

**York University**  
**Sexual Assault Awareness, Prevention, and Response Policy Working Group**  
**Meeting Notes**

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**Date:** Thursday, May 21, 2015

**Time:** 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Location:** 956 Kaneff Tower

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**Attendance:** Polly MacFarlane, Elana Shugar, Rob Castle, Catherine Salole, Jessica Thyriar, Deb Hansen, Grace Permaul, Siraz Chatha, Joanna Rainbow, Margaret Macharia, Aldo Altomare, Mina Rajabi Paak.

**Regrets:** Liisa Stephenson, Prakash Amarasooriya, Gire Jonathan, Rodney John de Roché, Tania Das Gupta, CWTP Representative.

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**Review of Meeting Notes from Last Meeting (Meeting 10; Friday, May 08, 2015)**

- There were a few corrections/clarifications w.r.t. the OSCR process:
  - OSCR does inform VPS of incidents of sexual assault so as to discuss if section 15 (emergency measures) will be invoked. NOT every case of sexual assault is reviewed by VPS because not every case needs section 15; VPS only consults on section 15.
  - Section 15 is not intended as punitive measure but the interim measure can be punitive in effect.
    - The respondent is suspended for 10 business days while information is being collaboratively compiled. The code also provides option for extension through VPS
  - Determination of Ongoing Risk:
    - The security bulletin protocol MAY be initiated.
  - The survivor is referred to either a Critical Incident Coordinator or Case Advisor.
    - The Critical Incident Coordinator MAY also go to hospital with the survivor, if the survivor requires medical attention.

- Accommodations/ Resources
  - If the survivor needs access to safe housing, safe house procedures are activated. The safe house may be recommended by CWTP and Security. It is managed by OSCR.
    - If the safe house is needed but it is in use, the office/ organizations will be informed that it is currently occupied.
    - Fallback - if the safe house is in use, OSCR will coordinate other accommodations.
  - If the survivor requires academic accommodations, the Associate Dean (or appropriate faculty member) of their faculty will be contacted.
- The Tribunal Panel includes 1 staff member, 1 faculty member and 1 student.
  - The panel is selected through an interview process by the current tribunal members. OSCR is neutral in the process.
- If the respondent is a faculty member/ staff, they will be referred to FR/HR who in turn connects with the Office of General Counsel
  - The Office of the General Counsel will informally assign an investigator as FR/HR is in charge of that.
- If the respondent is a student and employee, both the code and HR/FR are considered. HR/FR will deal with the employment aspect while section 15 will deal with the student aspect. Both processes are separate but one impacts the other.

### **Membership (RE: Silence Is Violence)**

- R. Castle responded to Silence Is Violence's email and communicated that based on discussions the Working Group does not intend on expanding its membership at this time. However, this would be brought to the Working Group for further discussion at the next meeting. R. Castle offered to meet with Silence Is Violence to discuss membership, the demands put forward, and any other concerns.
  - Silence Is Violence has not responded to the offer.
- R. Castle received emails regarding this decision.
- Q: How do we constructively engage with Silence Is Violence?
- The University can only communicate with M. Gray through her lawyer.

- T. Das Gupta expressed through email that there was not unanimity in Silence is Violence not joining the Working Group.
  - Response to Silence Is Violence was amended accordingly.
  - Email from T. Das Gupta reviewed. She recommended that we ask a representative from Silence Is Violence to become a member of the Working Group rather than M. Gray per se. She suggested that it is the group, rather than a particular individual that should be represented.
- Concerns about extending membership to Silence Is Violence
  - YUGSA was designated as a representative for graduate students.
    - Silence is Violence also represents undergraduate students – members put forward may not be graduate students.
  - The purpose of the Working Group is to develop the policy and related procedures.
    - It aims to be a space supportive of survivors however discussions around issues are not presented as specific to individual experiences although they may be informed by member’s experiences.
  - Silence Is Violence is concerned about the potential of a third party representing the concerns of survivors however a representative of Silence Is Violence would be a third party.
  - Student organizations that were included in Working Group were established groups that had built trust over the years.
    - Other student groups that were active on campus such as Feminist Action were not included as Working Group members even though they had contributed significantly to addressing this issue on campus.
  - The original membership was offices, departments, and student organizations directly involved in the response process.
    - Representatives from student unions were included because of the significant role they have in representing the student population and involvement around this issue.
    - Great consideration was given to expanding membership. Additional members were added when gaps were established and through consultations.

