

# The Influence of Social Media on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: Student Perspectives

## Background

The goal was to gather information from Trent students about the opinions & perceptions about sexual & gender-based violence (GBV) that have been formed from social media.

### Sexual & Gender-based violence in Canada:

- 11 million people experience GBV at least once a year since age 15 (Gov of Canada, 2024).

### Violence on Post-Secondary Campuses (Cotter & Savage, 2019):

- 71% of students witness/experience unwanted sexualized behaviour
- 1/10 female post-secondary students experienced a sexual assault in the previous year

### Legislation

- Bills 26, 131/16, 132

## Methodology

### Survey

- 7 sections
- Social Media Usage
- Sexual & Gender-Based Norms & Stereotypes
- Perspectives on Influence of Social Media
- 155 respondents

### Focus Groups

- 4 open-ended prompts
- 4 total participants

### Analysis

- Qualtrics data analysis
- JASP analysis
- Thematic analysis

## Key Findings

### Survey

- Average First Social Media Use: 13-14
- Average Social Media Usage: 3-4 hours daily
- Bypassed Age Restrictions: Yes
- On Average disagreed with outdated notions of sexual & gender-based violence

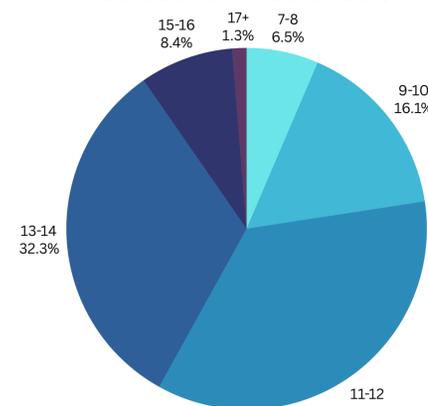
### Focus Group

- Social media has a major effect on life
- Echo-chamber effects on social media
- “You are what you search”
- Open to explore new avenues of information
- Increase awareness on campuses

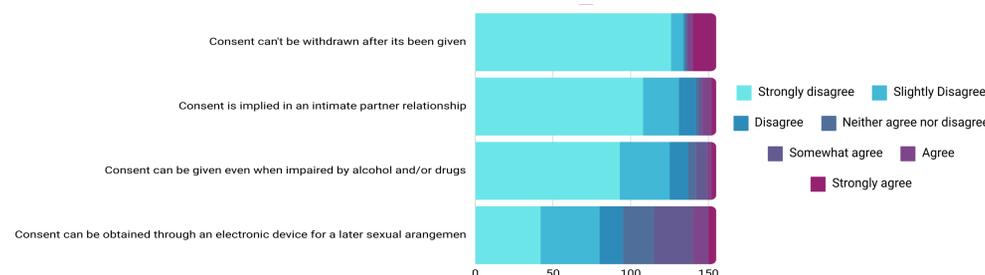
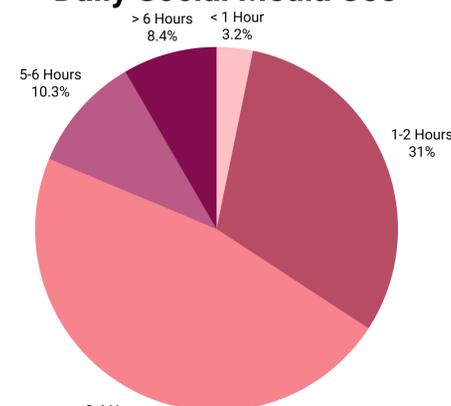
## Research Questions

- 1) How, where and at what ages do youth and young people find information about sexual & gender-based violence, consent & consent culture?
- 2) How does social media and other pop culture forms influence perceptions, feelings and social norms of youth and young people surrounding the topics of sexual & gender-based violence?
- 3) How does social media and other pop culture forms influence perceptions, feelings and social norms of youth and young people and how does that influence life and experiences on campus and within the post-secondary education lifestyle?

First Social Media Use



Daily Social Media Use



## Future Directions

### Adapting policy to account for social media

- Technology-facilitated sexual violence

### Update Education/Training Plans

- Tiered approaches to education plans
- Required coursework

### Community Centred Approaches

- Increasing student voices in decisions about programs

### Increased Visibility

- Social media for outreach, university-wide platform for support/events/clubs

### Increased Research

- Increasing research for non-heteronormative and neurodivergent individuals

**Researcher:** Katherine McCowan

**Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Mira Kapetanovic

**Agency Host:** Kristen Haines

**TCRC Coordinator:** Sarah Khaki

**Department:** Forensic Science

**Course Code:** FRSC 4890Y

**Host Agency:** Consent at Trent

**Year:** Fall/Winter 2024-2025



### References

- Cotter, A., & Savage, L. (2019). Gender-based violence and unwanted sexual behaviour in Canada, 2018: Initial findings from the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces. *Juristat: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics*, 1-49. <http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/gender-based-violence-unwanted-sexual-behaviour/docview/2330014776/se-2>
- Government of Canada. (2024, December 4). *Women and Gender Equality Canada*. Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/facts-stats.html>
- Bill 26, An Act to amend various Acts in respect of post-secondary education, 2022, 1st Session 43 Legislature, Ontario, 2022.
- Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters, 2016, 1st session, 41st Legislature, Ontario, 2016
- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act: Sexual Violence at Colleges and Universities. (2022). Bill 131/16. Retrieved from Ontario e-laws website: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation>