

ANNUAL REPORT

May 1, 2025-April 30, 2026

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office

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ABOUT THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE OFFICE

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) is the University of Waterloo's central resource for support, education, and prevention related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

SGBV includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, stalking, coercion, technology-facilitated violence, and other forms of harm connected to sex, gender, sexuality, power, or control.

SVPRO provides confidential, trauma-informed support to students, staff, and faculty who have been impacted by SGBV. This includes individuals who have experienced harm, witnessed harm, received a disclosure, or are seeking support because they have been accused of, or self-identify as, having caused harm.

In addition to direct support, SVPRO offers prevention-focused education, awareness initiatives, consultation, policy-related support, and campus-wide collaboration. Through this work, SVPRO strengthens the University's capacity to prevent and respond to SGBV in ways that are survivor-centered, trauma-informed, intersectional, anti-oppressive, collaborative, and evidence-informed.

Meaningful collaborations are a key component to SVPRO's work, including both campus and community partners. These partnerships help build shared responsibility for creating a safer and more respectful campus community and support normalizing conversations around SGBV.

Territorial Acknowledgement

The University of Waterloo acknowledges that much of its work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

The University's active work toward reconciliation takes place across its campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is centralized within the Office of Indigenous Relations. Sexual violence has been, and continues to be, used as a tool of colonialism. This has contributed to disproportionate harms experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit peoples, as highlighted by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



AT A GLANCE: SVPRO'S CAMPUS REACH

During the 2025–26 reporting period, SVPRO continued to expand its support, education, consultation, and prevention work across the University of Waterloo.

- **354 direct service requests,** representing a 28% increase from the previous reporting year.
- **202 consultations,** a 135% increase from 2024–25.
- **10 formal complaints** were filed under Policy 42 - Prevention of and Responding to Sexual Violence.
- **80 accommodation and support requests,** including counselling referrals, academic accommodations, complaint support, and referrals to external resources.
- **171 education and prevention offerings** delivered across campus.
- **11,204 participants** reached through workshops, trainings, presentations, guest lectures, groups, booths, and awareness initiatives.
- **1,270 participants** completed the online Sexual Violence Foundations course.
- **12,474 total programming interactions** across education, prevention, and online learning activities.

354

Direct service requests

11,204

participants reached through programming initiatives

10

Formal complaints filed under Policy 42

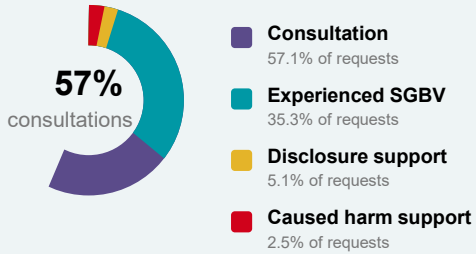
SVPRO Annual Report

At a glance

354	202	10	80	171	11,204	1,270	12,474
direct service requests	consultations	Policy 42 complaints	Accommodation support requests	education offerings	participants reached	online course completions	programming interactions

Direct response services

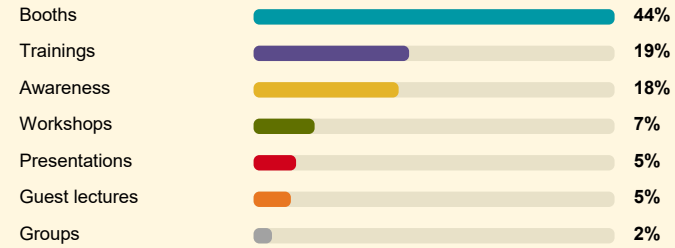
Support type distribution



- **Consultation** 57.1% of requests
- **Experienced SGBV** 35.3% of requests
- **Disclosure support** 5.1% of requests
- **Caused harm support** 2.5% of requests