- Representatives from student service groups were added because they represented marginalized community members not specifically because of their status as undergraduate students.
  - Silence is Violence has continued to share miscommunications about the Working Group and certain university processes.
  - Working Group members and the offices, departments, and student organizations included in the processes have all been working to address these issues on campus for years. The Working Group has had extensive conversations and during mapping process and this has required building a lot of trust for open and honest sharing.
    - There is concern that they are not interested in working collaboratively.
    - Adding Silence Is Violence to the working group may impact progress.
  - There is also the added concern about their voice taking over the space and censoring members.
  - There is also the issue about contributing to a hierarchy of survivorship.
    - Silence Is Violence has made a number of assumptions about lived experiences of members of the Working Group.
  - Silence Is Violence has also expressed concern about the chair of the working group.
- YUGSA does regular report backs with their members.
  - M. Rajabi Paak is the ideal person to meet with and communicate with Silence Is Violence. She can bring back their questions and concerns as a graduate student representative.
  - Q: How comfortable is the Working Group in having the information discussed in the meetings, shared?
- Working Group will extend the invitation to Silence Is Violence to meet to discuss membership and concerns again as well as potentially attend a designated Working Group meeting.
  - We could discuss why we are hesitating to invite them to join the Working Group as members.
  - We could invite them to attend a meeting for a 30 minute conversation. Have a meeting with them to discuss their membership and other items.
  - Invite them to take part in a specific discussion around response process for graduate students.

- **ACTION:** R. Castle will email Silence Is Violence

### **Review of the Personal Counselling Services (PCS) process**

- PCS has had very few instances where they have been the first responder. Their role deals with emotional impacts. In situations where they are first responders, their role is to encourage individuals to do what is best for them while laying out options.
- Individuals can contact PCS on the phone or in-person. However, those who call in will eventually be asked to come in if they want to pursue counselling.
- At first contact, PCS will determine if the individual is in crisis regardless of what the issue is.
  - If the individual is in crisis (e.g. if they indicate a desire/need for a same-day or sooner session), PCS will initiate their *Crisis Intervention Protocol*.
  - If the individual is not in crisis, PCS will arrange an intake appointment with an *intake counsellor* or other counsellor if intake counsellors are unavailable. The intake would usually occur within 1-7 business days of the request.
- The Crisis Intervention Protocol is standard across all crisis situations and involves the client providing demographic information and filling out a brief questionnaire re the nature of the crisis prior to meeting with the counsellor.
- If the individual requires medical attention, PCS will refer them to emergency services
- If the individual's safety is at risk, PCS will assess those needs and help the individual take appropriate action.
- If the individual wants to file a report with TPS, PCS will help. Depending on the circumstance, this could be done through Security Services.
- If the individual wants to file a complaint against another student, PCS will contact OSCR.
- If the individual wants counselling services, PCS will provide short-term counselling services and they will suggest any other relevant resources.
- If the individual wants long term counselling other than the short-term services, PCS will suggest possible resources.
- If the situation just needed immediate handling and the individual is satisfied, PCS will close the file and keep it for their records. PCS maintains all client files.
- In situations where the individual is not in immediate crisis, an intake appointment is set.

- Initial paperwork includes information on the individual's demographics and nature of the situation.
- If during the intake, the intake counselor determines the individual is in crisis, they will either bring in the on-call people or initiate the crisis intervention protocol.
- If the individual is not in crisis, the intake counsellor will proceed with intake. The intake process is a 30 minute process to gather basic information about the situation.
- If the individual is referring to something that happened recently, the intake counsellor will determine if the individual needs triage.
  - If an individual is deemed to require priority counselling, an appointment will be scheduled within a week.
  - If not, the client will be placed on a waitlist which is usually 1 week to a month depending on the time of year.
- Once the individual is contacted with appointment, PCS will proceed with counselling services.
- **Q:** Is there opportunity to provide feedback?
  - **A:** If an individual wants to provide feedback about their experience, the Director, Polly's contact information is provided and a meeting is arranged. Feedback is provided in-person where workable for the client.
    - If an individual's experience with a counsellor or the process was negative, Polly will review this.
    - This is not a formal process.
    - Option is not indicated in PCS material.
    - **ACTION:** We should be assessing what opportunities for feedback are provided by all services.
- Confidentiality
  - Confidentiality will only be broken if there is a specific or perceived risk to self or others.
    - Suicidal ideation does not necessary meet threshold.
  - If someone is sent to hospital – PCS would like to follow-up but does not always have that option.
  - If EMS responds, Security report would be generated.
    - OSCR would be notified and Carolyn would reach out.

- If there is a need for counselling, PCS will either provide counselling or provide referrals depending on specific needs of individual as they relate to the mandate and policies of PCS
  - Services external to York may have longer wait-times.
- **Q:** Do counselors have specialized training in sexual assault?
  - **A:** Counselors have training in trauma, not necessarily specific to sexual assault.
- **Q:** Does PCS have group counselling for survivors?
  - **A:** No. There have not been enough students who are both interested in a group and are available at a common time.

### **Meeting Schedule**

- Next meeting is scheduled for the afternoon of Thursday June 4th.