

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

Annual Report (May 2024 – end of April 2025)

Introduction

The 2024–2025 year was marked by program expansion, increasing case complexity, deeper athletics engagement, and the formal launch of the Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy revision process. The Sexual Violence Support Centre (SVSC) continued to provide trauma-informed response services while simultaneously advancing prevention education, provincial leadership, and systems change initiatives.

Notably, this year saw:

- The expansion and institutionalization of the Athletics Ambassador Program (AAP)
- The launch of SCORE (Sports: Changing Our Role in Education)
- Growing provincial and cross-sector collaboration
- Increasing case complexity, including respondent and witness support
- The formal beginning of the Sexual Violence Policy renewal process

1. Case Management and Institutional Response

Increasing Complexity and Sustained Demand

Throughout the year, the SVSC maintained a consistently high caseload, with complexity continuing to increase.

Across the reporting period:

- New cases ranged from 3–11 per month, with peaks in September (11) and March (9).
- Active caseloads averaged between 25–35 concurrent files.
- Ongoing caseload numbers increased significantly, reaching over 180 files by spring 2025.

February and March reflected increased respondent sessions and report navigation support.

Emerging themes this year included:

- Increased housing insecurity among survivors
- More frequent support requests from respondents and witnesses
- Greater procedural complexity requiring cross-department collaboration

Support provided included:

- Academic accommodations (frequently requested during peak academic periods)
- Referrals to community legal supports
- Navigation of police and court processes
- Safety planning
- Respondent information sessions and follow-up

Collaboration with Security, Counselling, People and Culture, Accessibility, Legal Counsel, and senior administration remained central to ensuring coordinated, procedurally fair processes.

2. Prevention Education and Campus Engagement

Welcome Weeks & Consent Awareness (September 2024)

September was a record-setting engagement month:

- Over 300 students participated in Welcome Week and Consent Awareness programming.
- “From Consent to Care” was delivered to over 200 varsity student-athletes, with a commitment to reach all varsity teams.

Events included:

- Fries for Fries (147 participants)
- Services Pop-Ups (141 participants)
- Athlete A film screening (26 participants)

This integration into orientation and athletics training significantly expanded early-year prevention reach.

Sexual Violence Prevention Week (January 2025)

January marked another successful Sexual Violence Prevention Week:

- Pop-Up Event – 57 participants
- Community Beading Workshop – 8 participants
- Open House – 11 participants

Collaborations with SchoolsPlus and Athletics Ambassadors also advanced Waves of Change programming in high schools.

16 Days of Activism & Trans Day of Remembrance

November programming included:

- 16 Days Speakers Series
- Services Pop-Up
- Survivor Art Space
- Sex Positivity Bingo & Trivia (40 participants)

The National Day of Remembrance ceremony included 10 Athletics Ambassadors and 4 SVPI Peer Educators, demonstrating meaningful student engagement.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April 2025)

The third annual Survivor Support Letter Campaign was successfully implemented in partnership with the Patrick Power Library. Acadia University replicated the model on their campus. This initiative continues to center survivor affirmation and cross-campus visibility.

3. Athletics Ambassador Program & SCORE Expansion

The 2024–2025 year marked the full implementation and expansion of the Athletics Ambassador Program (AAP).

Key Achievements:

- “From Consent to Care” delivered to every varsity team (September onward)

- Cards for Consent with Flower the Therapy Dog – 42 participants
- Waves of Change Train-the-Trainer for Athletics Ambassadors
- High school pilot: Waves of Change at Cole Harbour High facilitated by three Athletics Ambassadors (with fantastic feedback!)

Importantly, the Athletics Ambassador Program will expand with support from the Scott McCain and Leslie McLean Centre for Sport, Business, and Health. SCORE (Sports: Changing Our Role in Education) officially launched this year, strengthening the integration of sport culture and violence prevention. The upcoming AACUSS presentation, “From Locker Room Talk to Ambassadors for Change,” reflects national recognition of this innovative work.

4. Policy Renewal and Institutional Change

This year marked the formal beginning of the Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy renewal process.

Consultations completed this year included:

- Resident Assistants (51 participants)
- SMUSA Societies Executives (12 participants)
- SVPEAC (17 staff and student representatives)

Additional feedback sessions with Athletics Ambassadors are underway.

Policy review this year reflects a shift from maintenance toward intentional structural renewal grounded in community consultation.

5. Provincial and National Leadership

The Advisor continued to play a leadership role across provincial and national networks, including:

- Nova Scotia Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Committee
- Gender-Based Violence Sector Coordination Working Group
- Humane Canada Working with Boys and Men Steering Committee
- Provincial GBV/IPV Design Team

Additional highlights:

- Hosted and coordinated Investigator Level 3 Training for all 11 NS post-secondary institutions.
- Participated in the Nova Scotia GBV Action Summit.
- Participated in Federal Ombudsman consultation.
- Presented Waves of Change to Department of Education senior leadership.

These partnerships position the institution as a provincial leader in prevention and response innovation.

6. Capacity Building and Program Development

Key internal developments included:

- Continued refinement of Consent at SMU Brightspace modules (101 & 102)
- Development of FRIES and 6 D's bystander resources

- Creation of CARE Resource for Responding to Disclosures
- Development of graphic templates to strengthen communications consistency

Student leadership development remained central through:

- Peer Educator onboarding and training
- Service-learning placements
- Athletics Ambassador mentorship
- Community high school outreach

Conclusion and Looking Ahead

The 2024–2025 year reflects:

- Sustained and increasing case complexity
- Significant expansion of athletics-based prevention education
- Launch of SCORE and cross-sector sport partnerships
- Formal policy renewal grounded in consultation
- Deepened provincial leadership

The work continues to balance immediate response with long-term culture change. As the next year unfolds, priorities include:

- Completing policy revisions and approval processes
- Expanding the Athletics Ambassador and PAWWS initiatives
- Strengthening evaluation frameworks for prevention impact
- Deepening housing and justice system response partnerships

The foundation laid this year positions the Sexual Violence Support Centre to continue building a campus culture rooted in consent, accountability, equity, and collective care.