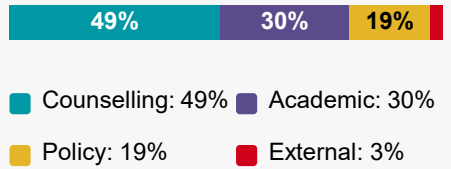
Prevention education

Reach by programming type



Accommodation & support needs

80 requests facilitated by SVPRO



UW Campus Community Survey

4,547 students participated in Spring 2026

- **19%** reported experiencing sexual violence
- **61%** occurred during first or second year
- **70%** supported male allyship opportunities

Looking ahead: 2026–27 priorities

1. **Accountability & behaviour change**
   Support behaviour change and prevention of future harm.
2. **Trauma-informed healing**
   Expand wellness programming and low-barrier supports.
3. **Embedded prevention education**
   Continue the MME pilot and scalable models.

Figures reflect the 2025–26 SVPRO Annual Report. Visual style uses University of Waterloo brand colours.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE WORK

Sexual and gender-based violence remains a significant public health, human rights, and gender-equity issue in Canada. Young adults experience some of the highest rates of sexual violence, making post-secondary institutions important sites for prevention, education, and support.

Although anyone can experience SGBV, research shows that some communities are disproportionately affected, including women, Indigenous peoples, racialized people, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, persons with disabilities, and other equity-denied groups (Crocker et al, 2020; Cotter and Burczycka, 2026). Universities are also unique environments because they are places of learning, work, residence, and social connection. Recent Statistics Canada (2026) data indicates that women are more than three times as likely than men to experience sexual assault in school settings, with higher prevalence, overall, among young women and girls. That said, workplaces also remain sites where sexual violence is common. More than one in ten Canadians experienced unwanted sexual behaviours while at work or participating in a work-related event, where women are more than twice as likely than men to experience these behaviours (Cotter and Burczycka, 2026). Since campuses function both as schools and workplaces, campus populations of students, staff, and faculty are at-risk of experiencing SGBV. As a result, prevention and response efforts must address the needs of students, staff, and faculty.

In 2025–26, SVPRO saw continued demand for direct support, consultation, and prevention education. This reflects the ongoing need for accessible services, clear reporting pathways, and coordinated campus-wide approaches to preventing and responding to SGBV.

REPORTING PERIOD HIGHLIGHTS

Policy 42 Update

Policy 42: Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Alleged Against Students, is the University of Waterloo policy that outlines how the University responds to gender-based and sexual violence alleged against students.

In October 2025, the University's Board of Governors approved a revised version of Policy 42. The updated policy reflects campus consultation, research, and evolving best practices in sexual violence prevention and response. One key change is the designation of the Associate Provost, Students as the central decision-maker for formal complaints. The revised policy also strengthens reporting, response, and support processes.

As required by provincial legislation, Policy 42 will continue to be reviewed every three years with student input and engagement. SVPRO will continue to support campus understanding of the revised policy through updated education, including a refreshed Policy 42 workshop.

UW Campus Community Survey

In Spring 2026, Institutional Analysis & Planning and the Statistical Consulting and Survey Research Unit conducted the second UW Campus Community Survey. The survey gathered information about students' experiences of sexual and gender-based violence, awareness of supports, perceptions of available resources, and barriers to seeking support or reporting concerns.

A total of 4,547 students participated. Nearly one in five respondents reported experiencing some form of sexual violence, a finding that remained largely unchanged from Spring 2025. Among students who reported experiencing sexual violence, common behaviours included unwanted sexual touching and sexual jokes, unwelcome physical contact and unwanted sexual attention.

The survey findings show that experiences of sexual violence often occurred early in students' university experience and commonly involved someone known to the student.

- 19% of respondents reported experiencing some form of sexual violence.
- 10% of those students reported that the experience involved someone they worked with during a co-op term.
- 61% of experiences occurred during first or second year.
- 86% identified the person who caused harm as a man.
- 51% identified a UW student as the person who caused harm; 36% identified a non-UW student; and 27% identified someone with no university affiliation.
- 70% agreed that increasing opportunities for men and boys to learn how to be better allies in addressing SGBV would benefit campus.

