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Don't Rebuild On Our Backs

**REPORT ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER COVID-19**

Impacts from our Programs and
Survivor-Centred Recommendations



**DANDELION
INITIATIVE**

2020-2021

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Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

About The Dandelion Initiative

The Dandelion Initiative was founded by survivors, for survivors. Since 2016, our small grassroots non-profit has become one of the leading community organizations for gender-based violence prevention education and survivor supports.

We prioritize the voices and needs of women, 2SLGBTQ+ survivors, racialized and workplace violence survivors through our work and services. We aim to amplify the voices of survivors, and our work through an intersectional, evidence-based, survivor-centred framework. We are governed and staffed by a diverse group of women and trans folx dedicated to our important work.

We fundamentally believe in the power of education as a resistance to gender-based violence. We also believe in the power of intersectional feminism, equity and community. We honour our lived experiences and the herstory of violence against women and transgender communities.

Our mission is to disseminate survivor-centred, gender-based violence education, training, and policy development to workplaces and community spaces across Ontario. The proceeds from this work funds our frontline services for survivors; these include workshops, advocacy, accountability sessions, community events, and peer counselling. We are here today because of a group of women and trans people who work every single day, meet every month, and share dreams of justice and equity, continuing to work together through it all.



Introduction

Don't Rebuild On Our Backs is a call-to-action for policy change, equity, and safety for survivors, and the organizations and programs that serve them. During COVID-19, we have seen further devastation caused by gender-based violence and a lack of funded resources. **It is time to accept this collective opportunity to create a prevention-focused, solution-based future where we stop accepting femicide and gender-based violence as the norm, but rather, a virus we have the cure for.** It is also a call to continue supporting our work and other non-profit, grassroots organizations working in gender-based violence prevention and response.

This report and these recommendations are intended to serve as a piece of a larger collective ask where primary prevention and gender equity are prioritized, and a feminist economic recovery plan is implemented through community. We do not want to see our work, programs, and voices left behind.

Report Goal

- Highlight the reality and lived experience of survivors, honouring that we cannot capture all lived experiences. Recognizing that data on the impacts of gender-based violence on Black women/trans folks is not accessible in Canada. Read more here: <https://behindthenumbers.ca/shorthand/black-women-in-canada/>
- Provide a snapshot of gender-based violence before, during, and, after COVID-19, from an evidence-based and survivor-centred lens.
- Share our programming impacts and action items to encourage stakeholders and government to fund and support our work.
- Provide policy recommendations, provincially and municipally.
- Build bridges between the Dandelion Initiative's work and the work of our multi-sectoral partners and allies.

Using This Report

The recommendations and program overviews provided in this report holistically illustrate the work we have done, and will continue to do, with ongoing support.

This report has three major sections, based on our strategic plans, expertise, and priority. The sections are divided by headers and each section has action items or recommendations to multi-agencies, our partners, future donors and all levels of Government.

A Message From Our Executive Director & Team

It is an honour to present this report and these recommendations to you all, in hopes of highlighting the incredible impact of survivor-led programs and services, while emphasizing the insidious nature of misogyny and its impact on our lives.

We have managed to survive, like dandelions do, but it is not without unnecessary barriers and increasing lateral violence. This is the reality of so many women and trans people, who do this work on all levels. Therefore, this is a valuable truth that needs repair and attention as we continue to rely on these essential workers and services long after COVID-19.

I fundamentally believe that women and trans people alike have the knowledge and collective power to challenge and change the systems and societies that perpetuate violence against us.

The Dandelion Initiative tries to create opportunities where we are not competitors for validation and space, where we are not silenced and made to feel small, but opportunities where we can celebrate and work together. Our work is fueled by visions of spaces, where our narratives are reclaimed, our stories of resiliency are celebrated, and our minds and knowledge are valued.

Over the last few years, I have had the honour of serving 250 survivors alongside our small, but powerful, team of employees past and present, through individual and group sessions. Over the last few years, we have collectively trained over 1,500 people in gender-based violence prevention and response. Over the last few years, we have released vital policy and programs for hospitality, the collective arts, and other diverse sectors. Over the last few years, we have re-committed to constant growth, change, new knowledge, partnerships and survivor-centred care.

I recognize that there is much that we could not cover in this report. We are part of a mosaic of voices, and do not wish to be the only voice centred. As we continue to build our capacity, we hope to expand our work and our collaborations.

It has been a privilege, endlessly challenging, beautiful, heartbreaking, and an honour to do this work alongside you all.

"It is time to accept this collective opportunity to create a prevention-focused, solution-based future where we stop accepting femicide and gender-based violence as the norm, but rather, a virus we have the cure for."

With gratitude,

Viktoria Belle (She/Her)

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
BEFORE, DURING,
AND AFTER COVID-19

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER COVID-19

Section Contents

- The gendered impacts of COVID-19
- Policy recommendations and action items based on our work and community needs

Gender-Based Violence Before, During, and After COVID-19

A pandemic is an infectious disease occurring on a wide scale. Although COVID-19 is a novel virus, women and feminized people are not strangers to pervasive dangers like these. Gender-based violence, rape culture, and patriarchy are also infectious global threats that jeopardize our individual and collective safety.

Current available evidence shows us that 1 in 3 women will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. According to the Trans PULSE Project, which researched the social determinants of health for trans and gender diverse individuals in Ontario, 20% of all trans Ontarians “had been physically or sexually assaulted for being trans, and another 34% had been verbally threatened or harassed” (G. R. Bauer & Scheim, 2015).

