

Violence Free BC: Sexual Assault: Strengthening Responses on Post-Secondary Campuses

The Men's Circle @ UVic
Funding Report - June 27, 2017

Territory Acknowledgement

The Anti-Violence Project would like to acknowledge the communities and nations in whose territories we work, live, and thrive upon: the Lkwungen (Songhees and Esquimalt) and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples. Both the Men's Circle meetings and the work that produced the following report took place on these lands.

We acknowledge this because we understand that part of the work that takes place at the Men's Circle, which seeks to address hegemonic notions of masculinity, gender-based and sexualized violence, and a lack of consent in dominant culture, is inherently connected to and rooted in Canada's ongoing history of occupying lands without consent, of disrespecting territorial boundaries, and infringing on Indigenous peoples bodies with violence and coercion.

This connection between the colonization of land and sexualized violence is not merely symbolic. Colonizers use rape as a tool of occupation and specifically target women and children to clear lands and violently disrupt the social continuity of Original communities. Colonial masculinities also continue to be forced upon Indigenous masculine folks through processes of colonization. Those whose experiences and/or identities do not neatly adhere to the myth of the gender binary are often policed through violence. Intersex, two spirit, genderfluid, genderqueer, agender, etc. experiences are continuously erased and invisibilized through processes of colonization.

The Men's Circle actively seeks to challenge and dismantle dominant constructions of masculinity that are connected and rooted to colonization. However, it also acknowledges that this work is part of an ongoing resistance to colonization and patriarchy that Indigenous people have been leading for centuries.

The Men's Circle

The Men's Circle at UVic began two years ago in response to an incident of gender-based violence on our campus community. The two young men involved in causing violence expressed a desire to unlearn the mentalities and beliefs that ultimately enabled their harmful actions. Realizing this desire, the Anti-Violence Project put out a call to action among men on campus

and in the community who had been involved in anti-violence work. The call asked these men to help coordinate a group that would bring more men into a collective movement addressing dominant, violent masculinities and take action to address rape culture on campus and in our greater community. The Anti-Violence Project collaboratively created the Men's Circle as an innovative and urgently needed prevention-focused response to sexual assault and gender-based violence.

The Men's Circle works to challenge and dismantle rape culture on our campus and move towards a culture of consent, community care, and safety. It also strives to undermine the idea that sexual assault is perpetrated by "monsters." Rather, we know that sexualized violence, including sexual assault, is perpetrated by regular people (often men) who have been raised in a culture that promotes violent masculinities, devalues women and trans people, and does not teach consent as a fundamental social value.

With this in mind, the Men's Circle provides a bi-weekly space for men and masculine-identified folks from diverse backgrounds to:

- learn about the systems and structures which support and uphold gender-based violence
- work on strategies for dismantling and challenging gender-based violence and oppression on campus and the community at large
- connect, share lived experiences, and work on themselves
- deepen their understanding of constructions of masculinity
- resist and mitigate the impact of dominant, violent masculinities
- develop skills and capacities toward promoting healthy masculinities

Practices of learning and unlearning in the Men's Circle are ways we can push back against rape culture, colonization, heteropatriarchy, and other forms of oppression.

Anti-Violence Project

The Anti-Violence Project (AVP) is the on-campus sexual assault center at the University of Victoria. Since it was established in 1998, it has been actively working towards shifting the culture on campus from one of entitlement and expectation, to one of care and informed consent. The work of addressing gender-based violence must always continue to change, deepen, and become more nuanced in its understanding in order to remain relevant and responsive to the realities of gender-based violence. It also requires recognition of the context, culture, and systems in which this violence is taking place. For example, a disproportionate amount of violence targets women and feminine identifying people, especially women of colour, Indigenous women, trans women/trans women of colour, and women with differing abilities.

Simultaneously, AVP comes to this work with the understanding that all of us have the capacity to cause harm, and we believe that no one is disposable. This understanding is critical to

informing our response strategies. It is essential to understand that certain groups and identities benefit from violence, and will resist new pathways that threaten to diminish the power they hold in our society. Yet still, we have to believe in people's willingness and capacity to unlearn harmful worldviews.