Findings will continue to inform SVPRO service delivery, education programming, and awareness-raising initiatives to better meet campus community needs. SVPRO is committed to understanding and gathering longitudinal data on campus sexual violence climate more broadly, an especially important endeavour for evidence-based decision making related to prevention, response, and policy.

Coaching and Educational Support for Students Who Have Caused Harm

Individuals accused of causing harm, or who self-identify as having caused harm, also receive support through SVPRO. SVPRO's Education Specialist, Chris Martin, provided individualized coaching and educational support to 14 students seeking to strengthen skills related to communication, healthy relationships, consent, boundaries, and conflict resolution. An additional 9 individuals were supported by SVPRO Case Managers Jay Love and Taneah Ugwuegbula. Recognizing that individuals benefit from different approaches to learning and engaging around these topics, sessions are tailored to the unique circumstances of the incident(s) as well as the needs of those accessing support.

In total, 23 individuals accused of, or self-identifying as, causing harm accessed support to better understand the impact of their behaviour(s) and develop strategies for positive change. Sessions emphasize accountability, reflection, practical skill development, and the prevention of future harm.

Co-op Student Role

SVPRO hired a Sexual Violence Prevention Assistant co-op role during the Winter 2026 term. This was the fourth term in which the office supported a co-op student.

The student assisted with booths, events, and outreach initiatives, serving as a student-facing representative of SVPRO. Peer-to-peer engagement is one of the most effective ways of reducing barriers to participation and support-seeking, shifting campus culture, and helping to build trust and awareness among students.

Volunteer Program

This reporting period, SVPRO launched its first volunteer program under the leadership of Education Specialist Stacey Jacobs. Eight students completed specialized training to support SVPRO prevention education and awareness-raising initiatives throughout the year.

Volunteers assisted with outreach events, information booths, and workshops while serving as visible peer ambassadors. The volunteer program strengthens peer-to-peer engagement, increases student involvement in prevention efforts, and enhances the visibility of SVPRO across campus.

DIRECT RESPONSE SERVICES

SVPRO provides confidential, trauma-informed support to individuals affected by sexual and gender-based violence. Support includes emotional support, short-term coping strategies, safety planning, referrals, academic accommodation support, information about reporting options, and guidance for those supporting a friend or colleague.

Support is also available to people who have received a disclosure, witnessed SGBV, or are accused of, or self-identify as, causing harm.

Direct Service: Reach

During the 2025–26 reporting period, SVPRO received 354 direct service requests. This represents an increase in demand from the previous reporting year and the highest number recorded since the establishment of a direct response service role at the University of Waterloo in 2017.

Consultations represented the largest share of direct service activity. This indicates that more campus community members and partners are seeking guidance on how to respond to SGBV-related concerns in informed and supportive ways.

Table 1: Trends in Direct Response Services

Type of Support	**Count**
Direct service provision (unique individuals) *	139
Carry over (students/employees continuing to access services from the previous reporting year)	13
Consultations	202
Total number of direct service requests	**354**

**Note: this number does not include those supported by Education Specialist Chris Martin*

Direct Service Highlights

SVPRO's direct service data shows three important trends. First, consultations increased substantially, suggesting that students, staff, faculty, and campus partners are increasingly seeking guidance before, during, or after responding to SGBV-related concerns. Second, students continue to represent the largest group accessing direct support, while employee requests have increased over time. Third, formal Policy 42 complaints reached their highest level to date, which may indicate greater awareness of reporting options, increased trust in available processes, and/or reduced barriers to accessing complaint pathways.

