaluation plan, advise on the implementation of the tools, and offer insight into the interpretation of data.
- Are evaluators asking survivors directly what the important evaluation questions are?
- Have participants provided consent for you to share evaluation results or data in an adapted or different way than first intended? For instance, participants consented to participation in the evaluation for the purpose of improving the strategy. Later on, the data is used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategy to the funder. Ensure that you consider all the ways in which the data might be used and obtain informed consent appropriately.

3. Be *conscious* of how you are doing this work



Evaluation in Action

Evaluators can ask the following questions to better understand participants and particularly survivors' needs and priorities, as well as their experiences of the existing campus culture.

- How can we as evaluators support you while conducting the evaluation?
- Are there evaluation needs that are specific to your community? (e.g., campus community, identity community, faith community, etc.).
- What evaluation questions do you think need to be asked? Are there any ways that the evaluation process could be improved? Are there ways that you would have preferred the evaluation to have been conducted, that would have made you more comfortable, inclined to participate or that you think would have made the evaluation more effective? (e.g., using different data collection methods, moving the evaluation online or offline, changing the way the data was recorded/ audio/video/notes, etc.)
- What do you need? (e.g., What kind of support do you need from the (fill in the blank) - institution, faculty and staff, administration, campus services, security, friends, spaces, etc.)?
- What do you need on campus to feel safe?
- How is your institution supporting you?
- What can we do to better support you and your needs on campus?
- What culture shift or changes do you think will make a safer campus and community?

Building *Grassroots Relationships* that are *Survivor-centered* into the Evaluation Process

Guide and checklist

Engaging **in careful and ethical feminist, social justice work** in a community context necessitates building **meaningful relationships with survivors of sexual violence.**

The following is a **step-by-step guide and checklist** for program leaders and facilitators who are looking for ways to incorporate feminist, trauma-informed and survivor-centered knowledge in their community outreach and education. The guide and checklist below are informed by best practices for engaging in community work around gender-based sexual violence in the Canadian context.

1. Does your program, initiative, or data collection method *affirm and uplift the voices of survivors*?

- Do your evaluation activities focus on dialogue-centered events that facilitate knowledge sharing in a way that is appropriate, safe and affirming for survivors? (e.g., How do you allow for silences and participant-led conversation? How do you affirm and validate survivors' experiences?)
- Have you created some survivor-only spaces in your program and evaluation plan? For example, self-identified survivors might have the opportunity to answer an additional set of questions or participate in survivor only focus groups or activities.
- Do you include innovative learning opportunities? (e.g., Activities and workshops that provide an immersive learning environment?)
- Are you centering survivors' experiences and knowledge by building safety into your evaluation? (e.g., Does this evaluation include obvious triggers?)
- Does the program account for the heterogeneous nature of survivors' experiences? (e.g., Experiences of sexual violence vary from person to person and are context specific, that is, shaped by geography, personal history, race and class etc.)
- Have you put thought into how your program and evaluation process will be responsive, and to and prioritize the needs of survivors? (e.g., How does your evaluation process give back to survivors?)

2. Have you considered how your program *might adjust from region to region* while accounting *for regional and systemic factors* contributing to survivors' experiences?

- Have you thought through how programs roll out, buy-in and assessment measures will be tailored to the region the program will be delivered in? (e.g., Survivors in Nunavut may have different needs and priorities than those in Toronto and rural folks may have different priorities than urban ones)
- Are facilitators members of the community? Will facilitators be able to connect with participants in this community (campus community groups, etc.)?
- Do you situate your approach to gender-based sexual violence within the context of gender-based inequality?
- Who is your audience? Is the language you use in your workshops, activities and evaluation inclusive and accessible for your audience?
- Have you considered building an anti-racist lens into your evaluation process? (e.g., Have you considered how discursive and institutional racism structure experiences of sexual violence in participants' communities?)
- Have you considered how you might include boys and men into your program and evaluation efforts?

3. Have you built *action and flexibility* into your approach to sexual violence programming and program evaluation?

- Have you considered 'thinking outside the box?' (try to be open to changing an element of your program or evaluation approach that does not seem to work or affirm survivor knowledge)
- How is a self-care plan for facilitators and participants built into your work?
- Do you center and prioritize the knowledge of community members through a popular education framework?

Evaluation Implementation

A comprehensive checklist for teams

Researchers and evaluators are not therapists or counselors; however, **they often deal with sensitive subjects and may hear disclosures.** Therefore, it's important to be prepared. Whenever possible consult or collaborate with the university or community Sexual Assault Resource Center before you begin to evaluate. For instance, this can take the form of having a trained resource person review your objectives and data collection method and questions, while providing trained active listeners to be present during evaluation and extra counselling and support for participants and even for facilitators.

- [ ] Train **all** evaluators in adopting both a survivor-centered and trauma-informed language and tone throughout the entire evaluation process.

- [ ] Train **all** evaluators, volunteers, and staff in a basic understanding of how trauma works - this will help dispel potential unconscious bias, assumptions, and rape myths, as well as reduce secondary trauma or retriggering survivors.

Trauma-informed evaluation design

- [ ] Evaluation should **not** have the most difficult or sensitive questions at the beginning or end; in order to build trust and ensure that participants do not leave feeling distressed - **the sequence of questions is important.**

- [ ] Design evaluation with a clear intent to **not** retrigger participants

- [ ] Be clear about what will be expected of participants and explain that you will try your best to alert them to any potential triggers ahead of time. Also, remember informed consent is a **process**. Provide participants with multiple decision points throughout the survey or interview (*e.g., Introduce a new line of questioning with a phrase like, "Now I would like to ask you some questions about ___, would you like to continue?" Provide participants multiple places to decide how they would like to proceed*).

