

PROGRESS REPORT 2015–2016



IT'S NEVER OKAY:

AN ACTION PLAN
TO STOP SEXUAL
VIOLENCE AND
HARASSMENT



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MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

When I unveiled *It's Never Okay* a year ago, I said that we can and must do better. Despite the progress that had been made — thanks to hard work by so many people over so many years — sexual violence and harassment remained shockingly prevalent. There was still so much more to do.

I also said that change for the better is possible.


We can make Ontario a place where everyone can live free from the fear, threat or experience of sexual violence and harassment. And our three-year Action Plan has set our province firmly on the path to this goal.

It's Never Okay deals not only with the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment in our society, but confronts the rape culture and misogyny that are at its root. Over the past year, our government has taken unprecedented action to challenge deep-seated attitudes, behaviours, myths and stereotypes that normalize or trivialize sexual violence and harassment.

Our thought-provoking and award-winning #WhoWillYouHelp campaign has helped the public recognize sexual violence and harassment when they see it. Our first video broke new ground by speaking directly to bystanders and portraying their role in the perpetuation of sexual violence and harassment. It demonstrated why it is crucial for witnesses to sexual violence and harassment to speak out against it, rather than give their implied consent by staying silent.

This video generated more than 85 million views worldwide — an amazing achievement. Even more significantly, public-opinion research shows that it has had a profound impact on attitudes here in Ontario.

Over the last year we have carried out other parts of the Action Plan, including improving support for survivors by increasing funding for sexual and domestic violence treatment centres and community-based sexual assault centres. Moving forward, it's important that we continue to address the need for more support in rural and remote communities in our province.



In October we introduced proposed legislation to make campuses, workplaces, homes and communities safer, including requiring that employers investigate incidents and complaints of workplace sexual harassment.

To ensure that young people learn about healthy and respectful relationships, we introduced a new health and physical education curriculum that includes topics such as consent, sexual harassment, online safety and gender-based violence.

We have made progress, but we still have a long way to go. We need to do more to create a culture where people intervene when they see sexual violence and harassment, and come to the aid of survivors. Above all, we need to do more to change the attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate violence in our society.

Sexual violence and harassment are not exclusively women's issues. These are social issues and economic issues — and they affect everyone.

They hold us back from being a province where everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy and happy life. And they are unacceptable.

As we begin the second year of our Action Plan, we will continue to work with our partners, including the permanent roundtable on violence against women, to take additional concrete steps to stop sexual violence and harassment.

And with our recently announced long-term strategy to end violence against Indigenous women and our forthcoming strategy to combat human trafficking, we are recognizing the multitude of ways that sexual violence and harassment take place in communities across our province.

All of us have a role to play in this. Together, we can create an Ontario that is safe, equal and respectful for everyone.



KATHLEEN WYNNE
Premier of Ontario

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am pleased to join Premier Kathleen Wynne in releasing this progress report on *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*, which we launched last March.

Our government will continue to build on early progress made; many programs and initiatives are still in development. We will continue to monitor results and report regularly to Ontarians. The work to stop sexual violence and harassment is ongoing. We still have a lot to do.

I join Premier Wynne in recognizing our many partners who share our government's commitment to end sexual violence and harassment, who helped us to develop and are now helping us implement

It's Never Okay: women's organizations, diverse communities, our partners in the community, education, health and justice sectors, front-line workers and so many others.

We thank the members of Ontario's Roundtable on Violence Against Women for their ongoing and thoughtful advice on issues of gendered violence. We thank students who are speaking up and bystanders who are increasingly refusing to stand by when they see sexual violence and harassment occur. They are setting a crucial example and making an important difference. We particularly thank the survivors who so courageously share their stories and who deserve better.



Our government will keep moving forward, with our Action Plan as a guide, towards an Ontario where everyone lives in safety, and is free from the fear, threat or experience of sexual violence and harassment.

TRACY MACCHARLES
Minister Responsible for Women's Issues



ONE YEAR AGO: ACTION PLAN RELEASED

In March 2015, the Ontario government released *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*.