Table 2: Direct Service by Support Type

Type of Direct Service Request	Count	Percentage
Consultation for an SGBV-related matter	202	57.1%
Students/employees who continued to access services from the previous reporting year	125	35.3%
Received a disclosure of SGBV	18	5.1%
Accused of, or self-identified as, causing SGBV*	9	2.5%
Total	**354**	**100%**

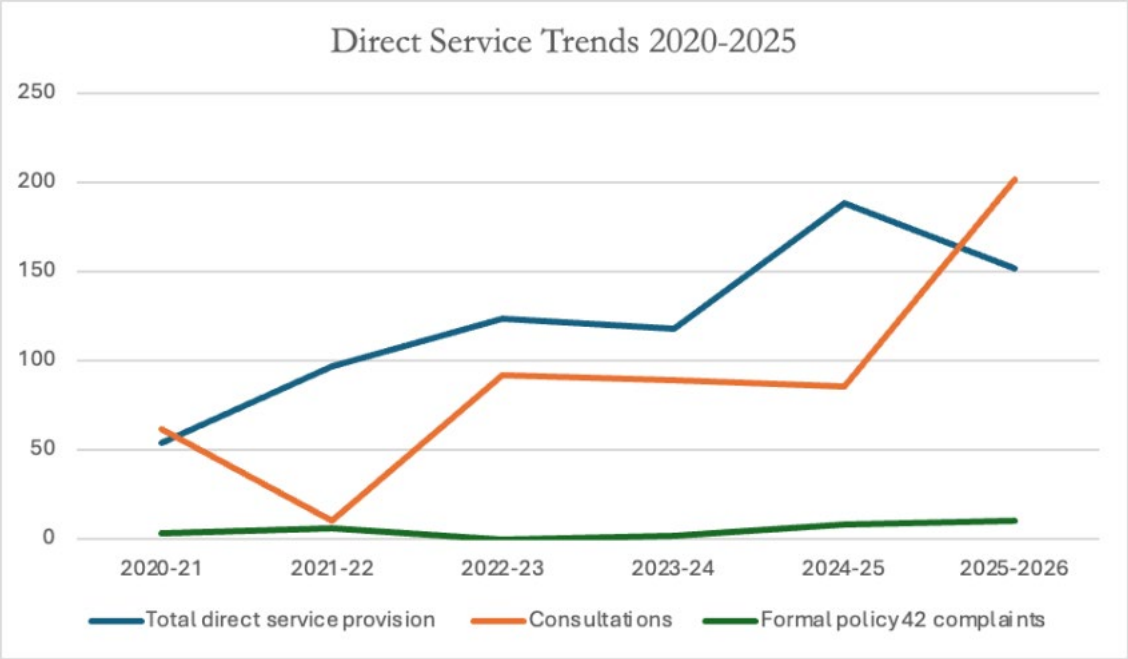
**Note: this number does not include those who received support from Education Specialist Chris Martin*

Table 3: Direct Response Service Metrics for the Past Six Reporting Periods

Supports and Services	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Student service requests/interactions	116	157	118	124	97	54
Employee service requests/interactions	23	18	7	8	1	3
Student service requests carried over from the previous reporting period	13	11	26	18	10	20
Consultations	202	86	86	92	59	62
Total	**354**	**272**	**237**	**242**	**167**	**139**

Note: Reporting periods prior to 2024–25 used calendar-year direct response service data. Current reporting periods use the University's annual reporting cycle.

Figure 2: Direct Service Metrics for the Past Six Reporting Periods



Trends over six reporting years show increased engagement with SVPRO. Student service requests remain high, employee service requests have increased over time, and consultations rose substantially in 2025–26. Carried-over cases have declined from their 2023–24 peak, which may suggest improved early support, guidance, or case resolution timelines.

Table 4: Direct Response Service by Campus Membership/Population Type

Type of Direct Service Request	Count	Percentage	Percentage Excluding Consultations
Student service requests/interactions	129	36.4%	85%
Employee service requests/interactions	23	6.5%	15%
Consultations	202	57.1%	N/A
Total	**354**	**100%**	**100%**

Of the 354 direct service interactions provided by SVPRO, 202 were consultations. Excluding consultations, students represented 85% of individuals accessing direct service, while employees represented 15%.

Table 5: Policy 42 Complaints

Supports and Services	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Number of complaints	10	8	2	0	6	3

Formal Policy 42 complaints increased from 8 in 2024–25 to 10 in 2025–26. This is the highest number recorded across the comparison period and may reflect increased awareness of reporting options, reduced barriers to reporting, or increased confidence in available processes.