- [ ] Structure evaluation so the facilitator can respond appropriately if someone becomes triggered.

- [ ] During an interview or focus group, the facilitator should actively look for signs of a post-traumatic response to the questions being asked and be prepared to respond in a supportive way. It is important to not probe or push for a response, and the facilitator or evaluator may need to establish a safe rapport before proceeding or may need to revise that particular question or sequence of questions.

- [ ] With interviews, focus groups, or other types of evaluation, your pace might need to be adapted based on how your participants are feeling. Provide a sense of control and agency by allowing space for participants to control the pace.

- [ ] Consider shifting power dynamics by including types of evaluation such as empowerment evaluation, feminist evaluation, arts-based evaluation, or participatory evaluation, which all consider the agency and privileging of participants' voice, as well as shifting the power dynamics in evaluation.

- [ ] Have appropriate resources available for participants that go beyond what ethics review boards dictate: this can be in the form of books, tea and snacks, emotional support, referrals to services, and other wellness and self-care practices and activities.

- [ ] Respect participants' time and experience by only asking thoughtful, carefully considered, germane questions that will result in usable, valid data.

- [ ] Carefully consider how each piece of information will be used, analyzing whether the potential benefit of the data is worth the emotional and time investment of the participant.

Types of data collection *from a trauma-informed point of view*

- [ ] **Focus groups or facilitated discussions.**
Group settings can be good for open-ended questions about general experiences or strategies; however, it is not recommended if participants are being asked to speak about traumatic experiences. This is especially true if participants have not taken the initiative themselves or identified themselves as survivors of trauma.

- [ ] **Interviews.**
Trained interviewers, as discussed above, can assess and address participant feelings of distress during the interview. The interviewer can take time to build rapport and pause to allow participants time to process thoughts and feelings.

- [ ] **Self-administered surveys.**
Surveys allow participants privacy to respond to sensitive or difficult questions, without having to speak about it with another person. However, surveys are not very useful for open-ended information or detailed information.

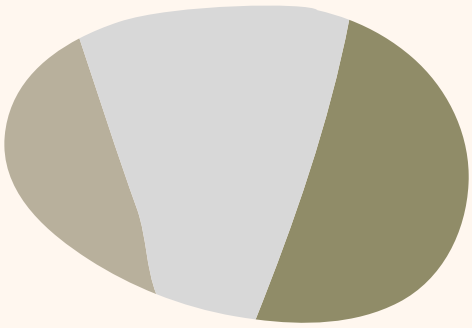
Do not send an unsolicited survey, for instance to students' email, as it can be triggering. Also, participants may not feel that they are in the right headspace to answer, have the emotional resources, or supportive environment to answer. Creating the right environment and conditions to participate are essential parts of the trauma-informed approach.

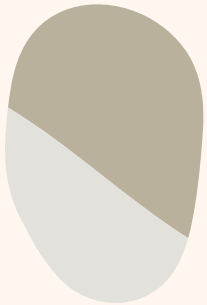
- [ ] **Arts-based data collection** can be designed in ways to enable participants to control their participation. For example, providing a general prompt that participants can respond to enables participants to share deeply personal responses or very general perspectives and insights dependent upon their personal preference (please see Arts-based Evaluation Section).

How evaluators can create *a trauma-informed environment*

Traumatic reactions are *normal* responses to *abnormal* situations.

- [ ] Take the time to build trust and rapport with participants and/or survivors.
- [ ] Acknowledge the courage and generosity of participants.
- [ ] Be accountable to participants and aligned with your explicit purpose and goals.
- [ ] Reciprocity is foundational to data collection and evaluation: consider how this evaluation will benefit participants and survivors. Foster reciprocal relationships.
- [ ] Encourage and provide additional resources for self-care and wellness to survivors, participants and evaluators/staff/faculty doing this work.
- [ ] Trauma-informed care is fundamentally a strengths-based approach that aims to empower participants in their own healing process. Therefore, consider employing a strengths-based framework for your evaluation design.
- [ ] During the evaluation process, it is important to focus not only on trauma that participants may have experienced but also their diverse strengths and experiences, in order to build resiliency and empower participants and survivors. *It's not just about focusing on what's wrong, but also acknowledging what's going strong.*