In Canada, we live in a time where a woman or girl is killed every 2.5 days on average. The risk of violence is even greater for Indigenous women, who are killed at a rate almost six times greater than non-Indigenous women (Dawson, M., et al., 2018). Black women are often silenced, criminalized and left out of policy and decision making processes, perpetrating the cycles of misogynoir and violence against black women.

In Canada, there are 600,000 sexual assaults reported to the police in a year. If that number seems high, remember that only about 5% of survivors report to the police at all, and within that, only 3 out of every 1,000 sexual assaults lead to conviction (Savage, L. & Cotter, A., 2019). The actual numbers are much higher.

Many survivors keep their experiences to themselves and do not report sexual violence because of the dehumanizing and re-traumatizing criminal justice system process. This is a longtime and serious contributor to the perpetuation of the sexual and gender-based violence pandemic.



Gender-Based Violence Before, During, and After COVID-19

Recently, we experienced our most deadly shooting in Canadian history. In April 2020, a man killed 22 people after abusing his girlfriend. Media has called this crime senseless and rare, yet if we look at mass shootings and murders in Canada, most are linked to gender-based violence and misogyny (Bensadoun, E., 2020). As a culture, we often disregard how violence is fuelled by misogyny. We do not label it femicide, and therefore we do not and cannot prioritize prevention or uproot rape culture. This must change.

We expect the existing gender-based violence pandemic to intensify during COVID-19. International research shows that domestic violence rates increase following natural disasters. After Hurricane Katrina for example, violence between partners increased by 98% (Jenkins, P., & Phillips, B., 2008).

"As a culture, we often disregard how violence is fueled by misogyny. We do not label it femicide, and therefore we do not and cannot prioritize prevention or uproot rape culture. This must change."

This increase is often because pandemics and times of economic uncertainty are linked to a myriad of risk factors for gender-based violence against women, children, and trans people around the world. Research has pointed to these risk factors and their devastating impacts after the first Ebola outbreak, decades before COVID-19 (Peterman, A., et al., 2020).

This illuminates the very real, double pandemic: Many women and trans people experience violence at home, and now with COVID-19, the threat permeates outside the home as well. Two concurrent pandemics magnify all existing inequalities and further pushes survivors, victims, and their families into immediate and long-term danger.

Gender-Based Violence Before, During, and After COVID-19

Within the first three months of the coronavirus pandemic, 1 in 10 women had reported that they are worried about violence in their home (Gillis, W., 2020). Many only have minutes to seek help, and shelters and crisis lines are overwhelmed with the number of emergency calls (Wright, T., 2020).

Although limited, survivors had options before COVID-19 to go seek help at their children's schools, their workplaces, community spaces, faith spaces and the police. Since the closure or decrease of most nonessential services, most women and children are unable to access support, which is particularly problematic when it comes to life-saving services such as medical care after rape/sexual violence, pregnancy, injury from violence, and mental health support.

We echo what so many in our sector have said: We are terrified to see an influx of delayed crisis services for women and children after the coronavirus pandemic. This is especially concerning in places like Ontario, where there are limited SANE nurses and trauma-informed care options.



This lack of prioritization and urgency has left survivors and victims in the dark, again. When there are limited to no spaces or services that respond to gender-based violence, it falls on friends, family members, and co-workers as they are likely to be the first source of disclosure (Peterman, A., et al., 2020). Despite people's best intentions, they often do not have the skills or capacity to deal with traumatizing situations or intimate partner violence. This can create a ripple effect of trauma for the survivor and for their families and friends.

Empowering the public with prevention and response knowledge can be a useful primary prevention strategy. However, without a national primary prevention plan, people are left to do this work alone.

Gender-Based Violence Before, During, and After COVID-19

Based on reported evidence throughout history and our firsthand experience, it is apparent that the systems and public still believe that gender-based violence is not a pandemic. It can be hard to see something that we have been told to ignore or keep silent throughout almost every culture, country and society. Still, we can choose to stand against misogyny, together.

What are we saying when we choose silence, in the light of this knowledge? The message to women and trans people then, at worst, is that they are disposable and at best, unfortunate casualties to senseless violence.

Since the necessary social isolation measures, at least nine women have been killed by their partners and family. There has been very limited media coverage, and no acknowledgement beyond our sector and the victim's families (Hayes, M., 2020).

Still women and trans people prevail.

For centuries, women and other marginalized communities have rebuilt and recovered societies and industries while often working their second shift of unpaid and undervalued care work. The people on the front lines of our essential services are health care workers, of whom 82% are women.

Nurses, for example, were already working through situational and lateral violence daily (Casey, B. 2019). Now, living through a double pandemic, they also face the threat of death and illness from COVID-19. Just as nurses are working to keep us safe, we should be doing the same for them.

In feminized careers such as childcare, where women make up 94% of the workforce (Halfon, S & Langford, 2015), grocery store workers, personal support workers, and shelter workers are all working under duress while lacking protective gear. They are forced to continue, despite the inequity and economic violence they experience in these positions.

Gender-Based Violence Before, During, and After COVID-19

These normalized gender inequities will place women at the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, while they are excluded from making crucial decisions about their own health, education, workplaces, children, housing, safety, and access.

As we consider rebuilding, our prevention and response plans to gender-based violence must be built into a comprehensive, intersectional feminist recovery plan (Carolus Jabola, K. 2020). This plan must recognize the ripple effect of trauma, and the increase in demand for services that are currently underfunded.