Direct Service: Types of Sexual Violence

SVPRO supported individuals experiencing a wide range of sexual and gender-based violence. The most frequently recorded forms were sexual assault and sexual harassment, which together accounted for more than half of recorded experiences.

Reports involving intimate partner violence and unwanted attention increased from the previous reporting period. These trends reinforce the importance of accessible support, early intervention, clear reporting pathways, and prevention education that addresses the continuum of SGBV.

Table 6: Recorded Types of Sexual Violence

Type of Sexual Violence	Percentage
Sexual assault	31%
Sexual harassment	23%
Intimate partner violence	13%
Unwanted attention	10%
Coercion	9%
Stalking	4%
Technology-facilitated/digital sexual violence	4%
Sexist/misogynistic comments	3%
Drug-facilitated sexual violence	2%
Indecent exposure	1%
Total	**100%**

Direct Service: Accommodations and Supports

SVPRO offers academic accommodations and referrals for all individuals impacted by SGBV. During the reporting period, the office supported 80 academic accommodation/referral requests, as well as requests to support the preparation of a complaint under Policy 42.

Counselling referrals represented the largest category of support requests, followed by academic accommodations and policy complaint support. These requests reflect the diverse impacts of SGBV and the need for coordinated support that addresses academic, health and wellbeing, and procedural needs.

Table 7: Direct Service Accommodations and Supports

Type of Request	Count	Percentage
Referral to on-and-off campus counselling	39	49%
Academic accommodations	24	30%
Policy complaint support	15	19%
Referral to external supports/resources	2	3%
Total	**80**	**100%**

PREVENTION-FOCUSED PROGRAMMING

Prevention-focused Programming: Education & Awareness Initiatives

Prevention-focused programming builds knowledge, strengthens intervention skills, promotes consent, and increases awareness of available support. Prevention is a key component of building and maintaining a safer campus community.

During the reporting period, SVPRO delivered 171 education and prevention offerings and reached 11,204 participants. Programming included training, workshops, guest lectures, presentations, information booths, awareness events, group learning, and online education. The online Sexual Violence Foundations course reached an additional 1,270 participants.

Trainings

SVPRO continued to offer core training focused on strengthening campus capacity for both prevention and response. Programming and initiatives are designed to deepen understanding(s) of sexual and gender-based violence, build practical skills for violence prevention and intervention, and foster a culture of consent on campus. Active Bystander Intervention training provides practical strategies for intervening in situations of harm. Responding to Disclosures training supports participants in responding to disclosures in ways that are trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and connected to appropriate resources.

Awareness-Raising Initiatives and Events

This reporting period, SVPRO delivered a total of 171 educational offerings and awareness-raising events across main and satellite campuses. Key initiatives included: What Were You Wearing?; F.R.I.E.S. for FRIES;

Behind the Screen: Conversations on Adolescence; Menopause Café; Gaslight Film and Bingo Night; and Gender-Based Violence in the Legal System.

What Were You Wearing? Exhibit

SVPRO hosted it's annual What Were You Wearing? Exhibit, an arts-based installation that challenges victim-blaming myths and promotes survivor-centered conversations about SGBV. The installation uses an arts-based approach to highlight the pervasiveness of harmful victim-blaming narratives, using student-survivor accounts to recreate 'what they were wearing' during an experience of sexual violence. Originally inspired by Dr. Mary Simmerling's poem, What I was wearing, and first created by the University of Arkansas in 2013, Education Specialist, Stacey Jacobs, spearheaded a re-creation of the exhibit at the University of Waterloo. With the goal of empowering survivors on our campus and including their outfits in future iterations of the exhibit, our office implemented anonymous ways for UW students to consensually share their own accounts. The exhibit generated 1,062 interactions, more than doubling engagement from the previous reporting year.