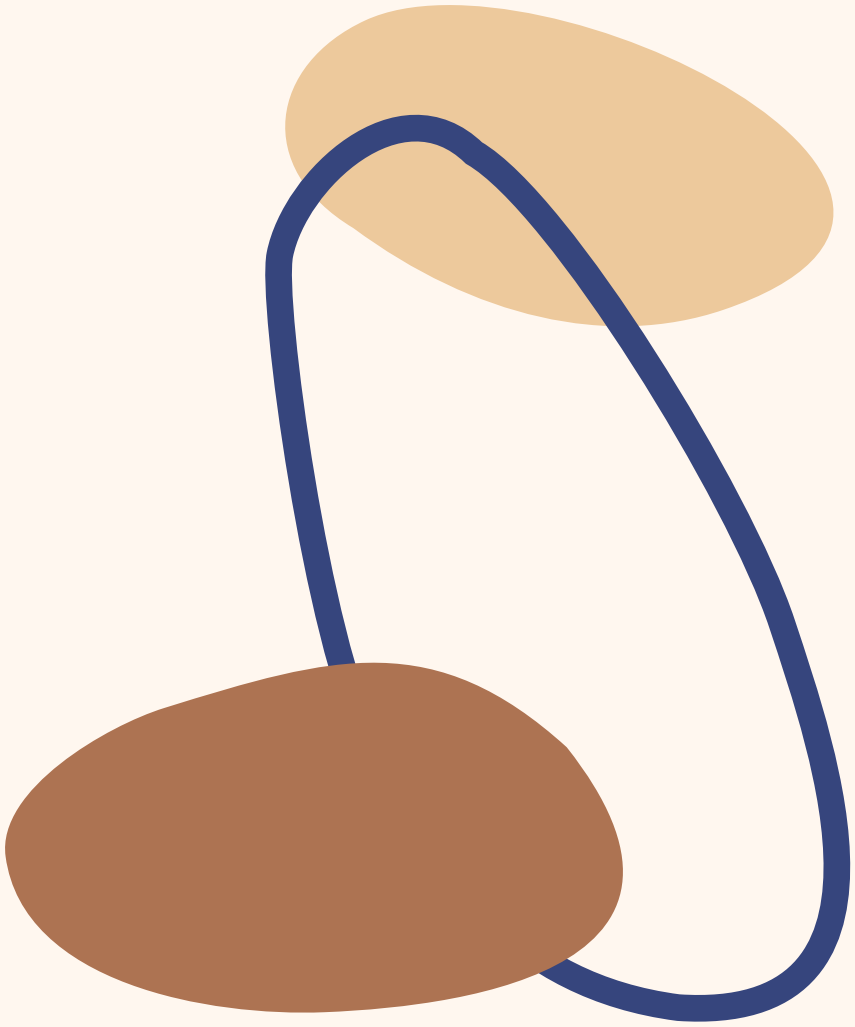
Evaluation: Ask Participants

In thinking about how you were treated during the evaluation [by evaluators, agency, staff, etc.], **do you feel that you were:**

- ☐ Completely Respected
- ☐ Somewhat Respected
- ☐ Completely Disrespected
- ☐ Completely Disrespected

because...

If participants feel that they were not respected and justly treated, follow-up with participants to ensure their well-being and safety (offer counseling support, active listening, etc.). Follow-up with responsible parties and ensure adequate sensitivity training, plus other necessary training to ensure the situation is addressed and rectified.



Arts-based Evaluation

Art is a window into other worlds. Engaging with a work of art can enable us to understand, empathize, and feel things that we ourselves may not have experienced. The act of creating art allows us to reflect upon our own experiences, sometimes uncovering hidden truths in the process. The power of art is both in the act of creation and in the interaction between the viewer and the artwork, which can transform the everyday into the remarkable, altering the ways in which we view social issues and the world around us.

Arts-based evaluation for strategies addressing sexual-violence

Arts-based evaluation (ABE) is an alternative and accessible approach for evaluating strategies to address sexual violence and rape culture on campus. ABE provides alternative, participatory approaches that offer other possibilities, working alone or in conjunction with conventional evaluation approaches. ABE processes offer ways to engage program participants using art (e.g., collage, photography, theatre, dance, writing, poetry, digital media, paint, etc.) as a reflection and an expression of the impact and outcomes of a program strategy. It enables evaluators to investigate and translate complex responses to strategies contextualizing participants' experiences and articulating new ideas about potential program outcomes.

Arts-based approaches to evaluation enable the evaluator to combine the conventions of traditional evaluation with those of qualitative arts-based methodologies in order to enable deeper evaluation insights, meaning making, alternative ways of understanding, and challenging the power dynamics often inherent in more traditional methods of evaluation.

An Important Distinction:

Arts-based strategies to address gender-based sexual violence

versus

Arts-based evaluation to assess strategies that address gender-based sexual violence

It's important to clearly identify how you are using ABE for evaluation. While ABE can provide a very powerful evaluation tool, sometimes the boundaries between the strategy and the evaluation can become blurred. This is why the sections on identifying goals, objectives, and outcomes.

ABE can provide a rigorous and detailed assessment and elicit deeply revealing data when used well. Arts-based evaluation provides an opportunity to seamlessly embed the evaluation into the curriculum for optimal alignment. Oftentimes, when using arts-based strategies, the curriculum, research questions (if the project requires research), and evaluation overlap and interrelate. This is one of the greatest strengths of using art to address social issues; the strategy, research, and evaluation can build upon each other and unfold in harmonious alignment.

ABE is well-suited and especially aligned to *evaluate strategies that address gender-based sexual violence on campus* because it:

- Can be mobilized in the interests of the marginalized who may otherwise be excluded by traditional evaluation frameworks.
- Can initiate provocative conversations and make challenging ideas accessible and inclusive. Complicated academic and policy language in questionnaires may potentially alienate survivors and traditionally marginalized populations and as a result exclude those perspectives that we need in order to end up with meaningful evaluation.
- Has a proven track record in contributing to projects focused on social change. However, ABE approaches can also be effectively used to evaluate strategies or projects that are not social change oriented. When ABE is used in a strategy addressing social change it can be useful to integrate the evaluation into the strategy design for a seamlessly aligned projects.
- Can help us see a situation through someone else's eyes and share an experience empathetically in ways that a survey or questionnaire may fail to do. This is particularly crucial when developing and implementing policies that respond to experiences one might never have or expect to have.
- Can provide opportunities for participants to speak about the unspeakable, to make the invisible visible when exploring difficult subjects. Art can illustrate complex ideas in profound ways which is especially relevant when evaluating strategies addressing gender-based sexual violence and trauma.
- Can be used to bridge institutional divides and provide a more inclusive, as well as creative ways to share information about topics that may be emotionally fraught, trauma laden or alienating.
- Can be used to facilitate evaluation with participants who may struggle with communication or literacy but have alternative ways of expressing themselves and have important insights to share.
- Can be more powerful and evocative than traditional methodologies (such as, questionnaires, interviews, etc.) in providing information and insights about an issue.
- Enables evaluation design that is pluralistic and culturally relevant or inclusive in regard to visual language, symbols, imagery, and representation. ABE can employ culturally appropriate and empowering imagery while carefully avoiding cultural appropriation. ABE enables evaluators to incorporate art forms that are already a part of participants cultural repertoire and that are meaningful to participants and their community.
- Can be done in a healing-centered way with a survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach with attention to not re-triggering participants.