Sexual violence and harassment exist in every community, in every culture, in every economic class: one in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime. This cannot go unchallenged. All Ontarians deserve the opportunity to thrive, to reach their full potential and to live fulfilling lives free of violence and discrimination.

The Action Plan sets out concrete steps to end sexual violence and harassment. It focuses on changing attitudes, providing more supports for survivors and making workplaces and campuses safer from, and more responsive to, sexual violence and harassment. The government has committed \$41 million over three years to support its implementation.



To ensure that the Plan delivers on our commitment to a safer Ontario, we will monitor progress and results and update Ontarians on the Plan's first anniversary.

— It's Never Okay:
An Action Plan to Stop Sexual
Violence and Harassment, 2015

FROM THEN TO NOW: PROGRESS MADE

The Action Plan is leading the way to an Ontario where everyone lives in safety, free from the threat, fear or experience of sexual violence and harassment. It includes 13 key commitments:

1. Introduce legislation to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing, and through the civil claim process.



Introduced the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015 which, if passed, would make workplaces, campuses, and communities safer and provide more support for survivors of sexual violence by removing the limitation period for all civil proceedings based on sexual assault; eliminating the limitation period for survivors of sexual and domestic violence to make a compensation application to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board; and shortening the time it takes to end a tenancy agreement for people experiencing sexual or domestic violence, to make it easier for survivors to flee abuse.

2. Launch a public education and awareness campaign across Ontario to challenge attitudes, promote immediate change in rape culture behaviour, and encourage a longer-term generational shift to end deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours.



Released the award-winning #WhoWillYouHelp campaign which received more than 85 million views worldwide, raised awareness and shifted attitudes.

3. Develop tools and identify best practices to support a compassionate and sensitive response from law enforcement authorities to encourage more survivors to report sexual assaults.



Invested in evidence-based research that examines issues surrounding sexual violence reporting to help improve police response. Hosted a community of practice conference to improve supports for survivors.

4. Increase supports and develop an enhanced prosecution model to improve the experience of survivors navigating the criminal justice system.



Provided training for over 600 Crown attorneys on improving sexual assault survivors' experiences in the justice system.

5. Update the Health and Physical Education curriculum to help students from grades 1–12 gain a deeper understanding of a host of important issues, including healthy relationships and consent.



Implemented the updated Health and Physical Education curriculum in all publicly-funded schools.

6. Introduce legislation to require colleges and universities to work with students to adopt campus-wide sexual violence and harassment policies that include training, prevention, complaint procedures and response protocols.




Introduced the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015 which, if passed, would require all publicly-assisted colleges, universities and private career colleges to have a stand-alone sexual violence policy that is reviewed every three years with student involvement.

7. Strengthen supports provided by hospital-based Sexual and Domestic Violence Treatment Centres (SDVTCs) to maintain 24/7 access to excellent, appropriate and timely care.



Invested an additional \$1.1 million in annual funding over three years for hospital-based SDVTCs to strengthen counselling and outreach services to patients.



8. Develop up-to-date training for front-line workers in the health, community services, education and justice sectors to better support survivors of sexual assault and harassment, and develop training for workers in the hospitality sector to empower them to know how to help when they encounter high-risk situations.

✓ *Initiated training development through a call for proposals for organizations to develop and implement up-to-date training for front-line professionals. Successful applicants will be announced this spring.*

9. Stabilize and increase funding for community-based sexual assault centres.

✓ *Stabilized and increased the annual investment by \$1.75 million for Ontario's 42 community-based sexual assault centres for services like crisis help-lines, counselling and referrals.*

10. Create a pilot program to provide free independent legal advice to sexual assault survivors whose cases are proceeding toward a criminal trial.

✓ *Finalizing a pilot program to give survivors of sexual assault free legal advice anytime after the incident occurred, including those whose cases are proceeding to trial.*

11. Establish a permanent roundtable to make Ontario a leader within Canada on issues of violence against women.

✓ *Established Ontario's Permanent Roundtable on Violence Against Women.*

12. Enhance workplace laws to strengthen enforcement under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, including establishing a Code of Practice to help employers develop stronger sexual harassment policies.