F.R.I.E.S. for FRIES

SVPRO collaborated with the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association to offer the second F.R.I.E.S. (Freely Given, Reversable, Informed, Engaged and Specific) for FRIES event. The event invited students to engage in fun, consent-based education in exchange for a free order of fries. Combining a fun, approachable activity with meaningful conversations about healthy relationships and consent, the event increased consent literacy, while encouraging warm interactions with SVPRO and raising awareness about our supports and services

Behind the Screen: Conversations on Adolescence

During Sexual Violence Awareness Month, SVPRO offered a four-part virtual drop-in series focused on themes raised in the Netflix series "Adolescence", including masculinity, social media, violence, relationships, boundaries, consent, gender and growing up. The format created space for timely discussion of SGBV-related issues in popular culture.

Menopause Café

The Menopause Café continued to provide a welcoming space for University community members navigating perimenopause and menopause. Through informal conversations and shared lived experiences, participants continue to strengthen their menopause literacy through peer connection and stigma reduction, as well as contributing towards more inclusive employee workplace conversations about health and wellbeing.

Gaslight Film and Bingo Night

SVPRO hosted a screening of Gaslight followed by a bingo activity. The event supported discussion about manipulation, coercive control, emotional abuse, how harmful relationship dynamics manifest, and the continuum of SGBV, while also connecting participants with available resources and supports.

Gender-Based Violence in the Legal System

SVPRO Case Manager Taneah Ugwuegbula, Women's Crisis Services, and the Waterloo Regional Police Service's intimate partner violence (IPV) unit collaborated on a new workshop titled Gender-Based Violence in the Legal

System. The workshop helped participants understand reporting options for intimate partner violence and sexual violence, including information related to mandatory charging and community-based supports through the Family Violence Project. The Family Violence Project, in partnership with the community, raises awareness and delivers services and support to anyone at risk of, or experiencing, family violence including intimate partner violence.

Embedded Education

Education Specialist Embedded in Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering

Following years of collaboration between SVPRO and the Faculty of Engineering, the embedded Education Specialist role within Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering completed its first full year of implementation.

In its first year, this role delivered 21 offerings reaching 1,870 participants, including 17 undergraduate offerings reaching 1,718 participants and 4 graduate or research group offerings reaching 152 participants. This role integrates prevention education into undergraduate courses, graduate and research environments, and faculty and staff initiatives.

This work shifted education from single passive touchpoints to curriculum-linked interventions focused on topics such as perception, bias, unequal experience, conflict navigation, apology, repair, and relational accountability. Lessons from this three-year pilot will inform sustainable and scalable approaches to prevention education within Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering and the broader Faculty of Engineering.

Prevention-Focused Programming: Reach by Different Markers

Table 8: Reach by Programming Type

Programming Type	Total Reach	Percentage
Booth	4,928	44%
Training	2,123	19%
Awareness-raising events and initiatives	1,980	18%
Workshop	833	7%
Group	251	2%
Guest lecture	509	5%
Presentation/Panel	580	5%
Total	**11,204**	**100%**

Information booths represented the largest share of programming reach, followed by trainings and awareness-raising initiatives. This demonstrates the importance of both informal outreach and structured learning opportunities in engaging the campus community.

Table 9: Attendance by audience type

Audience Type	Count of program offerings	Sum of Attendees	Percentage (%)
All campus members	44	4,942	44.1%
Students	8990	4,128	36.8%
Staff & Faculty	1329	1,765	15.7%
Student Staff	97	305	2.7%
Staff/faculty and student staff	1	73	0.7%
Total	**171**	**11,204**	**100%**

Programming open to all campus members accounted for the largest portion of attendees, followed by student-focused programming and staff/faculty programming.