Strengths of an ABE approach:

- Enables a wider range of responses in evaluating whether a strategy is meeting the goals and objectives. If the objectives are not being met ABE can provide opportunities to understand why. Because ABE is so open-ended and participatory it enables participants to provide unforeseen insights, offering answers to questions you would not have thought to ask.

- Can be adapted to the specific context. Approaches can be brief (for example, create a word collage about your key takeaways in 10 minutes) or extensive (bringing together participants to create a forum theatre production to respond to the initiatives our CEGEP has implemented to support Bill 151); it is adaptable to a variety of contexts.

- Generates new knowledge, reveals the unknown, and offers new ways of seeing and doing things.

- Enables participants to engage in ways that are interactive, action-oriented, participatory, and open-ended, allowing participants to decide how deeply they wish to participate. Many participants report finding ABE approaches more interesting and engaging than traditional evaluation methods.

- Can provide a way to subvert traditional hierarchy and power dynamics in the research and evaluation process.

- Well-suited for sensitive topics that are difficult to put into words and aligns well with a trauma-informed approach to evaluation.

- A tool for designing data gathering which leads to creative, innovative ways of evaluation that can be shaped to accommodate emerging social issues, such as the interplay between on and offline sexual violence.

With great power comes great responsibility

Voltaire said it first, "With great power comes great responsibility". Some use a more current attribution, citing Peter Parker's Uncle Ben in Spiderman.

While it is a powerful tool, ABE is not always an easy choice. Following are some considerations to be aware of when thinking about best practices.

Questions to consider when employing ABE

- How can creative, arts-based evaluation methods contribute to the process of evaluating strategies (aimed at addressing and ending sexual violence and rape culture on campus)?

- How can you engage participants in collaboratively creating emergent arts-based evaluation tools for carrying out program evaluations?

- Does this context lend itself to using arts-based evaluation approaches? What can this approach bring to your evaluation that other methods may not be able to?

- How will ABE impact participants? (e.g., increased buy-in, specifically suited to community needs, trauma-informed, etc.)

Promising practices to consider when employing ABE

'Buy-in'

Not every funder, administration or audience is going to buy into ABE immediately and it may take more time to explain why you have chosen this approach to evaluation. Stakeholders may feel more comfortable with traditional methods that they are familiar with. Suggesting a mixed evaluation approach may help 'ease' stakeholders into using arts-based evaluation; for instance, pairing a photovoice activity with a few basic evaluation questions. Often the ABE data adds a deeper and more comprehensive perspective to the overall evaluation, which demonstrates the strength and advantages of ABE.

Powerful Emotions

Arts-based activities may elicit strong emotions which could potentially be triggering for participants, facilitators, and evaluators. A trauma-informed approach can help evaluators understand and respond to the powerful emotions ABE may elicit. It's important to ensure that your evaluation is aligned to your objectives and that you carefully consider the context and fieldsite.

Comfort Level & Trust

Not all participants will want to take part in ABE. This type of evaluation is well-suited to situations where you have already built trust between participants or when you have the time to build trust because using non-traditional ways of communicating can make participants feel vulnerable. Being vulnerable in the context of this work is not necessarily a drawback, but it's a consideration that requires ethical consideration and support for facilitators and participants. That said, there are many ways that arts-based evaluation is easy for participants to engage with because it's often accessible and enjoyable.

Inclusivity

While it can be one of the most inclusive strategies, it can in some cases create alienation if too much is asked of the participants in too short a time. When using ABE be mindful that you allow sufficient time for participants to fully participate in the evaluation. Following this, creating a climate of consent is always important but can take more time when using involved ABE strategies.

Resources

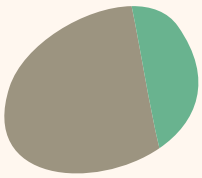
Arts-based evaluation, as with most evaluation, works best when well planned and executed. This can require significant resources in terms of time, facilitators, and materials if your evaluation is extensive. However, many ABE projects can be scaled to accommodate resources.

Data Analysis

ABE evaluation has the potential to produce very clear data, but also has the potential to create complexities if the prompts that accompany the evaluation activity are not clearly aligned. Like other evaluation approaches it will be important to consider how you work with the evaluation data that you receive. Because there can be multiple interpretations of data it's especially important to have a clear, well-planned evaluation.

Generalizability

Due to the nature of ABE, the number of participants is usually limited and therefore while the data can be extremely nuanced and revealing the size of datasets often does not allow for generalizability.



Implementation

As discussed throughout the toolkit, evaluation is most rigorous, comprehensive and usually most effective when you evaluate throughout the strategy or project. Ongoing evaluation, can help create coherence and alignment. Illustrated below is how ABE may be implemented, what it can do and the benefits of using arts-based evaluation at every stage.