Introduced the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015 which, if passed, would require specific new employer duties to protect workers from workplace harassment, including a duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are appropriately investigated, and enhance requirements regarding workplace harassment programs.

13. Launch a creative engagement fund that supports Ontario artists to develop projects that provoke conversation and dialogue on issues of consent, rape culture and gender inequality.



Launched a \$2.25 million Creative Engagement Fund to support artistic projects that draw awareness to issues of sexual violence and harassment.

The government began to implement the Action Plan immediately upon its release. This work has been guided by these 13 key commitments. Over the past year, many of these commitments have been met in full or in part; other programs and initiatives will be announced in the coming months.

Progress will be monitored to determine the impact of the initiatives on stopping sexual violence and harassment, and on supporting survivors.



FROM THEN TO NOW:
PROGRESS MADE

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Raising public awareness is necessary for immediate and long-term change. People need to understand what constitutes sexual violence and harassment, and that we all have a role to play in stopping sexual violence and harassment from happening. Over the past year, our public education and awareness campaigns have reached out in many ways, to many people, and are having a measureable effect.

LAUNCHED A HIGH-PROFILE, PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

When we released the Action Plan, we also launched a multi-media public education campaign. *#WhoWillYouHelp* is designed to raise awareness about sexual violence and harassment, challenge existing attitudes, promote immediate change in rape culture behaviour, and encourage longer-term generational change.

The first phase of the campaign included powerful ads to educate the public on its role and to empower bystanders to act when they see sexual violence and harassment in any form. The ads featured scenarios that drove

home the point that anyone could be a victim of sexual violence. They were also translated into multiple languages. The *#WhoWillYouHelp* video was instantly popular, receiving over seven million views within ten days of release, and sparking discussion about sexual violence in Ontario and around the globe:

- The *#WhoWillYouHelp* video was viewed over seven million times in the first 10 days.
- The *#WhoWillYouHelp* video generated more than 85 million views worldwide.
- ONgov Facebook posts reached over 1.9 million, establishing a new benchmark for an Ontario government campaign.

Within six months, there were clear and measurable results. Two-thirds of Ontarians surveyed recalled seeing the *#WhoWillYouHelp* campaign. Research showed:

- 55 per cent *strongly* agreed they had an obligation to intervene when witnessing sexual harassment, **up from 37 per cent before the campaign launched.**

- 92 per cent agreed they had an obligation to intervene if they witnessed sexual violence, **up from 81 per cent.**

- 83 per cent agreed that if they witnessed sexual assault and did not intervene, they were making the decision to allow it to continue, **up from 77 per cent.**

The government is working with other jurisdictions in Canada and beyond who have expressed interest in adapting this campaign.



In public-opinion research, it is very rare to measure such a significant change in attitudes in such a short period of time. These results suggest that the Government of Ontario's campaign appears to be having a profound impact on the attitudes of Ontarians, and the belief that they have a role to play when witnessing acts of sexual harassment or violence.

— Sean Simpson, Vice President,
Ipsos Public Affairs



**ONE IN THREE ONTARIANS
(32 PER CENT)**

DO NOT ALWAYS BELIEVE
THAT FORWARDING NUDE
PHOTOS OF SOMEONE
THEY KNOW TO A THIRD
PARTY CONSTITUTES
SEXUAL VIOLENCE.

The second phase of the campaign began in November with a focus on "grey areas", or areas where Ontarians report not being sure whether or not certain behaviours constitute sexual violence and harassment. #ItsNeverOkay emphasizes that there are no "grey areas", no circumstances where sexual violence and harassment are ever okay. Research is currently underway to determine the results of this phase of the campaign.



**EXAMPLES OF
"GREY AREAS" INCLUDE:**

- 37 PER CENT OF ONTARIANS AGE 18 TO 29 BELIEVE THAT MEN DON'T USUALLY FORCE THEMSELVES ON WOMEN WITH INTENT, THEY "JUST GET CARRIED AWAY".
- ONE IN THREE ONTARIANS (32 PER CENT) DO NOT ALWAYS BELIEVE THAT FORWARDING NUDE PHOTOS OF SOMEONE THEY KNOW TO A THIRD PARTY CONSTITUTES SEXUAL VIOLENCE.
- ONE IN FOUR ONTARIANS (26 PER CENT) BELIEVE THAT SPREADING RUMOURS ABOUT SOMEONE'S SEXUALITY SOMETIMES CONSTITUTES HARASSMENT, AND SEVEN PER CENT THINK IT NEVER DOES.