At AVP, we believe that we must model mechanisms of accountability, and that there is power in creating intentional communities of respect and care. It is AVP's understanding that it will not be more punitive forces or policies that will change our culture; rather, it will be our collective capacity to hold ourselves and each other accountable, a deepening of our knowledge of consent, and respecting boundaries that will create new pathways for a society where everyone's safety and dignities are held with respect. For this reason, we strive to provide anti-oppressive and sex-positive services, advocacy, and action on-campus and off in order to address and resist all forms of violence. We offer support services to people of all genders who have experienced gender-based violence themselves, are supporting someone who has, and to people who have caused harm and seek to change their actions. We also provide free safer sex supplies and resources and referrals to anyone who is looking for resources about gender-based violence. In addition, we offer workshops on consent and supporting survivors.

The relationship that exists between AVP and the men's circle is primarily one of accountability. Specifically, it is of utmost importance for the men's circle to remain accountable to members of the community in order to ensure the group continues to de-center masculinities, and does not become male-centric. AVP staff were able to offer knowledge and expertise from non-masculine/male perspectives and identities to those coordinating the men's circle during regular coordinator meetings, which also supported the incorporation of diverse lived-experiences into the circle and its discussions.

Activities and Outcomes

The following chart demonstrates how each Men's Circle activity contributed to our expected outcomes:

- Attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that perpetuate sexual assault are challenged and changed
- Practices for engaging men in addressing the root causes of sexual assault are documented and shared
- Raising awareness about the Men's Circle will move us further away from the 'monster' myth and make it more possible for people (men in particular) to identify and challenge their internalized beliefs and behaviours that contribute to sexualized violence by getting involved in these programs

The activities and their corresponding outcomes are demarcated into the following sections:

- Men's Circle Routine Activities
- Men's Circle Discussion Topics
- Externally Facilitated Workshops
- The Men's Circle Resource Creation

Men's Circle Routine Activities		
Activity	Immediate	Intermediate
Territory Acknowledgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledges that we are living and meeting on lands from which Original communities were violently displaced - Makes direct connections between colonialism and non-consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourages ongoing reflection about the connections between colonialism and violent, dominant masculinities - Offers a tool for resisting colonial legacies and toxic masculinities
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributes to a sense of community and offers each individual the opportunity to self-identify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourages self-identification and supporting others in their process across all relationships and communities
Group Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates boundaries that contribute to group safety, trust and cohesion - Clearly delegates group safety as every individual's responsibility - Encourages knowledge and idea sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiates thought about the well being, safety and comfort of communities rather than simply individuals - Encourages collective responsibility and accountability within communities
Men's Circle Discussions		
Activity	Immediate	Intermediate
Introduction to the Men's circle	<p>This session gave folks an opportunity to become familiar/re-familiarize themselves with the Circle and other members. We also introduced the notions of gender, masculinity, patriarchy, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial Group Agreement Brainstorm - Expectations for the group and each other - What you want to see happen - Unpacking Gender - Masculinities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin to build relationships with other men and masculine identifying folks - Develop new language and lens through which to analyze real world experiences
Lab Time	<p>Lab Time can incorporate multiple topics and ideas. Some that came up during various Lab Times included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how we flail in the face of being called out - how we perform patriarchal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generates self-reflexive skills - Encourages group brainstorming and knowledge sharing - Enables one to critically examine past actions and behaviours as well as imagine

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> roles - things we do that we have to (or have been asked to) deal with. - Vulnerability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This time is dedicated to discussing, with care and compassion, some of the more difficult/challenging interactions or situations we come across daily, while giving ourselves insights or invited help in dealing with them. 	new ways of being
Accountability	<p>Discussing Accountability through prompting questions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can gender privileged folks learn from our mistakes and do better? - How can we be accountable and support one another to do the same? - Ways of thinking about accountability and some embodied experiences of what it feels like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enables everyday acknowledgement of power and privilege and the ways they impact our daily living - Encourages those with privilege to use it to create change as a means of accountability
Emotional Labour	<p>Discussing Emotional Labour in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is it? - Who does it? - How do men/masc. folks take on this work with each other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visibilizes emotional labour as labour - Encourages men/masculine folk to recognize emotional labour when it occurs, and to take on more of it themselves
Externally Facilitated Workshops		
Activity	Immediate	Intermediate
Sex and Desire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What have we been told to desire? - What do we actually desire? - How does toxic masculinity affect our relationship(s) to sex? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows for self-reflection and critical thought about one's own desires and sexual interactions, and the ways they have been influenced by culture
Listening	<p>This workshop delves into what it means and feels like to listen. This includes practice and games to understand listening on a deeper level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotes active listening - Improves listening components and skills, and thus relationships
Consent (AVP)	This workshop is intended to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visibilizes consent as an