We must plan now to provide long-term support and trauma-informed services to our front line who will be affected deeply by an echo pandemic long after COVID-19 (Janson, K. 2020, CAMH). This means that while the general population resumes normal life, women, trans people, and front line workers will suffer the enduring effects of working through one crisis and continuing to survive another.

We are surrounded by incredible women and trans people who have innovated, created, healed and changed systems, even while those systems undermine and endanger us. Think of what we could do alongside a system that upholds our human rights as equals.

To date, no country has been able to eliminate violence against women, yet the solutions have been clear for decades.

Let this be our call to action.

Don't Rebuild on Our Backs is part of the solution. It has to be done with us, not without us. Together, not on our backs.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER COVID-19

1 FUND AND STAFF MOBILE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE UNITS.

5 ANNUALLY FUND OUR NEW PROGRAM, 'M.O.T.H.S.'. MANAGING OUR TRAUMA, HEALING & SAFETY.

2 MAKE SAFETY KITS AVAILABLE FOR SURVIVORS AT PHARMACIES AND DRUG STORES.

6 FUND NON-PROFITS THAT SERVE SURVIVORS.

3 PROVIDE PRE-PAID CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS TO WOMEN AND TRANS PEOPLE WHO ARE LIVING IN VIOLENCE OR DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A PHONE.

7 BROADCAST A CONSENT AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS COMMERCIAL.

4 FUND AND DISSEMINATE CONSENT AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS INFORMATION THROUGH LCBO AND BEER STORE LOCATIONS.

Recommendations to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Context of COVID-19

As a non-profit staffed and governed by diverse women and trans people, we have designed and implemented comprehensive services, policy, and public education to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Thus, our policy recommendation and action items are rooted in our program research, lived experience, and multi-agency collaboration. **We have detailed plans and budgets for most recommendations, please email Viktoria at director@dandelioninitiative.ca.**

1

FUND AND STAFF MOBILE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE UNITS.

We call upon all levels of Government, specifically our Provincial Government, to immediately respond to the increased danger of gender-based violence and lack of emergency supports during necessary isolation measures.

For example: Women's College Hospital has a mobile team and bus. With partnership from other VAW/C service providers, this mobile unit can rotate between neighbourhoods to bring services to women and trans people directly, as many have limited time to seek help and are often monitored. It has been proven that mobilizing community care and door-to-door information dissemination has positive outcomes after crises and disasters.

2

MAKE SAFETY KITS AVAILABLE FOR SURVIVORS AT PHARMACIES AND DRUG STORES.

Pharmacies and drug stores are often the places where many vulnerable people and survivors go to seek resources. Many pharmacists do not have the resources or survivor-centred training required to provide in-person or over-the-phone support.

We believe a short-term solution to provide support for the victim while providing resources for pharmacy staff is to have ready-made "safety kits". These kits would include information on crisis lines, shelters, and safety planning and would have necessary care products available for free.

Recommendations to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Context of COVID-19

3

PROVIDE PRE-PAID CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS TO WOMEN AND TRANS PEOPLE WHO ARE LIVING IN VIOLENCE OR DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A PHONE.

The Yukon Status of Women Council has started providing pre-paid cellphones and computers to women experiencing violence or who are most vulnerable to experience violence. These pre-paid phones and computers help women and trans people find services, connect with crisis supports, and access food delivery or pick up. This could reduce the impacts of living in disconnect and violence. Any municipality and service agencies working together with schools and tech companies could make this happen immediately.

4

FUND AND DISSEMINATE CONSENT AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS INFORMATION THROUGH LCBO AND BEER STORE LOCATIONS.

Written in this report is evidence of increased alcohol consumption and purchase since March 2020 (CBC News, Ivany, K. 2020).

Evidence also shows that increases in substance use can increase the likelihood of violence in the home (Mason, R. & Toner, B. 2012). We also know that twenty-five percent of reported sexual assaults involve the use of drugs or alcohol (Conroy, S & Cotter, A. 2017).

We demand to see consent and healthy relationships information in the form of posters and brochures throughout the LCBO and Beer store locations.

We have experience with emergency survivor-centred consultation and content development for municipalities on their consent and alcohol consumption campaigns in previous years.

This recommendation requires government and local experts to work together to ensure the content is survivor-centred and does not further stigmatize or silence women and trans people.

Recommendations to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Context of COVID-19

5

ANNUALLY FUND OUR NEW PROGRAM, 'M.O.T.H.S.'. MANAGING OUR TRAUMA, HEALING & SAFETY

Survivor-centred practices are guided by trauma-informed principles to centre the experiences and healing of the survivor/victim through resiliency-building and care. Survivor-centred programs and practices can re-establish a survivor's autonomy and choice, while building their self-efficacy. Over the course of 8-weeks, we aim to create a collective space where survivors and/or workers have the opportunity to learn valuable skills, such as self-efficacy skills and trauma care, for themselves or their workplaces.

Developed by survivors, clinicians, practitioners, peers, and front line workers, this 8-week cohort program focuses on building skills and tools to manage trauma and its effects on our personal and professional lives. Using an intersectional trauma care model, we work to dismantle the paternalistic and patriarchal models that a) further re-traumatize survivors and b) serve to disconnect us from safer accountability and collaboration with one another, as survivors or as professionals working in feminized spaces/sectors. Through diverse modalities and techniques, participants will be able to explore new skills and tools to sustain, heal, and mitigate burnout.