LAUNCHED ONTARIO'S CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT FUND

Art shapes people's perspectives and opinions, and can be a catalyst for change on social issues. In recognition of this, our government established a \$2.25 million Creative Engagement Fund that partners Ontario artists with sexual violence experts to create works that raise awareness, spark conversation and imaginatively draw focus to issues of sexual violence and harassment, including consent, rape culture and gender inequality.

The Ontario Arts Council is administering this fund and has received the first intake of applications which include all forms of artistic expression, such as: performance, writing, music, photography, theatre, videos, online engagement, installation, painting, graffiti arts, murals, visual arts and Indigenous art. Successful applicants will be announced this spring.



We were thrilled by the response to the Creative Engagement Fund call for proposals. It's inspiring to see how professional artists from a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds have come together with experts in sexual violence and harassment prevention to initiate projects of high artistic quality. They will build on the work already being done in Ontario communities to raise awareness and change attitudes on this issue. These collaborations, which deal with prevention, education and healing and include individual and collective experiences, will have universal resonance.

— Rita Davies, Chair,
Ontario Arts Council



RAISED AWARENESS AMONG STUDENTS

In the spring of 2015, the government invited the education sectors to implement province-wide sexual violence prevention campaigns to seed generational change in schools and to end rape culture on campuses.

Over 100 resources previously developed through the *Draw-the-Line* and *It Starts with Him/It Stays With Him* public awareness campaigns were utilized. These materials depict social situations and issues encountered by young people, including rape myths, the meaning of consent for sexual activity, coercion over the internet, sexual exploitation, alcohol facilitated sexual assault and human trafficking.



The resources, some of which have been translated in up to 14 languages and three Indigenous dialects, include lesson plans for educators linked to the Ontario curriculum, posters, postcards, videos and other items for social media. They were developed based on best practices and aim to:

- Change the attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate sexual violence;
- Engage both female and male identified populations in a positive, non-blaming manner;
- Teach about consent and healthy relationships; and
- Support the updated Health and Physical Education curriculum.

\$2.2 million over three years was invested in this initiative, which included ensuring students on campuses had information about preventing sexual violence and harassment during their first week of classes, during orientation week and throughout the year.



THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO SUPPORT PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS TO ENSURE STUDENTS HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT, AND LEARN ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS, ONLINE SAFETY, AND THE MEANING OF CONSENT.



FROM THEN TO NOW:
PROGRESS MADE

MORE TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS

When a survivor of sexual violence or harassment reaches out for help, service providers need to be able to respond with up-to-date knowledge and resources, and understanding. Over the past year, the government has supported training for professionals across diverse sectors to enable the best and most appropriate response.

HOSTED A PROVINCIAL SUMMIT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

More than 700 community leaders, activists and front-line workers attended this two-day bilingual provincial summit, the first of its kind in Canada, held in November 2015 in Toronto. Plenary sessions were made available via webcast extending its educational reach even further, and select excerpts of the conference will be made available for public viewing online in the spring. The government, through the Ontario Women's Directorate, organized local, national and international speakers, plenary and breakout sessions to discuss the latest research, best practices and innovations and the most effective tools in preventing and responding to sexual violence and harassment.

The summit was an important learning and networking opportunity for people and organizations across Ontario who work every day to end sexual violence and harassment, and to support survivors.



FOLLOWING THE SUMMIT, A SURVEY OF DELEGATES FOUND:

- 90 PER CENT AGREED THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHALLENGES FACED IN RESPONDING TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES HAD IMPROVED;
- 90 PER CENT AGREED THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF PRACTICES TO PREVENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND TO PROMOTE SERVICES TO SURVIVORS HAD IMPROVED; AND
- 72 PER CENT, ACROSS ALL CONCURRENT SESSIONS, AGREED THE SESSIONS WERE RELEVANT TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL NEEDS.