At beginning of the project ABE can:

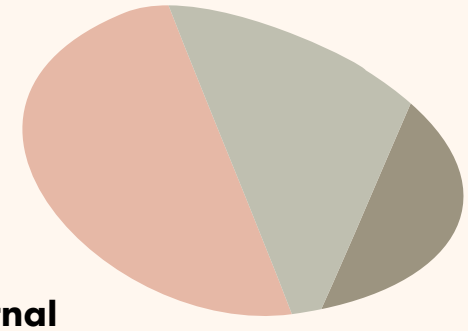
- Provide insights to help gather a deeper understanding of climate and culture on campus.
- Identify key issues and needs within a specific community or the broader campus community.
- Reveal baseline knowledge about the issues the strategy is designed to address. Gathering data regarding awareness, attitudes of participants, and of resources available on campus for addressing and responding to gender-based and sexual violence.
- Illuminate gaps, unaddressed concerns, underrepresented communities, and under-served groups.
- Generate the evaluation questions you might have never thought to ask about issues you didn't know existed.

Throughout a project ABE can:

- Provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy at particular points in time.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to provide feedback that can be used to improve the effectiveness of the project by sharing how the project is impacting their learning, understanding, attitudes, awareness, and behavior.
- Provide feedback regarding how participants might be feeling or experiencing the strategy.
- Gather, document, and present evidence.

At the end of the project ABE can be used to:

- Evaluate effectiveness.
- Evaluate the impact.
- Share best practices.
- Generate potential solutions to issues from within a community.
- Understand what the strategy meant in the lives of participants.
- Understand which strategies to develop next.
- Collect and archive data to be shared with the community.



Case Study: Multimedia Journal

Asking participants to keep a multimedia journal responding to a workshop curriculum on rape culture on campus can provide an evaluation that is embedded in the curriculum. Participants respond to prompts after each workshop session so that facilitators can evaluate whether the workshop is meeting objectives.

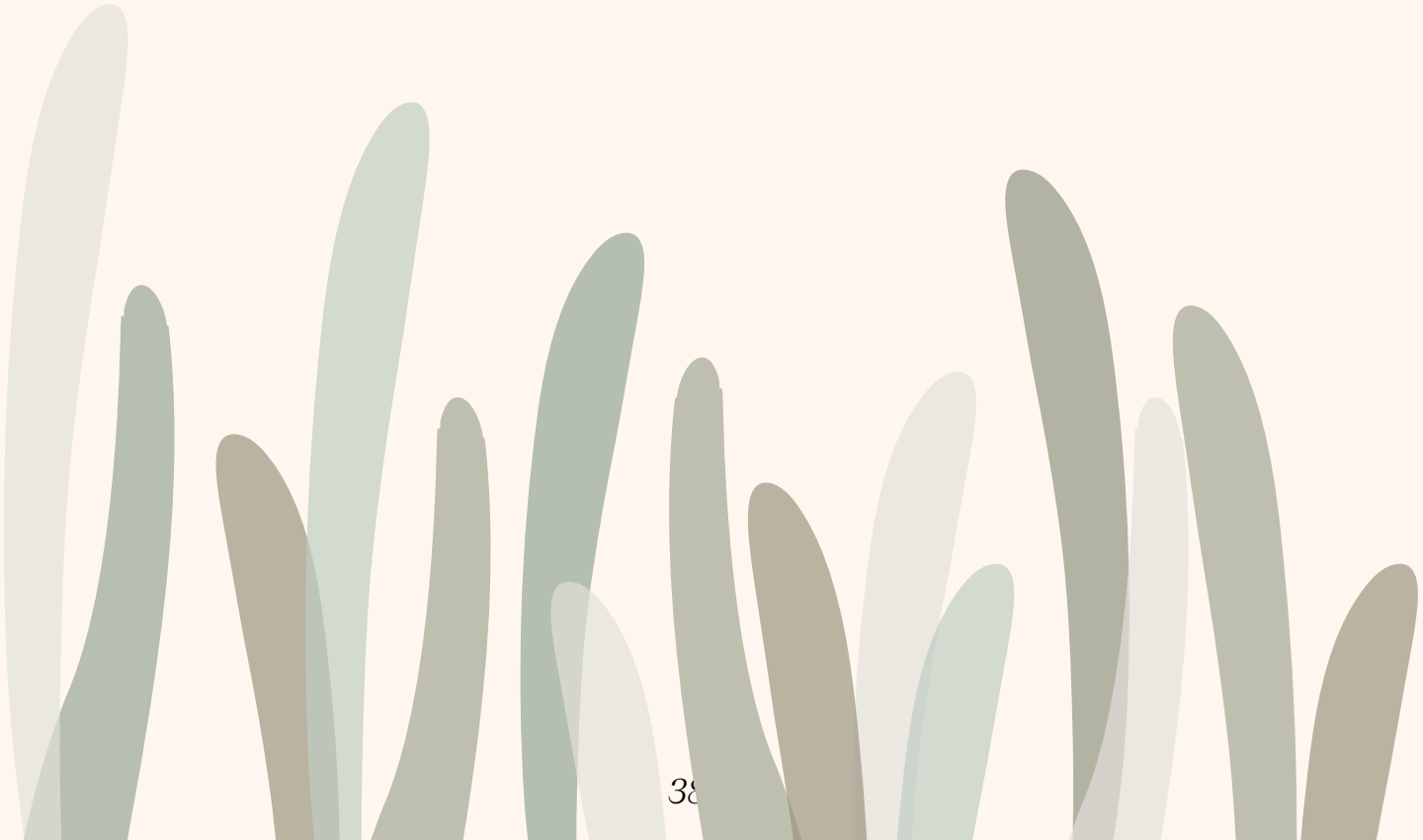
This is an example of how ABE can be used throughout a project to provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy at particular points in time by:

- enabling participants to provide feedback that can be used to improve the effectiveness of the project by sharing how the project is impacting their learning, understanding, attitudes, awareness, and behavior,
- providing feedback regarding how participants might be feeling or experiencing the strategy,
- gathering, documenting and presenting evidence that can be used for overall evaluation of whether the strategy has met the objectives.
- demonstrating ways in which evaluation can be embedded in the curriculum or strategy.