Through a digital blended model, we provide ongoing curriculum, group facilitated sessions, 1:1 peer support, and ongoing professional supports for workplaces/front line workers through our training and policy services.

M.O.T.H.S was created to provide an opportunity for survivors and front line workers in feminized sectors to manage the double pandemic, and the inevitable echo pandemic to follow, as we move through surviving and working within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prevention starts with empowering survivors with the tools to work and live, safer. This begins with centring the needs and care of survivors and front line workers in feminized sectors.

M.O.T.H.S will be facilitated and led by the Dandelion Initiative and our partners.

Consultations and development began in 2019 and will be finalized upon receiving program funding.

Recommendations to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Context of COVID-19

6

FUND NON-PROFITS THAT SERVE SURVIVORS.

The Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) called on the Ontario Government to create a stabilization fund of \$680 million for the non-profit sector to ensure that non-profits and charities can help rebuild the economy and communities.

This funding can come via the unallocated portion of the \$3.7 billion set aside for “Supporting People and Jobs” in Ontario’s COVID-19 Action Plan, through a simple application process administered by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

We would add that we encourage a gender equity and safety lens to this distribution and ask for a portion of these allocated stabilization funds to be directed towards small and grassroots non-profits who are staffed by and serve vulnerable or marginalized communities like women, LGBTQ2s+ BIPOC survivors.

7

BROADCAST A CONSENT AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS COMMERCIAL.

In May 2020, CTV broadcast a report that depicted non-consensual actions and encouraged dangerous behaviour during this double pandemic for women and trans people. We are calling on all levels of government to work with the Dandelion Initiative and our partners to create, fund, and broadcast a healthy relationships commercial.

This commercial needs to focus on de-escalation and prevention rather than response, which can further aggravate violence in the home. The commercial needs to use informed consent and provide resources and crisis lines for men, women, and trans people as part of this broadcast.

This is a critical and simple way of disseminating primary prevention education that role models de-escalation tools and encourages safety and health between partners during this pandemic.

NOW SERVING:
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION
AND RESPONSE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SAFER BARS & SPACES
SAFER ARTISTIC SPACES

NOW SERVING: SAFER BARS & SPACES

Section Contents

- Overview and impacts of our Programs and Training
- Growing the program and our ecosystems for safety
- Recommendations for how to support our work
- Safer Cities Policy recommendations for the City of Toronto



Now Serving: Safer Bars & Spaces was created in response to the normalized patterns of sexism, harassment, and violence experienced by women and trans people in hospitality and nightlife spaces.

Our content was developed by industry professionals, gender-based violence prevention experts, and survivors. Our unique and specific content blends survivor-centred equity education with industry-specific bystander intervention skills, creating opportunities for meaningful learning and culture change.

Investing in Safety

Our program uses a socio-ecological model for gender-based violence prevention that focuses on connecting primary (policies), secondary (training), and tertiary (direct support) practices which have been proven to provide the best long-term outcomes for preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

We use this model to reinforce the reality that individuals alone, cannot be responsible for culture change. The skills and value-building we foster with teams needs to be reinforced through policy, environment, and ongoing learning. This is what makes our program unique and why the impacts from our Now Serving : Safer Bars & Spaces program are so positive.

Barriers and Remedies

Delivering a program of this size has not been easy. The program uptake often requires lengthy consultations that we struggled to maintain with limited staff and funding.

Over the last few years we have seen this program transform workplaces and bring accountability and dignity behind the bar, in the kitchen, and on the floor.

Still, there are external barriers to addressing gender-based violence in hospitality that have not been addressed or prioritized. There is a disconnect between government, business owners/operators, and the industry workforce. This disconnect must be addressed and remedied within an economic recovery plan.

The hospitality and nightlife industry has faced devastation. The collective and the gendered impacts of COVID-19 on our workforce and patronage cannot be ignored. Now more than ever, we must prioritize prevention, instead of reaction, in all sectors.

There needs to be a critical investment from all levels of Government. Gender-based violence prevention training and policy development, along with annual audits and municipal by-laws only strengthen public safety and workplace safety alike. We can no longer ignore the pervasive dangers of working in public facing or consumer driven sectors.



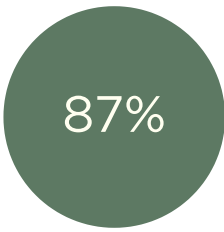
1 in 2

Women reported experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace.
(Angus Reid Study, 2018)

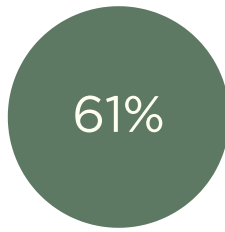


30%

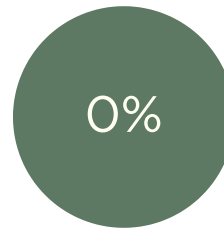
of LGBT-identified respondents felt that they experienced discrimination in the workplace, as opposed to 2.9% of the general population.
(Sasso, T & Ellard-Grey, A., 2015)



of survivors knew the person who assaulted or harassed them before it happened.
(Rotenberg, C. 2017)



of the Canadian restaurant workforce are women. They are mainly in low paying, non-decision making roles.
(Moyser, M. 2017)



of gender-based violence and sexual harassment complaints in hospitality are tracked by the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.
(Kostuch Media Ltd, 2015)

Impacts of Our Now Serving: Safer Bars & Spaces Program

In 2017, Ontario's hospitality industry took aim at sexual harassment with *It's Your Shift*, a voluntary online training program, backed by huge government investment. Sadly, as evidenced throughout this report and many others, programs and investments like *It's Your Shift* just do not have the impact Ontarians need and deserve. Without a comprehensive plan or a transparent protocol for workplace policy and training expectations/audits, complaints will continue to go unheard and workplaces will continue to struggle to sustain safer environments for workers and patrons. Without up-to-date data, many organizations cannot advocate or present solutions that are evidence-based. Our program addresses a lack of data in the industry.