	<p>provide folks with the education, skills, and opportunity to understand and practice consent in a supportive and sex positive space. Through activities, and discussion, the workshop offers a chance for us to talk about all the safe and fun ways to build consent-based relationships with the people we care about.</p>	<p>everyday, ongoing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opens up opportunities to discuss consent with loved ones - Allows us to see the many ways non-consent is practiced daily and is inextricably linked to colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and gender-based violence today
<p>Bystander Intervention</p>	<p>This workshop is designed to support participants in exploring some of the ways that they can intervene when violence and oppression is being perpetuated in everyday life, in places where we live, work, and play, on and off campus. More specifically, we designed it with the following goals in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a supportive environment where participants feel able to take risks and make mistakes. - Use facilitation tools that invite participants to actively practice (rather than just discuss) various interventions in harm. - Hold space to unpack what has gone well (and not so well) in terms of different strategies of intervention. - Work from people’s experiences to generate collective insights and tools to support resisting oppression, interrupting violence, and mutual support - Encourage participants to come away with more curiosity, questions, and interest in bystander intervention. - Provide (very limited and brief) tools for supporting survivors of violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deepens understanding of why gender-based violence occurs and the systems and structures that uphold it - Creates awareness of daily acts that contribute to rape culture and thus gender-based violence - Offers different skills and ways of intervening in the face of violence, whether directly or indirectly - Encourages ways of being that push back against rape culture
<p>Supporting a Survivor</p>	<p>This workshop provides some</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates awareness of the myths

(AVP)	foundations for supporting survivors of sexualized violence. Throughout the workshop we discussed different approaches and tools that can be used when supporting someone. Some topics include: active listening, believing survivors, caring for yourself, and making referrals.	and facts surrounding sexualized violence - Provides skills to better support loved ones who have experienced violence, or to self-care when experiencing violence - Initiates some thinking regarding gender-based violence and the justice system
The Men's Circle Resource Creation		
Activity	Immediate	Intermediate
Interviews with Men's Circle Participants, Coordinators, and AVP staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create conversation and space for reflection among participants on their experience in the Men's Circle - Evaluate Men's Circle processes, discussions, and topics - Gain understanding of the impact experienced by participants and their perceived changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours - Collect knowledge on the creative processes, facilitation tools, ideas, intentions, and structures of the Men's Circle and its creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create possible additions, modifications, improvements for the Men's Circle moving forward by determining and filling gaps - Advocate for the continuation of and increased access to similar men's groups - Share information and knowledge gained with similar men's groups or those interested in creating a similar group through the resource creation
Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create an accessible document for other communities and campuses to pull from in the creation of their own similar men's groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the availability of projects engaging men and masculine identifying persons in challenging gender-based violence, supporting each other, and fostering healthy masculinities - Support individuals in addressing their own internalized behaviours that contribute to sexualized violence and recognize their own ability to contribute to communities of care - Develop inter-community relationships dedicated to anti-violent and anti-oppressive approaches to push back against gender-based violence and create communities of care

Reflections

Personal Reflections

Several members of the Circle and its coordinating team agreed to reflect on and speak to their experience at the Men's Circle over the past year. Their reflections highlighted various themes and topics covered at the Circle over the past year, and often revealed personal feelings, emotions, and experiences regarding some of these topics. We have included some themes and quotes from these reflections below:

“Attending the Men's Circle has helped me become more reflective and aware.” - Tom

Several members noted that attending the Men's Circle has enabled them to become more aware of how their own actions and behaviours, as well as the actions and behaviours of those around them, are both influenced by and reinforce systems of power like patriarchy, colonialism, homo and trans antagonism, etc. These different systems of power interact to elevate and privilege certain notions of masculinity that are often associated with negative and harmful actions and behaviours above others. Being able to notice and critically reflect on one's own actions and the actions of others provides an entry point for individuals to begin to challenge and dismantle systems of power that privilege some at the expense of other due to the identities they hold.