Case Study: Forum Theatre

Forum theatre was created with the objective of empowering oppressed populations to change their world. Dramatized scenes of rape culture on campus provide opportunities for participants to discuss their own experiences and provide an analysis of potential strategies to respond to specific incidences.

Evaluation is conducted collaboratively as participants analyze narratives and responses. The evaluation at the end of the forum theatre can provide opportunities to evaluate effectiveness, evaluate impact, employ the performance to generate potential solutions to issues from within a community, and understand which strategies to develop next. Performative talk backs can be used to understand what the strategy meant to participants. Embedded in the structure of forum theatre is a facilitator who acts as the connection between the performance piece and the audience. This person can ask key evaluative questions that are helpful in evaluating larger campus wide issues. “Were these scenes and situations common?”, “Do you think that your campus has addressed these issues?”, or “If something like this happens, do you know where to go to receive support or to make a complaint?”



Case Study

Arts-based evaluation on a college campus

The following is a case study based on a compilation of our varied experiences evaluating and developing strategies, collaborating with students, administration, staff and faculty at various institutions and community organizations. It illustrates some of the challenges and common issues that we have observed and highlights the committment to dealing with rape culture on college campuses by so many amazing collaborators.

This narrative brings together the ideas in this toolkit and demonstrates ways in which they can be used to strengthen the important work that is happening across campuses and in community organizations. This case study portrays a very comprehensive and large scale evaluation that brings together people from across the campus. However, it can be scaled down to whatever the capacity of the resources allows while still providing useful data.

Scenario: Implementing strategies to address rape culture and sexual violence on campus

The administration at a local college developed several initiatives to address concerns raised by the college community about rape culture and sexual violence on campus.
The college administration consulted with administrators at other colleges and universities in order to decide which strategies to implement and where to devote their limited resources. The result was a one-day event for students on campus. Personnel from campus health services, student services, student groups, and community organizations that provide resources relating to sexual health were invited to reach out and build awareness and educate students about key issues and resources. The various groups set up tables, put up posters, handed out educational and promotional materials, (such as pamphlets, 'consent awareness' pins and stickers) and were present to speak to the campus community, providing information and resources. Additionally, the administration purchased a curriculum about consent which comprised of a 2-hour workshop which they offered to students living in residence and all students participating on sports teams.

In the hours and days following the event, the administration received some positive responses from teachers and students in the form of passing comments and congratulatory emails. However, they also received a significant amount of feedback from the campus community critiquing the initiatives. Feedback was incidental, often second-hand and not systematic enough to provide a clear sense of the overall effectiveness.
The varied, anecdotal feedback revealed a campus divided, revealing that while some students, faculty and staff were very satisfied with the initiatives, others believed that the strategies to end rape culture and sexual violence on campus were not sufficient. Some were frustrated and even angry, complaining that the strategies were not inclusive and did not reflect the authentic needs and issues of the students on campus. Students and college personnel felt that they had been left out of the conversations about which issues were the most important to them. Some of the students suggested that the point of the activities was unclear, some believed that the strategies were not comprehensive enough, others believed that the wrong issues were being addressed.

The college administrators who had selected and implemented the strategies were understandably very disappointed at the mixed feedback that they received because their intention was to effect positive change and bring the college community together to end rape culture on campus. They were frustrated at not having specific information and data about what went wrong. They were dismayed to learn that despite their good intentions the initiative seemed to have backfired in the eyes of some of the very people they wanted to help. Determined to learn from this experience and to do better going forward, they initiated an in-depth analysis of the situation in order to inform future planning and action.

Scenario analysis: Lessons learned

What went wrong? What might have been done differently? What was lacking in the initial planning? There is a lot to unpack in this scenario which can help illustrate what is needed for an evaluation that is more participatory, inclusive, and effective. Incorporating evaluation into the strategies from the beginning would have provided clear feedback from the campus community so that organizers could respond and adapt their initiatives to better meet community needs.

This situation reflects the need for a participatory approach to evaluation. In choosing which strategies to implement, the college administration had consulted administrators at other colleges rather than consulting their own campus community and particularly the people within the community who were the most impacted. This was now acknowledged to be an unfortunate oversight. Going forward, the administration will take a participatory approach and make sure that both the strategy and the evaluation are both inclusive and intersectional.

Developing and following an evaluation plan might have helped include the wide range of voices that need to be consulted when addressing rape culture on campus. Developing the tools to measure the effectiveness of proposed activities requires including and collaborating with the groups you are seeking to target with your strategy.

Developing an evaluation plan would have benefitted the administration because the first step in an evaluation plan is to identify goals, objectives, and outcomes. This important step was not well considered. Having an all-day event on campus can be a great strategy if your clearly stated objective is to briefly introduce new students to the range of campus-based student services, but, on the other hand, if your goal is to have students challenge their own assumptions and think more deeply about rape culture, a different activity might be more appropriate. In other words, part of the problem was that the administrators' stated and perhaps an overly ambitious goal, addressing rape culture on campus and ending sexual violence, misled participants into expecting more than the strategies that were implemented that day could deliver. Planning an evaluation can help clarify objectives and point to appropriate strategy selection. Making these decisions starts with considering goals, objectives, and outcomes.