We have to ask the question: Why is there no data collected and disseminated about sexual harassment and gender-based violence in food, beverage, and hospitality, even though 27% of sexual assaults happen in bars and restaurants? (Conroy, S & Cotter, A, 2014).

Impacts of our Now Serving: Safer Bars & Spaces Program

0/10

of the spaces we reached out to after complaints of harassment/assault responded back.

We know that a lack of data does not mean sexual and gender-based violence does not happen in the industry.

"I told my manager what happened; they told me I was overreacting. And, the next few months were hell. They forced me to quit; he was promoted." - Jane, Bartender, 2019

50+

individual disclosures we received of workplace harassment or violence from industry women in Ontario from 2018-2020.

Often reports regarding sexual and gender-based violence are ignored or passed off as the norm, since many people are either complacent or lacking in the tools and skills to address these issues and resolve them in real time.

In an industry that relies on tips, employees are less likely to report violence, not only from other staff, but from patrons as well. When customer service plays an integral role in both the evaluation and pay of employees, vulnerable workers are even more at risk.

1500+

people trained in our gender-based violence prevention & response training since 2018

Although we provide free policy recommendations to comply with Bill 132 and OHSA in Ontario, we could not collect data on how many spaces actually developed these policies and put them into practice.

We believe that most people want to see a culture change and provide their staff with safer workplaces. Policy and training make this possible. All the same, managers tell us that they are limited by resources like time and money. This is why we are advocating to ensure that this program becomes a part of a regulated and supported system for the industry.

"Every restaurant should do this. It's effective; it's powerful and long overdue."

Why Focus On Education and Policy?

90%

of our post training
policy recommendations
were positively received

Good practices, in any industry, requires employers and practitioners to move beyond compliance (Jessup-Anger & Edwards, 2018). We know that policy alone does not work; it creates an institutional overemphasis on compliance rather than on holistic and sustainable safety and health (Iverson & Issadore, 2018). Policies must examine the way in which embedded institutional structures create the environments in which sexual violence/gender-based violence is allowed and persists in our communities (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016).

Standardizing and auditing anti-harassment and gender-based violence training, policy development, and review requires a multi-agency, government and community collaborative approach.

52 A YEAR

individual consultations and
policy development work
with bars, restaurants, non-
profits, and other industry
agencies

Making our program the standard could provide cohesion, clarity and transparency between ministries, regulators, operators, and gender-based violence/safety experts. See our policy recommendations for The City of Toronto in this report.

Spaces that tolerate inequality need to be held accountable and supported to do better. This is the only way that we rebuild safer. Research has shown that anti-harassment and sexual violence policies need to be stand alone and survivor-centric, accompanied by informed education to create safer workplace cultures (OHRC, 2013).

These policies need to be reviewed annually and created in an integrated way between staff, ownership, management, and experts in the sector (Human Resources Professionals Association, 2018). This is why our call to action and policy recommendations highlight the importance of including training, policy, regulation, and support to ensure all teams are safe and informed.

"As a victim of workplace sexual harassment/assault, this workshop really helped me make peace with that assault as well as utilize today's topics to help others."

2019-2020 Program Data

50/50

EQUAL NUMBERS DO NOT MEAN
EQUALITY

On average, there were equal number of respondents that were cis women and cis men. There were less than 5 trans people out of 500. Most managers and owners are white cis men.

72%

HAD NEVER RECEIVED TRAINING
LIKE THIS BEFORE

Over half of respondents said they wish the training was longer or reoccurring. Many participants have chosen to volunteer with us or refer us to other spaces and teams.

48%

CONFIDENCE INCREASE IN
BYSTANDER INTERVENTION AFTER
ONE SESSION

On average, after just one 3.5-hour session, participants reported feeling more confident and better equipped to physically and verbally intervene with harassment, assault, and harmful behaviour that happens in their workspace.

2019-2020 Program Data

Our Now Serving: Safer Bars & Spaces feedback is in! These are participants' most valued topics we teach in our training sessions.



Bystander Intervention
Industry-specific and interactive.



Healthy Teams
Tools for staff debriefs, check-ins, and communication.



Gender-Based Violence Impacts
Understanding the ladder of gender-based violence.



DFSA
Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault safety and support.



De-Escalation skills
Scenarios and interactive skill-building.



PLEI
Policies, workplace rights, and legal information on gender-based violence.

Alongside our training and policy work, we also have created workshops for industry and non-industry folks alike. [See more under the Survivor-Centred Trauma-Informed Work and Care section.](#)

Our most requested workshops are:

1. Empowered Bystander Intervention

Engages people with information, tools, and courage to safely intervene in gender-based violence.

2. Anti-Harassment Lead (AHL) Training

How to take workplace disclosures and conduct survivor-centred investigations.