TRAINING FOR FRONT-LINE WORKERS

THE GOVERNMENT IS INVESTING OVER \$1.7 MILLION IN TRAINING FOR FRONT-LINE WORKERS WHO HELP TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. THIS INCLUDES TRAINING WORKERS IN THE HEALTH, EDUCATION, JUSTICE, COMMUNITY AND HOSPITALITY SECTORS WHO ARE IN A POSITION TO INTERVENE IF THEY WITNESS OR BECOME AWARE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE OR PEOPLE AT RISK.

CREATED A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Ontario's Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, through the Ontario Police College, delivered the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Community of Practice Conference, held February 22 to 24, 2016 in Richmond Hill.

The conference brought together a range of partners who regularly interact with victims of sexual violence, including police, crown attorneys, representatives of victim-witness assistance programs, sexual assault nurse examiners and community agencies. It gave those who investigate, support and prosecute sexual offenses an opportunity to share best practices.

Delegates heard from leading experts, learned of best practices and gained in-depth knowledge of emerging trends and issues of collective interest, to help improve results for survivors. The conference, to be held annually, will support the ongoing evolution of police training related to understanding victimization and responding to survivors of sexual violence in a compassionate and appropriate manner.

FROM THEN TO NOW:
PROGRESS MADE

MORE CHOICES AND BETTER OUTCOMES FOR SURVIVORS THROUGH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Sexual assault survivors often report that going through the justice system as a complainant can be as traumatic as the sexual assault itself. Over the past year, the government has worked with justice sector partners to develop programs and initiatives to make Ontario's justice system more responsive to survivors, and to encourage more survivors to report sexual assaults.



FUNDED RESEARCH INTO POLICE RESPONSE

Survivors of sexual assault need to feel safe when coming forward to police, and police want to be sure they're responding appropriately to survivors and effectively investigating cases.

In February 2016 the government announced that approximately \$375,000 would be provided to academic researchers to explore:

- how police respond to various forms of sexual violence perpetrated online and in the community;
- how the Ontario Provincial Police respond to reports of sexual assault involving survivors with developmental disabilities;
- current police training and investigative practices; and
- the collaboration between post-secondary institutions and police regarding reports of sexual assault on campus; e.g how colleges and universities currently respond to reports of sexual violence, and how they can improve reporting mechanisms for victims on campus and provide better supports.

The results will be used to inform future policies and programs aimed at improving police response.



THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH POLICE SERVICES ON PROVIDING CONSISTENT AND STANDARDIZED TRAINING ON RAPE SHIELD PROVISIONS, INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES AND ALL ASPECTS OF THE LAW ON SEXUAL ASSAULT PROSECUTIONS.



FREE LEGAL ADVICE FOR SURVIVORS

The government is finalizing a pilot program to give victims of sexual assault access to free legal advice. This service will be provided in three locations in Ontario this spring. Next steps include inviting lawyers to apply to participate in the program as part of a roster of independent legal advisors.



IT'S CRUCIAL THAT CHARGES FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES ARE HANDLED AS FAIRLY, EFFECTIVELY AND CONSISTENTLY AS POSSIBLE. THE GOVERNMENT CREATED A SEXUAL VIOLENCE ADVISORY GROUP COMPOSED OF SENIOR CROWN ATTORNEYS WHO ARE EXPERTS IN THE PROSECUTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE OFFENCES. TOGETHER, THEY ARE DEVELOPING A SEXUAL VIOLENCE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM THAT WILL GIVE CROWNS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES FOR DEALING WITH ALL ASPECTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE CASES. THE ADVISORY GROUP WILL CREATE REGIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CROWN ATTORNEYS, POLICE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND HELP ENSURE SURVIVORS ARE SUPPORTED THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROCESS.