Understanding what the objectives are helps in identifying which populations need to be targeted with the strategy. For instance, is it a strategy that works to engage groups that are at risk of perpetrating harm? Or are the strategies directed at providing services for survivors? Is the strategy's objective focused on prevention of sexual violence, or responding to sexual violence? It is important to have a clear understanding of which populations are being addressed and likely to benefit from which aspects of a strategy. By asking these questions first and examining your goals and objectives there can be better alignment between the strategy, goal, objective and its effectiveness in address-

ing specific populations and needs. Having an evaluation plan helps in gathering concrete data about both the effectiveness of the strategy but also whether the campus community agrees that the chosen strategy addresses a key issue. This could go a long way towards initiating a more balanced, informed discussion on campus.

"What's going strong? What's going wrong?" Planning and implementing an appropriate evaluation

Armed with new insights from their analysis of what went wrong, the administrators decided to take action. After consulting several key faculty members they decided to use a participatory approach to:

- Determine the overall effectiveness of their attempts to address rape culture on campus
- Find out which strategies the campus community might want more resources devoted to
- Uncover aspects of the issue that might not have been visible to them, the unintended outcomes or changes that may occur as "side effects" of the stated goal, and to learn more about what strategies are needed.

Creating a participatory plan that is *inclusive, intersectional and trauma-informed*

This time around, the administrators decided to try to include as many members of the capus community in evaluating their efforts thus far and in determining where to go next.

1. *They brought together the key policymakers and community leaders:*

This included people who were well placed to effect change in policy and practices addressing sexual violence and rape culture on the campus to participate in designing the evaluation and receiving and acting upon the results. This included the Head of the Gender Studies Department, Dean of Student Services, Counseling Services, Sexual Assault Resource Centre Coordinator, the coaches of the athletics teams, campus faith leaders, heads of student organizations, such as the student union, transgender support group, and other student groups that showed an interest.

2. *They applied an intersectional lens:*

They reached out to students and organizations on campus who were disproportionately impacted by the issue and made sure that their voices were privileged – specifically, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC community. Students and members of the campus community whose everyday lives were most impacted by the issue of rape culture and sexual violence were recruited. The group included

survivors, indigenous student representatives, students who are on the spectrum, as well as student groups that support students with (dis)abilities. Because people in these groups are frequently overburdened with these types of requests while experiencing additional challenges on campus, the administration was able to offer an incentive for the student club groups in the form of gift cards to these collaborators and consultants. The administration was also able to collaborate with student services to make sure that they were reaching out to the various communities in a trauma-informed and survivor-centered way.

3. *They employed a participatory approach in creating an advisory committee for their evaluation.*

This committee was convened to ensure that the greatest representation shaped the evaluation so that the findings would be representative. By including the perspectives and ideas from a wide range of stakeholders they ensured greater buy-in to the evaluation within the communities that the stakeholders represented. Additionally, through including stakeholders in the process of developing and implementing the evaluation the chances of the findings being viewed as credible and acted upon was increased.

4. *They adopted a trauma-informed approach.*

They consulted with counselors from the student services department who were trained in both active listening and trauma-informed approaches to evaluation in order to ensure that the evaluation was not triggering to participants and that they were ready to support any students or members of the campus community. They consulted the trauma-informed section of this toolkit to help guide them in their approach.

5. *The advisory committee met to decide what the key evaluation questions were and what methodology to use.*

During the first meeting, they decided that the evaluation should ask what is working on campus to address sexual violence and rape culture (what's going strong?) and which issues need to be addressed (what's going wrong?). A key consideration was to choose a methodology that would be interesting and motivating to participants, enabling creativity, and expression. They also wanted to use a method that would be able to capture the hidden issues on campus that evaluators might not have predicted or even known existed and thus were unable to formulate questions for. This led to a decision to use an arts-based approach to evaluation. A faculty member suggested using photovoice because it is open ended and enables participants to use photography in order to express, reflect, and communicate aspects of their everyday lives. In this cell phone age where so many people are accustomed to "snapping their lives", the committee thought that this choice might be motivating and feasible, giving students agency and voice.

Implementation of Photovoice: An Arts-based Evaluation Method

Some of the key goals of photovoice that made it a relevant choice for the evaluation were that it enables evaluators to:

1. Record and reflect the community or group's strengths and concerns.

2. Promote critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community issues through both small and large group discussions of photographs taken by participants.

3. Reach policymakers and bring issues and recommendations to their attention.

Some of the premises and concepts that underlie photovoice:

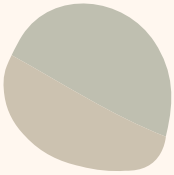
Photovoice is a participatory and arts-based method of conducting evaluation that involves groups of participants taking photographs or assembling photographs taken by others around a theme or issue of their choosing; meeting frequently to show, discuss, and analyze their photographs; preparing a photo essay or notated album or slide show; and then deciding on a suitable format and venue for presentation of their work to policymakers. This general protocol can be adapted to multiple digital formats, using for example, cell phone videos and social media. It can also be adapted to using drawings or other art forms in combination with or instead of photographs. Most students on campus have access to a device that can take pictures, therefore the approach is very inclusive and resources required in terms of equipment are low.

6. Another meeting was scheduled to introduce photovoice methods to the participants and facilitate a group discussion. The details of how to create an intersectional representative group of participants to develop the photovoice prompts and protocol, to participate in the data gathering, and to analyse and code the data, and submit the findings was resolved.

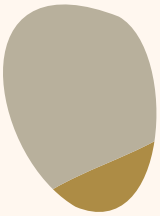
7. The college's ethics review board was consulted and their instructions were followed. As a result, an online informed consent form that could be submitted via cell phone was developed and the participants considered the implications and parameters of taking pictures of other people on campus eventually resolving not to include identifiable people in the images.