3. Safer Artistic Spaces

An adapted version of Safer Bars & Spaces that is specific to live music and arts spaces.

4. Survivor-Centred Peer Support

For organizations, individuals and spaces that want to enhance their trauma-informed practices and skills to support survivors.



We Surveyed Women in Hospitality and Asked: What Would Make Your Workplace Safer?

MORE WOMEN & DIVERSITY

- "I want more female management and better leadership training to teach management how to address sexual harassment when it arises."
- "More women in leadership and more diverse and queer staff. It's often just me and the 5 cis men I work with BOH."

POLICIES THAT MATTER

- "Transparency of policies, healthy communication, intentional practices, accountability measures that are clear and accessible. Workplaces that aren't 'politically neutral.'"
- "Policies that are shared with all staff no matter their level of 'importance', as well as the enforcement of those policies. So often large corporate restaurants preach values and safe environments, but their actions don't align. When staff come forward, the accused party is often given chance after chance to redeem themselves and the accuser ends up losing their job."

A CULTURE CHANGE

- "I just would like to see the industry in a way that reflects the people doing the work. I wanna see the land represented. I want us to be innovative with our small resources. I want to go to work and feel pride, not shame."

NOW SERVING: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION & RESPONSE

Recommendations for How to Support Our Work

- 1** FUND NOW SERVING: SAFER BARS & SPACES CONTINUOUSLY FOR SUSTAINABILITY.
- 2** SPONSOR A SPACE TO RECEIVE POLICY AND PREVENTION SUPPORT.
- 3** FUND OR BOOK "NOW SERVING": OUR NEW ONLINE DIGITAL BLENDED MODEL FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR MULTI-SECTORS.

Recommendations for How to Support Our Work

During this pandemic we are still delivering our training, workshops, and policy development services. We have worked over the last few months to re-develop our services and programs through an online digital blended model. Delivering the same education and training we did for hospitality & live music to ALL workplaces and communities in Ontario and beyond.

1

FUND NOW SERVING: SAFER BARS & SPACES CONTINUOUSLY FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

Safer Bars & Spaces training has stopped with the industry. We relied on service fees to cover costs and subsidize our free front line services for survivors and their families. The devastation COVID-19 has had on the industry creates a ripple effect to all service providers. There is even less revenue and capacity for individual owners/operators to pay for these essential services and there are less physical spaces operating at a capacity that can generate additional revenue.

We are asking for annual program funding to ensure that our critical and valued programs continue to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and inequity in hospitality and nightlife and that businesses and workers are not deprived of skill-building and support during times of uncertainty and rebuilding.

2

SPONSOR A SPACE TO RECEIVE POLICY AND PREVENTION SUPPORT.

The pandemic has not decreased the need for prevention education in hospitality, the arts and diverse workplaces across Ontario. It has, however, limited spaces' ability to afford the help. Through sponsorship donations from agencies, corporations, alcohol brands, government, and individuals, we can provide ongoing consultation, policy development, and training for management and ownership who are planning to re/open their spaces or who need this critical training.

3

FUND OR BOOK OUR "NOW SERVING": GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR MULTI-SECTORS.



Rooted in research and evidence-based frameworks

Our team has worked tirelessly to ensure we adapt our online learning platform into a comprehensive system to reduce barriers for learning, increase engagement, and provide in-person sessions with trained staff.

Delivered to your home or workplace

We will be launching our online e-learning platform in November/December 2020. Each participant and group will have their own confidential portals and access to our learning and resources library.

Reduces barriers for engagement

Using a flipped model for our classrooms, we provide a unique opportunity to learn and grow alongside your peers and mentors. It also allows for individuals with various learning needs to understand and engage with the content meaningfully.

Please make sure to follow us on social media.
Visit our website to see our new programs and decks,
available in November 2020.

NOW SERVING: SAFER CITIES

Policy Recommendations for the City of Toronto

A. PARTNER WITH THE DANDELION INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE SAFER VENUE INDUSTRY GUIDE.

C. MAKE ANNUAL ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TRAINING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT MANDATORY.

B. ADOPT AND FUND THE DANDELION INITIATIVE'S "NOW SERVING" PROGRAM MODEL.

D. ENHANCE AND ADOPT THE VANCOUVER CITY COUNCIL ACTION PLAN TO END SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE IN HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE INDUSTRIES.

Policy Recommendations for the City of Toronto

In 2019, The City of Toronto conducted consultations with specific organizations and a third-party consultant to strengthen Toronto's nightlife safety and economy. In this report we will focus on two area's of the action plan recommendations, 4a and 2.

Recommendation 4a. within the Motion for a Toronto Nightlife Action plan it states in section:

a) The Nightlife Safety and Economy Committee will develop a safer venue industry guide that incorporates safer spaces best practices, information on responsible consumption and safe working environments.

RECOMMENDATION A

The Now Serving: Safer Bars & Spaces program has created an industry guide with best practices for team and patron safety, Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) on employment policies and consent, including OHSA and a module on de-escalation and drug facilitated sexual assault.

This guide is a living document that is updated frequently to maintain current and multi-industry relevant skills.

City of Toronto and the Nightlife Safety and Economy Committee should partner with the Dandelion Initiative for development and distribution of this safer venue industry guide based on our completed work.

Best practices must be broad to honour the diversity and individual needs of spaces and neighbourhoods, while maintaining core values and pillars for equity, safety, and PLEI.