“I had never introduced my pronouns before the Men's Circle.” - Jonathan

Some of the personal reflections we heard pointed towards broad and general takeaways from the Men's Circle; others reflected on particular practices and actions that members were introduced to/invited to participate in while at the Circle. For example, one member explained that he had never really thought about his pronouns, let alone introduced them to others, before attending the Men's circle. The act of introducing one's pronouns is an important element of the Men's Circle and is done for several reasons. For one, introducing one's pronouns pushes back against transantagonistic structures, which produce behaviour that assumes all people identify as either men or women and, furthermore, that one's gender identity matches up with dominant society's normative expressions of masculinity or femininity. By introducing one's own pronouns, one is given the power to self-locate/determine how they identify as well as potentially realize that others may have different and diverse experiences and relationship with notions of gender, especially those individuals with cis privilege who may not have had opportunities to reflect on gender as a socially constructed concept.

“The rape culture pyramid definitely shed some light on some of the questions I had at that time about, for example, why catcalling comes under the fold of sexualized violence. I would never do it myself, of course, but it was useful to understand how sexualized violence of different forms were linked through that framework.” - Adam

One of the goals for the Circle is to challenge and dismantle attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that perpetuate sexual assault. This goal is approached in various ways at each circle with some addressing the goal more explicitly than others. For example, AVP's Consent workshop seeks to reveal how our everyday actions may be participating in and reinforcing the rape culture that we all live in. This is done by using tools like the rape culture triangle to reveal how different everyday actions, like catcalling, rape jokes, fat shaming, victim blaming etc., uphold rape culture by contributing to systems of power that enable individuals to feel entitled to the bodies of others. When a man engages in an activity like catcalling, they are demonstrating/vocalizing a sense of entitlement to comment on another person's appearance/body. Although they may not intend for this to be harmful, vocalizing their entitlement reinforces it while, simultaneously, encouraging other men and people occupying privileged identities to also feel entitled to other's bodies based on their identities. One of the members of the circle later reflected that he knew there was a connection between catcalling and sexualized violence before the consent workshop but was unable to clearly identify this connection.

“The energy and emotion it takes to build culture is not always appreciated.”

- Men's Circle participant

A common theme that came up for multiple members attending the Circle was the realization that shifting/creating a new culture based on care and respect is really difficult and time consuming. It takes constant and consistent effort to push back against systems of power that make the rape culture possible in our own lives, let alone to engage with others in ways that encourage them to challenge rape culture in their lives too. However, the Consent workshop brings up how consent, and other acts of care and vulnerability that are not always taught or considered the norm for masculine folks, is like a muscle. It may feel strange and awkward at first use but with practice and exercise will become a strong and powerful part of our lives. For this reason, the Men's circle tries to promote culture change and creation through conversation and dialogue, which tends to be more explicit and theory based, as well as through its actions and practices, which can often be more implicit and embodied.

“It feels inspiring and hopeful to be apart of a group where I can come to try and be more accountable for my mistakes and missteps, especially knowing that others are often working on similar things in their own lives.”- Men's Circle participant

At the Men's circle, conversations often refer to the idea of non-disposability, which suggests that all people hold value and that no one is disposable regardless of their past actions and behaviours. In other words, no one is inherently bad. From the perspective of non-disposability, it is our dangerous culture of domination, which is a product of colonial white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy that teaches people that it is okay to do things that harm others. However, no one is inherently good either. Everyone has the capacity to make mistakes and cause harm. When talking about harm that people have caused to others, the Men's Circle strives to both discuss and model different ways that we can hold ourselves and our communities accountable that do not solely resort to punitive measures that isolate and alienate those causing harm. One method of non-disposable accountability often included in

group agreements is referred to as “ouch/oops”. If something said or done in the group feels hurtful, those who feel harmed may name an “ouch,” explain what happened and how it was harmful. The “ouch” can happen at anytime and does not need to be brought up immediately following the event. Space is then offered to the group *as a collective* to discuss what happened, why it happened, and how they can be accountable as a collective. This “oops” part enables individuals to take accountability for their actions by learning how what they said or did was harmful, and offers a model for being accountable to a collective as well as *as a collective*. This collective dimension is important because oppressive behaviour is learnt through our social experiences with others and therefore must unlearn collectively as well if one hopes to challenge the dominant culture that we live in.