FROM THEN TO NOW:
PROGRESS MADE


SEEDING GENERATIONAL CHANGE

The deep-rooted attitudes that cause sexual violence and harassment are learned behaviours. Educating students from an early age in concepts such as respect, consent and diversity can help inspire a generational change that will make a long-term difference.

UPDATED GRADES 1-12 HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

In February 2015, the government released an updated Health and Physical Education curriculum for grades 1-8 and 9-12. The previous curriculum was over 15 years out of date, developed long before students had to navigate a fast-paced technological world, or deal with a constant flow of information and connection through social networking websites and applications like Facebook or Snapchat.

The new curriculum is relevant to today's students. It was designed in extensive consultation with parents, students, teachers, researchers, educational institutions and public health groups. Input from police, Children's Aid Societies and others was also included. Additional consultation and research confirmed that comprehensive sexual health education helps



to protect students from harm. All of Ontario's publicly-funded schools began to implement the new curriculum this past September.

The revised curriculum provides strengthened opportunities for students to learn about themselves and their relationships with others, as well as concepts such as mental health, healthy relationships, consent and respecting diversity.

To help students protect their own health and safety, and the health and safety of others, they learn — in age-appropriate ways — about gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, online safety, including the risks of sexting, and both caring and exploitive behaviour.

To support learning at home, the government also developed an extensive series of parent resources.



FROM THEN TO NOW:
PROGRESS MADE

SAFER WORKPLACES, SAFER CAMPUSES, SAFER COMMUNITIES


All Ontarians deserve to be free of sexual violence and harassment in their workplaces, campuses, homes and communities. In the past year, the government has taken important steps towards ensuring a safer and more respectful society.

INTRODUCED LEGISLATION: *THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT, 2015*

The government introduced the *Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act* last October, following extensive consultation. If passed, this legislation would amend six other Acts to provide the strength of the law where needed to increase safety and achieve results. It would mean:

SAFER CAMPUSES:

Stand-alone sexual violence policies would be required by all publicly-assisted colleges, universities and private career colleges in Ontario, with the policies reviewed every three years with student involvement.



SAFER WORKPLACES:

Strengthened requirements would be put in place for workplace harassment programs. New employer duties would include appropriate investigation of incidents and complaints of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment.

BETTER SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS:

The limitation period for civil proceedings based on sexual assault and, in certain cases, sexual misconduct or assault would be removed. The limitation period for compensation applications to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board by survivors of sexual and domestic violence would be removed. Individuals who experience sexual and domestic violence would be allowed to end their tenancy agreements with shorter notice to more easily flee the abuse.



FROM THEN TO NOW:
PROGRESS MADE

MORE HELP AND BETTER SUPPORTS FOR SURVIVORS IN THE COMMUNITY

Survivors of sexual violence and harassment require aid and support in many ways — from medical, to counselling, to help when fleeing abusive situations, to language interpretation. The government works closely with community partners to ensure survivors get the help they need, when and where they need it. Over the past year, we have improved community services and supports for survivors.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TREATMENT CENTRES

Ontario has a network of 35 *hospital-based* sexual and domestic violence treatment operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to meet the needs of patients arriving at any time. These services include: emergency medical and nursing care, crisis intervention, collection of forensic evidence, medical follow-up and counselling and referral to community resources.

In August 2015, the government announced that the treatment centres would receive an additional \$1.1 million annually for three years

to help survivors heal. Funds are currently being allocated as follows: \$900,000 each year to enhance existing specialized counselling services across the province and \$200,000 each year to enable community outreach across the province. Results will be monitored to be sure these new investments make a difference in the lives of those affected by sexual violence.



PROTECTING THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF PATIENTS

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE HAS ESTABLISHED A MINISTER'S TASK FORCE ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF PATIENTS WHICH IS FINALIZING ITS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN ONTARIO'S *REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACT*, 1991, AND TO REINFORCE THE PROVINCE'S ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY ON SEXUAL ABUSE OF PATIENTS.



STABILIZED AND INCREASED SUPPORT FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTERS



Ontario's 42 *community-based* sexual assault centres provide survivors of sexual violence with crucial services that include crisis help-lines, peer support, counselling and referrals. In September 2015, the government announced an increase in base funding of \$1.75 million annually, providing more stability and certainty for the centres and enhancing support for survivors. Ontario's 42 sexual assault centres now receive \$14.8 million in annual funding.