Policy Recommendations for the City of Toronto

2. Recommendations from the City of Toronto also included a Safer Venue Program, stating in the motion that many Toronto venues are proactively seeking advice about how to make their spaces safe for patrons and workers. This work includes developing a code of conduct, educating and empowering venue owners about safe spaces, offering training workshops to employees, and listening and responding to the needs of everyone.

Making such policies by working with Nightlife industry leaders will ensure everyone in Toronto is in a safe space. This aligns with the Toronto Sociable City at Night recommendation to "focus on new nightlife perspectives for safety."

RECOMMENDATION B

We urge this safer venue program to adopt the Dandelion Initiative's "Now Serving" Program Model and provide annual funding to ensure low-cost or free education and policy support for businesses.

Since our program content and delivery meets the needs and fills the gaps stated in this motion and action plan, this program should be led by the Dandelion Initiative and our vetted industry partners.

Our program is evidence-based and industry-specific. Our organization is based in Toronto, and our work is reflective of the diverse communities and groups that comprise the Toronto hospitality and nightlife industry. We believe the City of Toronto and The Nightlife Safety and Economy Committee should be prioritizing our work and collaboration efforts as part of an equitable economic recovery and re-stimulation plan for the hospitality and food industry.

Cost for our training is on par with Smart Serve Ontario prices, with an additional \$250 dollar base fee for policy recommendations and support calls. We can provide a full budget breakdown with staff payroll and operations expenses for annual delivery.

Policy Recommendations for the City of Toronto

As is evident in this report and throughout our research, Toronto needs "an action plan to end gender-based violence in hospitality and the arts." Toronto can become a leader in safety for the hospitality, arts, and nightlife industries alongside the Dandelion Initiative's "Now Serving" Program.

As part of this action plan, we recommend the following practices are adopted from Section 7: Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Vancouver's Hospitality and Service Industries (2019, Vancouver).

RECOMMENDATION C

- a) Make annual anti-sexual harassment and gender-based violence training and policy development mandatory through either the liquor licence or business licence approval and renewal process. This ensures compliance with OHSA and Bill 132.
- b) New liquor license applicants would have to submit a workplace anti-harassment and sexual violence policy with planned training for staff. If they are not employers, new liquor license applicants need to provide a written Code of Conduct.
- c) DIY Spaces & Special Occasion permits where alcohol will be served or where large groups of people are convening. Applicants will have to submit proof of either, Smart Serve Ontario certification and anti-sexual harassment policy or Code of Conduct in the application process to receive approval. Ensure that community spaces and DIY spaces can apply for safer spaces training for free as well to ensure full participation and inclusion.
- d) Established spaces or liquor license holders, who are currently re-opening post COVID-19 will be grandfathered into this new liquor or business license requirement.

Policy Recommendations for the City of Toronto

RECOMMENDATION D

As evident in our research and program impact measures throughout this report, an action plan to end gender-based violence in hospitality and the arts is critical for recovery and re-building in the City of Toronto.

Toronto can become a leader in safety for the hospitality, arts and nightlife industry alongside the Dandelion Initiative's "Now Serving" program. We recommend as part of this action plan to ensure the following practices are Adopted and enhanced from Section: 7. Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Vancouver's Hospitality and Service Industries (2019, Vancouver)

It is critical for the success of any policy and training program for safer spaces and anti-harassment to have an audit process. This process should use a criteria that meets the requirements of the OHSA, Bill 132.

An audit of a venue's/space's anti-harassment policies and training will provide transparency and safety for patrons. This audit process will minimize the risk of sexual violence incidents and escalation or continuation of poisoned work environments.

- We recommend that this annual audit is sustainable and non-punitive, as a heavy focus on compliance and policy only does not create safer spaces or change cultures. Our program impacts demonstrated this earlier in this report. Also, recognizing the serious issue of under-reporting and workplace violence escalation, we would advise a protocol for disclosures against owners and operators, since many times they are the barrier to reporting or non-criminal investigation.
- This audit could be conducted in partnership with the "Now Serving" program alongside municipal and provincial regulators. We have an established criteria for our Safer Spaces Listing that would serve as a template.
- We recommend annual training and testing for any committee members or staff responsible for the annual audit for anti-sexual harassment training and policies.

NOW SERVING:

Recommendations for Safer Workplaces in Ontario

1 AMEND BILL 148 AND BRING BACK PAID SICK DAYS, PAID DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE.

2 COLLECT WORKPLACE DATA ON GENDERED IMPACTS AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS.

3 COORDINATE A ROUNDTABLE WITH THE ONTARIO MLTSD, AGCO, OHS, HRTO, AND THE DANDELION INITIATIVE.

4 CREATE A SUSTAINABLY FUNDED MODEL FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION.

5 ESTABLISH AND ANNUALLY FUND A MULTI-SECTORAL PROVINCIAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE JUSTICE COMMITTEE.

Recommendations for Safer Workplaces in Ontario

1

AMEND BILL 148 AND BRING BACK PAID SICK DAYS, PAID DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE.

Currently under Bill 148, employers do not have to provide paid sick days or leave for domestic violence. Due to the increase in domestic and gender-based violence due to COVID-19 and the long-term negative health impacts of trauma, we strongly plead to reinstate mandatory ten paid sick days, five days paid leave for domestic and sexual violence victims, and up to 15-weeks of emergency extended unpaid leave.

Employers cannot require the employee to show proof of domestic violence or injury; they should not have to provide sick notes, as it may further endanger their lives.