“I had never thought of how class and gender interconnect until we talked about emotional labour.” - Adam

Several Men’s Circle participants noted how little they had thought about what we called “emotional labour”, which the group came to understand as referring to the labour that goes into producing and reproducing our daily lives and the cultures we live in. For example, washing the dishes and making food, as well as supporting friends and family through tough times by helping with childcare or transportation all can be considered emotional labour. The term and the way we use it comes from feminist Marxist thinkers who distinguish between productive and reproductive labour. In colonial white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, productive labour, which refers to labour that is exerted to create commodities, is valued above reproductive/emotional labour and is also primarily accessible to men. This leaves reproductive/emotional labour up to women and feminine folks and, even though this work is crucial, it is often taken for granted socially and financially. In recognizing this, we can become more aware of how we take up emotional labour as well as who we tend to rely on to do this work for us in our lives. At the Men’s Circle on Emotional Labour, many realized how they tend to place the burden of emotional labour primarily on the women and feminine identifying folks in their lives. As a result of recognizing this gender disparity, much of the Circle’s conversation about emotional labour sought to think of ways in which the circle’s members could take up a fair share of emotional labour as well as encourage other men and masculine-identifying folks to do the same.

Group Reflections

Over the funding period, a process of collaborative reflection and decision-making between AVP and the Men’s Circle resulted in two modifications of the original activities planned for the group. This collaborative process of reflection also led to several insights regarding future Men’s Circles. In particular, these modifications and reflections occurred in relation to the evaluation process and the Men’s Circle community event.

Evaluation

Although the Men’s Circle did not maintain a formal evaluation during Circle meetings, evaluation occurred through the ongoing accountability meetings with AVP staff. These

meetings enabled AVP and the Men's Circle to review the approach and forward motion of the Men's Circle to ensure they remained in harmony with the Circle's original intentions. In particular, this entails maintaining the respectful and earnest centering of survivors in topic choice, discussion direction, and practical skill work. Additionally, evaluation was conducted through interviews with Men's Circle participants and coordinators, as well as AVP staff. Through these evaluation processes, two central lessons learned were determined regarding accountability and external relationship building, respectively.

- Accountability: Developing methods to remain accountable to oneself and in relationships is an important focus of the Men's Circle, as a project as well as in its coordination. Through the evaluation of the Men's Circle, it was revealed that as the Circle moves forward, it is necessary to create clear guidelines and processes surrounding its accountability to AVP. This may include collaboratively determining policy on what accountability means in this relationship, how accountability is maintained, as well as identifying a specific AVP staff member that the Men's Circle would directly report to when addressing accountability.
- External Relationship Building: Men's Circle participants expressed appreciation in how the Men's Circle enabled them to build strong relationships and support structures while within the Circle. Simultaneously, participants highlighted that creating circumstances in which these relationships could exist outside of Circle meetings would be beneficial and welcomed. This may include participants coordinating Circle events in other settings and involving other activities as well as other persons not involved in the Circle to broaden the reach of the community-building approach. One Men's Circle participant suggested the creation of a texting group that would create a "Real-Time Support Network." This would allow Men's Circle to contact each other for support and advice in daily-life situations. The intention is that the relationships developed within Men's Circle can grow into external friendships and support structures amongst participants.