8. The participants who were answering the evaluation questions in the form of photovoice prompts were provided with some useful tips on taking images. For instance, how to frame a photo, not to always put the subject in the center, use of creative ways to protect identity if necessary by taking the picture from behind, focusing on feet or hands.

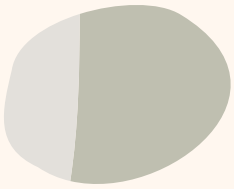
9. After the photos were submitted, a series of meetings to select, contextualize, and codify the themes or issues that emerged from the images was organized.



a. Each participant was asked to select and talk about one or two photographs that they felt were most significant in responding to the prompts and explain what they revealed.



b. Participants framed stories about their picture or took a critical stance on their photos in terms of questions like: What do you see here? What is really happening here? How does this relate to rape culture on campus? Why does this problem or situation exist? What might we want to do about it?



c. Through group discussions with the evaluation team the links between the photos and stories were analyzed. Participants identified themes, common concerns, and theories that arose from and across their images.

d. The initial discussions guided further rounds of photo taking.

10. When the participants decided that they had covered enough ground, and gained enough insight, they prepared a presentation to synthesize and share their results.

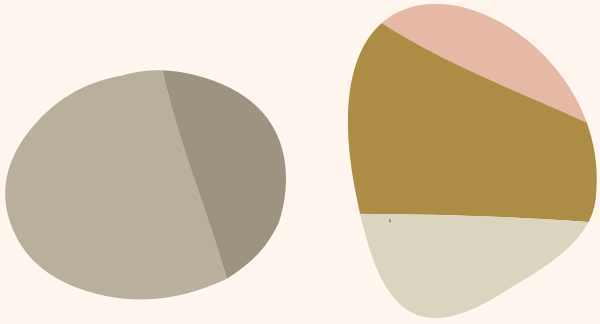
11. They organized a presentation for the campus community to share their findings. The presentation took the format of a vernissage. They invited the entire campus community along with key policymakers and community leaders who were positioned to effect change in policy and practices and who had been involved in the evaluation process throughout. The chosen photographs, along with the accompanying captions and explanations were printed and hung in the same auditorium where the initial 'one-day sexual violence awareness strategy' had taken place. The vernissage resulted in bringing the campus community together in conversations about what was working in addressing rape culture on campus and what issues still needed to be addressed. Several new initiatives to address some of the findings brought forward in the photovoice evaluation emerged through the event.

Conclusion:

Through developing an evaluation plan, this campus was able to get a better idea of what types of strategies were working to address the issues of rape culture and what was needed going forward. By taking a participatory approach and engaging in an evaluation process the people who are most impacted by the rape culture are included in identifying key issues, providing feedback about the effectiveness of the strategies, and given an opportunity to suggest solutions and ways forward.

Including the campus community, and particularly those most impacted in the evaluation resulted in bringing a variety of perspectives into conversation, giving voice to the 'experts' who are the people at the center of the issues who are so often not provided with authentic opportunities to shape the conversation. The photovoice strategy resulted in the students feeling more included and the administration feeling that they were able to use the information gathered to guide their strategic planning and program developments on campus.

Using a participatory arts-based approach to evaluation brought people together and placed the discussion and evaluation of the effectiveness of various strategies to the forefront of campus awareness. The evaluation plan helped people re-imagine how they think about evaluation and the role it can play throughout the development and implementation of strategies.



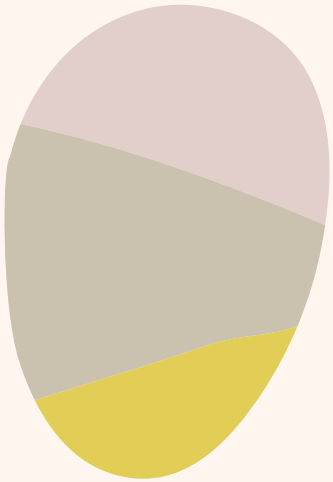
Ways Forward

We hope this toolkit serves as a jumping off point for you. It is meant to share some of the evaluation practices that we applied, observed, or that our collaborators suggested were 'better practices' when evaluating strategies addressing rape culture and sexual violence on campus. What works best when evaluating is contextual and dependent upon the goals of the strategy, the participants, the field site, amongst a variety of other considerations. This work can always include more voices, be more intersectional and address more complex topics. Our recommendation is start engaging with evaluation however your can. Whether that means, quietly examining your goals and objectives to yourself or developing a robust evaluation strategy with an implementation team.

This is the beginning of a process of sharing some ways of doing evaluation that are feminist, participatory, intersectional, trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and arts-based. However, we acknowledge that this is just a jumping-off point. There are many people doing this work in similar or complementary ways who have valuable insights and 'best practices' to share and develop.

When we begin thinking of, as well as employing approaches to evaluation that are participatory, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered we are creating a culture shift. Working in this way is effective because it provides an environment in which participants are more likely to share valuable insights. Importantly, it also lends itself to a healing-centered way of addressing systemic, structural, and institutional issues of sexual and gender-based violence.

The landscape in which this work is happening is continuously evolving, hopefully in positive ways. We invite people who read this toolkit to use it as a point of departure to integrate, build upon, and to continuously consider how to do this work in ways that support those at the front and center of the issue.



To reference this document, please use the following citation:

Dixon,S., Jones, C., Craven, E. & Crooks, H. R., (2021). *Approaches for evaluating strategies that address rape culture: Toolkit with key considerations, and discussion.* Addressing Rape Culture on Campus for the Women and Gender Equality Canada Project funded by FEGC/WAGE.