! RURAL, REMOTE AND NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) AGENCIES AND SHELTERS IN RURAL, REMOTE AND NORTHERN COMMUNITIES FACE UNIQUE CHALLENGES IN DELIVERING SERVICES. IN JANUARY, AT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE ROUNDTABLE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, OUR GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED A NEW \$1 MILLION, TWO-YEAR RURAL REALITIES FUND AVAILABLE TO ELIGIBLE VAW AGENCIES AND SHELTERS TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN IN THESE COMMUNITIES.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO WORKING WITH VAW AGENCIES TO CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A NEW FRAMEWORK THAT WILL HELP AGENCIES DEVELOP COORDINATED PLANS TO RESPOND TO TRAGEDIES OR CRISES INVOLVING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.






HELP IN OVER 70 LANGUAGES

THE GOVERNMENT RENEWED ITS COMMITMENT TO ONTARIO'S LANGUAGE INTERPRETER SERVICES PROGRAM, AND WILL BE INVESTING \$9.3 MILLION OVER THREE YEARS (2015-18) IN INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

IN ONTARIO, MORE THAN 7,000 SURVIVORS ANNUALLY REQUIRE INTERPRETER SERVICES, WHICH ARE AVAILABLE IN MORE THAN 70 LANGUAGES, 24 HOURS A DAY, 365 DAYS A YEAR. SURVIVORS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH OR FRENCH-LANGUAGE SKILLS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING, USE THESE SERVICES TO NAVIGATE ONTARIO'S SOCIAL, HEALTHCARE AND LEGAL SYSTEMS, SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRES AND THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT PROGRAM.



LAST SUMMER, THE GOVERNMENT HELD A ROUNDTABLE IN COLLABORATION WITH ACTION ONTARIENNE CONTRE LA VIOLENCE FAITE AUX FEMMES TO DISCUSS THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING ONTARIO'S RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE PROVINCE'S DIVERSE FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES. THIS WILL HELP TO INFORM IMPLEMENTATION OF INITIATIVES UNDER THE ACTION PLAN.



! OUR GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING QUALITY FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES TO FRANCOPHONE STAKEHOLDERS AND CLIENTS ACROSS ONTARIO. WE CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY THE OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES ACT TO ENSURE THE INTEGRATION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES INTO ALL OF THE ACTION PLAN'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES.

LAUNCHED THE INNOVATION FUND

Ontario's new \$3 million Innovation Fund has been established to set up and test new ways to strengthen community supports for survivors of sexual violence and harassment.

The fund will help build partnerships across sectors to deliver fast, efficient and seamless supports — so survivors can better get the help they need, when and where they need it. Projects might, for example, help bridge gaps in available services in remote or rural communities or in diverse communities disproportionately affected by sexual violence. Projects that demonstrate improved outcomes for survivors may receive longer-term government funding. Successful applicants will be announced this spring.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Over the past year, the government has taken decisive action to end sexual violence and harassment in Ontario, putting the right components in place to deliver results across diverse communities and to inspire broader change. This work is ongoing, and we will continue to monitor, measure and report on results.

ESTABLISHED ONTARIO'S PERMANENT ROUNDTABLE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The government has established a permanent roundtable on violence against women — the first of its kind in Ontario. It is composed of representatives from 22 organizations with expertise in preventing and responding to gender-based violence and experts who can speak about gendered violence affecting specific populations. The roundtable includes experts on issues affecting specific populations across Ontario, including Indigenous, Francophone, LGBTQ, newcomers, people with disabilities, youth and older women as well as boys and

men. It also has experts who can speak to violence and harassment in the workplace and on university and college campuses.

The roundtable held its inaugural meeting in March 2015 and continues to meet regularly. It advises the government on ongoing and emerging matters related to gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment. Issues discussed to date include responding to sexual violence on college and university campuses, legislative initiatives under the Action Plan, addressing violence against women in rural, northern and remote communities and human trafficking. The government is grateful for the members' dedication and hard work, and values their past and ongoing contributions.