Table 10: Type of Education Programming by Number of Offerings and Attendees

Type of Education Programming	Offerings	Attendees
Awareness-raising events and initiatives: informal events designed to raise awareness about SGBV and SVPRO, including Consent Week(s), 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, Sexual Violence Awareness Month, What Were You Wearing?, Behind the Screen, F.R.I.E.S. for FRIES, Menopause Café, and Gaslight Film and Bingo Night.	19	1,980
Information booths: information tables across main and satellite campuses where community members can meet SVPRO staff, learn about services, and access resources.	40	4,928
Training: structured learning opportunities such as Active Bystander Intervention and Responding to Disclosures, including specialized training for athletes, orientation leaders, and residence leaders.	39	2,123
Workshops: interactive sessions that use discussion, applied learning, and questions to deepen understanding of topics such as allyship, positive workplaces, consent, healthy relationships, and rape culture.	32	833
Presentations: informational sessions introducing SVPRO, core supports, and selected SGBV-related topics.	9	580
Guest lectures: SVPRO contributions to academic courses connected to gender, sexuality, relationships, violence prevention, health, and social justice.	8	509
Group learning: peer-engaged learning experiences that support dialogue, reflection, and skills-building related to neurodiversity, relationships, wellbeing, and SGBV.	24	251
Total	**171**	**11,204**

Systemic Change and Support

SVPRO recognizes that creating a campus culture grounded in care, consent, and community requires coordinated and sustained institutional work. In addition to direct support and education, SVPRO strengthens support networks, fosters campus partnerships, mobilizes resources, and advances prevention and response efforts across the University.

Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Influencer Group

The Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy Influencer Group (Influencer Group) remained a key part of SVPRO's prevention strategy. Grounded in a public health approach, the group supports coordinated campus-wide capacity-building by strengthening SGBV knowledge, fostering collaboration, and sharing evidence-informed practices, research, and relevant campus and community resources.

This reporting year, the Influencer Group included 75 active members from more than 15 departments, faculties, and units. Since its establishment in 2023, staff and faculty participation has grown and remained stable.

The goals of the group are to:

- Build awareness of the prevalence and root causes of sexual violence.
- Foster a culture of consent on campus.
- Support institutional courage and accountability.
- Address campus sexual violence through a public health lens that recognizes SGBV as a health inequity issue.

Highlights from this year's sessions included presentations on digital tools for intimate partner violence prevention, sexual violence prevention in Canadian junior hockey, and community responses to domestic violence through Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region.

Looking Ahead and Closing Remarks

The 2025–26 reporting year demonstrated continued growth in SVPRO's support, education, consultation, and prevention work. Increased service requests, higher consultation numbers, and strong participation in programming show that campus community members are increasingly engaging with SVPRO as a trusted resource.

In the year ahead, SVPRO will focus on three priorities: strengthening support for accountability and behaviour change, expanding trauma-informed healing opportunities, and advancing embedded prevention education.

Strengthening Support for Accountability and Behaviour Change

SVPRO provided support to 23 individuals who were identified as causing harm, either as an outcome of a process or through self-identification, over the past reporting period. SVPRO will continue building capacity to support individuals who have caused harm or are seeking help to change harmful behaviours. This work is grounded in accountability, education, reflection, and prevention of future harm.

Expanding Trauma-Informed Healing Opportunities

SVPRO recognizes that providing space for healing, where the primary goals are being in a supportive community with others and building skills for wellbeing, is equally as important as workshops and training. As such, SVPRO will introduce new wellness-based programming to complement existing support services. Planned initiatives include: Trauma-Informed Yoga as well as community and self-care workshops. Trauma-Informed Yoga will support mind-body awareness in a safe, supportive, and choice-centered environment. Community and self-care workshops will offer creative and nature-based approaches to stress reduction, connection, and awareness of SVPRO supports.

Programming will provide accessible opportunities for grounding, connection, mindfulness, creativity, and healing.

Advancing Embedded Prevention Education

The embedded SGBV Education Specialist role within Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering will move into the second year of its three-year pilot. Building on the first year, the pilot will continue to refine and expand curriculum-integrated prevention education and inform future opportunities for broader integration across the Faculty of Engineering.

As the University of Waterloo community continues to evolve, SVPRO remains committed to strengthening survivor-centered supports, expanding prevention education, and working with campus partners to foster a safer, more respectful campus community.

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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

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