Men's Circle Community Events

The purpose of the Men's Circle community event was to collaborate with AVP staff and volunteers, as well as campus and community partners, to foster dialogue and skill development on addressing gender-based violence. Through a number of discussions, the Men's Circle realized that they lacked the time and resources to authentically and thoughtfully coordinate such an event with the care it would deserve. Instead, the group determined that an important part of remaining accountable and building communities of care was showing solidarity through supporting pre-existing and ongoing projects and events. This was an opportunity for a group of men to acknowledge the work that women, persons of colour, queer, trans and indigenous folks have already been doing. As a result, the following community events were supported by the Men's Circle. These events were supported in a number of different ways including assistance with space rental, facilitation, transportation, etc. The form of support given was determined through discussion with and direction from event organizers regarding what they felt would be helpful.

Community Events Supported by the Men's Circle

Sexualized Violence Awareness Week

During September 2016, AVP in partnership with the University of Victoria and the UVSS (student society), hosted several events to engage students in conversations about consent and sexualized violence. The Men's Circle supported the keynote presentation by Farrah Khan who is a nationally recognized counsellor, educator and artist with over 16 years of experience addressing gender-based violence. Farrah is the Sexual Violence Support and Education Coordinator at Ryerson University, co-chair of the Ontario Roundtable on Violence Against Women and has been appointed to the Government of Canada's Federal Strategy Against Gender-based Violence Advisory Council. Farrah's presentation at UVic, which was entitled "We Begin By Listening," was well attended and encouraged students, faculty and community members to think about how we can come together as a community to work towards preventing sexualized violence on campus and beyond.

Volunteer Gathering in December

In the fall of 2016, AVP trained 15 new volunteers to take on facilitating workshops, supporting survivors, writing blog posts and other roles that allow AVP to run. The Men's Circle supported AVP's Volunteer Gathering in December that celebrated the hard work done by these dedicated volunteers. This event not only provided a space to acknowledge the important roles of AVP volunteers but also to build community within the organization. Support from the Men's Circle acts an expression of gratitude, as its existence and structure are reliant upon AVP. In working to deconstruct and challenge rape culture and gender-based violence, this support manifests and reinforces a culture of care and community through the sharing of food and appreciation of others.

Leanne Simpson Event

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1823343991250199/>

While the Men's Circle is an important space for masculine-identifying folks to learn, resist, care within, and carry lessons outside of, it is necessary to support additional and pre-existing spaces of cooperative care, resistance, and expression held by other identities. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson joined AVP in January 2017 for an event of intimate conversation in an intentional and safe space designated for Indigenous women, 2spirit folks, and genderqueer/gender non-conforming Indigenous folks. Leanne is a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer and artist who resists ongoing colonial oppression and extraction of Indigenous land, persons, and ideas through story, song, and motion that re-centers these lands, persons, and ideas. The event was infused with these approaches to decolonization and Indigenous resurgence. The spirit and nature of this event, its participants, and both Leanne's and the Men's Circle's support each challenge heteropatriarchal norms and oppressive structures reinforced through ongoing colonization and cooperatively encourage community and inter-community care.

Unlearning White Supremacy

The Unlearning White Supremacy discussion group grew out of AVP's annual volunteer training, which included conversations about white supremacy. Volunteers expressed a desire to

continue talking about white supremacy in the community, so they organized and hosted four discussion groups between January and March 2017 that were each attended by up to 60 people. The Men's circle supported this event by supplying facilitators as well as food. By supporting this group, the Men's Circle takes part in challenging aspects of white supremacy culture, which is interconnected with gender-based violence, and therefore encourages communicative spaces of responsibility, accountability, and (un/re-)learning as well as fosters communities of trust and care.

“Dear Muslim Students” Posters

In response to the shooting on January 29, 2017 at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City, AVP and the Men's Circle supported the creation and circulation of posters around the UVic campus dedicated to Muslim students. The posters emphasize the respect, inclusivity, and safety that should be accessible to all students on campus and that beliefs and spaces holding these ideas still exist in moments that they may seem the most hidden and unavailable. The Men's Circle support of this project devalues and pushes back against acts of violence and cultures of hatred. To replace these, the Men's Circle's contribution supports the ongoing creation of communities of care through the prioritization of anti-racist and anti-imperial perspectives in a silent but pervasive act of solidarity through the dispersal of these messages.