The Roundtable on Violence Against Women has actively provided critical analysis and advice on key initiatives under the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan. In addition we have strategically advised on key opportunities and emerging issues that will make a difference for women in Ontario. The Roundtable membership brings considerable expertise and commitment to addressing violence against women from an intersectional approach. It has been exciting to contribute to the significant work with the province that has been undertaken to date.

— Farrah Khan & Sly Castaldi,
Co-Chairs, Ontario Roundtable
on Violence Against Women

ACTED TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Working with its Indigenous partners, the government took a leadership role in ending violence against Indigenous women in Ontario. Together with the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women, the government released *Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy To End Violence Against Indigenous Women* which was shared with other provinces at the second National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, held in Manitoba in February 2016. While the government supports and will actively participate in national initiatives, the time for leadership and action is now.

This three-year strategy, with \$100 million in new funding, charts a path for Ontario and Indigenous communities to work together to

end the cycle of violence and ensure future generations of Indigenous women can live the way they deserve: with safety and respect. *Walking Together* aims to tackle the root causes and underlying factors of violence, and will also provide support for children, youth, men and communities. The government is committed to working with Indigenous partners to develop culturally appropriate research and data to better inform future policy and program development. The government will also host the fifth National Aboriginal Women's Summit this fall.



Walking Together speaks to the strength of Indigenous women as they work to build their communities up, and we are honoured to support them on this journey.

— Kathleen Wynne,
Premier of Ontario

Ontario applauds the federal government's recent decision to launch a long overdue national public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. The high rate of violence against Indigenous women is deeply alarming and unacceptable. The inquiry will shine a light on the issue, enabling us all to listen and learn and collectively take strong action to end the violence.

The government is also taking steps to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action regarding education and training, including introducing mandatory Indigenous cultural competency and anti-racism training for every employee in the Ontario Public Service (OPS) and implementing mandatory learning expectations in Ontario's public education system curriculum.



FIFTEEN PER CENT OF FUNDING UNDER THE NEW INNOVATIONS FUND, THE CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT FUND, AND FOR TRAINING OF FRONT-LINE WORKERS WILL BE ALLOCATED TO INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

ANNOUNCED THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HUMAN TRAFFICKING STRATEGY

The government is currently developing a strategy to end human trafficking in Ontario. The comprehensive plan will be survivor-centred and responsive to survivor needs. A crucial component will involve coordination of information between justice partners, community organizations and government. Ontario has begun engaging front-line experts in the development of the strategy. On February 17, 2016 Ontario's Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Ontario Women's Directorate met with law enforcement, violence against women, Indigenous and anti-human trafficking community leaders to seek input on key focus areas of action for the strategy. This strategy will be released in June 2016.

THE YEAR AHEAD:

CONTINUING ON...

With the Action Plan as a guide, the government has made important progress in stopping sexual violence and harassment in Ontario. But there is still a long way to go. It is clear that sexual violence and harassment — like domestic violence, human trafficking for sexual exploitation and the gender wage gap — are connected to gender inequality. Promoting equality and respect, changing the attitudes and behaviours that allow misogyny to exist, challenging these attitudes when we see them — will remain at the core of all ongoing work.

In year two of the Action Plan, the government will continue to build on progress made and work to fulfill the Plan's commitments. This spring, it will announce successful applicants to the Innovation Fund and the Creative Engagement Fund, funding for further training of professionals, and launch the pilot program to provide free legal advice for survivors of sexual assault. It will hold regional education and training conferences for Crown attorneys, police, sexual assault nurses, probation and

parole officers, and victim-witness assistance program staff throughout the province. It will implement additional programs and initiatives, and work with focus and determination, collaboratively with its many partners, to end sexual violence and harassment.

All Ontarians must do their part. To truly make the difference that needs to be made, for the sake of our sisters and brothers, friends and colleagues, for people in communities across this province, and for future generations — we must all stand together against sexual violence and harassment whenever we see it, wherever it occurs. It's never okay.



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