AVP Volunteer Facilitation Training

Facilitation training is one method for AVP and its volunteers to continually and collaboratively cultivate, learn, and unlearn in their workshop creation, facilitation, and communication with workshop participants and co-facilitators. Over two weekends in 2017, AVP staff and volunteers attended an intensive training with Mia Amir, a community-embedded writer, interdisciplinary performer, curator, and educator. For nearly two decades Mia has used creative practice in grassroots efforts towards environmental and social justice. One of core services that AVP provides is workshops, and so this training was one way to support AVP initiatives by supporting the training of staff and volunteers. AVP regularly facilitates 1 - 2 workshops a semester for the Men's Circle, therefore the Men Circle's support for the training reinforces relationships of reciprocity between AVP, the Men's Circle, and within communities as a whole. The support also recognizes the communal work that is necessary between AVP, the Men's Circle, participants, and related projects to navigate avenues of change and create safe spaces for thoughtful discussion as the training develops facilitators capacity to promote these.

The Body Takes Me Home: Interdisciplinary Creative Writing Workshop for Survivors of Violence

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1250046891746291/>

This writing workshop held in April 2017 was provided through collaboration between The Story We Be and AVP. The Body Takes Me Home which was open to the community, led participants through an exploration of the creative responses and strategies that bodies, minds, and spirits generate to protect, restore, and reimagine the self in the face of all the stories and experiences that our bodies hold including experiences of violence. Through the Men's Circle's contribution to this workshop, we practice accountability, respect and recognition, and

supported a space for survivors to experience and share healing, community, and empowerment both within and external to the self.

Acknowledgements

In closing we would like to acknowledge the countless hours that go into making the Men's Circle happen both by the dedicated volunteers that coordinate the circles and by the staff at AVP who believe in the importance of this work. We would also like to thank the folks who shared their experiences as members of the Circle and made this report possible.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to the funds received from the Civil Forfeiture Office in partnership with the Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division, Ministry of Justice. It is clear that without this funding we would have been difficult to do the depth and breadth of work that was possible in the last year. We look forward to opportunities in the future to be considered for other funds.

Evaluation Team

The following people were charged with the evaluation of this project.

Kanika

Kanika is a biracial woman who has been living, uninvited, on Lekwungen and WSANEC territory all her life. Growing up as a mixed race, able-bodied lesbian has allowed Kanika to learn about the intersections of power and privilege through her lived experiences, and fueled her passion for social justice. Her desire to participate in creating cultures of consent and community care led her to begin volunteering with AVP, and continues to inspire her to find new ways of challenging herself and those around her to be and do better. After graduating with a BA in Psychology, Kanika intends to complete her Masters and become an Occupational Therapist.

Yasmine

Yasmine has lived as an uninvited settler on Kanien'kehá:ka and Siksika territories, before moving to territory of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples to study Political Science at the University of Victoria. She is a cisgender able-bodied woman. As a "mixed race," first-generation North American from Arab and European heritage, she continues to learn to acknowledge her white privilege, self-locate, and balance her identity within and without these various cultural contexts. Yasmine began volunteering with the AVP in the fall of 2016 in the hopes of learning about and contributing to communities and relationships of care and support.

Brydon

Brydon is a cisgender straight white settler man with able-bodied privilege. Born and raised on Nakoda territory, Brydon moved to Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ territory to attend university at

Uvic in September 2011. While on the University of Victoria Student Society's Board of Directors, Brydon became involved with Uvic's Let's Get Consensual Campaign, which eventually led him to volunteer with AVP. He has also participated in the Men's Circle for the past three years and has taken on a coordinator role with the group since December 2016. Brydon plans to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Diploma in Social Justices studies in June 2017 before beginning Graduate school in September 2017.

Paloma

Born and raised on the territory of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples, Paloma is a cisgender settler woman. As a white presenting person of "mixed-race", Paloma often struggles to locate herself while both acknowledging her Colombian roots and her own white privilege, and is consistently deepening her learning about this. Paloma began working on sexualized violence prevention at age 15 as a member of Project Respect's Youth Social Action Team and Hollaback! Victoria, BC. She continues to expand her understanding of systems of oppression as a UVic Gender Studies and Social Justice Studies student and in her position at as the Volunteer Organizer at AVP.