2

COLLECT WORKPLACE DATA ON GENDERED IMPACTS AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS AND RESOLUTIONS.

The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal agency does not track sexual harassment or gender-based violence complaints in hospitality or nightlife. This has to change in order for us to understand the scope of the problem. This data is also vital to effectively prevent and respond to workplace violence. Less than 5% of survivors report to the police, which makes this data collection and process for tracking complaints and resolutions imperative.

3

COORDINATE A ROUNDTABLE WITH THE ONTARIO MLTSD, AGCO, OHS, HRTO, AND THE DANDELION INITIATIVE.

We request an immediate roundtable with the Ontario Ministry of Labour (Ontario MLTSD) inspectors, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO), the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), Employment standards and OHS inspectors to discuss a proactive and survivor-centred plan for consistency and transparency regarding workplace harassment reporting, investigation, and resolution.

Recommendations for Safer Workplaces in Ontario

4

CREATE A SUSTAINABLY FUNDED MODEL FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION.

Adopt and annually fund a system of contracted, predictable service agreements with service providers and survivor-led organizations. Health ministry resources must be deployed in support of these collaborative and community-based models, working in unison with the Public Health. Underfunding essential services creates precarious programs, burnout with staff, and a constant fight for donations and grants, creating additional competition rather than collaboration.

5

ESTABLISH AND ANNUALLY FUND A MULTI-SECTORAL PROVINCIAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE JUSTICE COMMITTEE.

We would like to see a diverse and community-driven multi-agency committee focused on sexual/gender based violence in workplaces. The Dandelion Initiative deserves a seat at this table with a focus on sexual violence law and reform. We would like to see action around the following critical barriers to reporting and justice:

a) Explore a community justice team to support survivors of gender-based violence

b) Explore adopting a third-party reporting model for hospitality and nightlife workers.

c) Ensure that survivors have legal ownership over their own Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK), which they currently do not.

d) Implement Bill C-337 An act to Amend the Criminal Code and Justice System, which has been tabled and voted against.

#CHOOSETOSHIFT We Can Rebuild Safer.

Sexual and gender-based violence has compounded costs that ripple through the fabric of our society, affecting not only victims and their families, but our economy and society as well.

The slow violence of austerity and inaction has normalized workplace harassment and violence which in turn impacts patron care, risk management in spaces, de-escalation, and safety.

A survivor-centred approach to addressing workplace violence prioritizes the needs of the survivor who has experienced harm. It focuses on reparation and accountability, and recognizes that impact of an action is more important than the intention. It gives power to the person who is vulnerable, equalizing the power dynamic that disempowered them in the first place. It also means just and fair processes that recognizes the needs or rights of the accused, but does not prioritize them in a way that causes further harm to the victim/survivor or the environment.

We hope to receive the support of the governments, and other stakeholders, to continue our important work. During times of distress and economic instability, prevention planning and trauma-informed approaches are key to building strong pillars post-COVID-19.

Again, we acknowledge that we could not do this work alone and are endlessly inspired, driven, and supported by workers and labour rights advocates, including but not limited to, [15 and Fairness](#) and the [Workers Action Centre](#).



#NOTWITHOUTUS

OUR SURVIVOR-CENTRED
WORK AND SERVICES

What Does Survivor-Centred Mean?

Survivor-centred practices are guided by trauma-informed principles to centre the experiences and healing of the survivor/victim through resiliency-building and care. Survivor-centred programs and practices can re-establish a survivor's autonomy and choice, while building their self-efficacy. This framework can help individuals safely manage triggers created by trauma.

Survivor-centred practices provide survivors with:

1. **Acknowledgement:** Affirmations and sharing their story
2. **Safety:** Confidentiality and chosen language
3. **Trustworthiness:** Non-judgmental environment and approach
4. **Agency:** Informed choice and consent
5. **Empowerment:** A focus on strengths and resiliency
6. **Collaboration:** Having a voice in decision making

"I appreciate this organization so much. I cannot tell you how much my ability to survive, in so many ways, has been so supported by the peer support and workshops offered by Dandelion Initiative. More importantly though, Dandelion Initiative has made a significant contribution towards processing my trauma so that I can get to a point where I'm no longer just surviving, but thriving. I am so incredibly grateful."

What is Peer Support?

- A peer is an equal in the peer support relationship.
- Promotes healing through the connection of shared experiences, belonging, learning from one another, and community care.
- Does not adhere to any one "program model".
- Does not focus on diagnosis or deficits.

Creating programs and workshops that are survivor-centred and rooted in peer support has built bridges between our small staff and the survivors we serve. We provide ongoing 1:1 peer support by survivors, for survivors. Our staff want to thank every single survivor who has connected with us one way or another, we carry you and your stories of resilience with us always.

Our Survivor-Centred Care Work

Along with our 1:1 peer support services, we also provide the following workshops that are rooted in survivor-centred practices and trauma care. All workshops and sessions are free for survivors. Organizations pay a non-profit rate.



SURVIVORS THRIVE

A workshop centering trauma care, narratives, resilience and self/community-care.



SURVIVOR-CENTRED PEER SUPPORT

Principles of peer support and trauma care for survivors, from a trauma-informed, survivor-centred lens.



SAFETY PLANNING

For women and trans people experiencing violence.



RESILENCY BUILDING

An intersectional feminist session to build skills for empowerment and trauma care.



ACCOUNTABILITY & SAFETY

We support survivors who are seeking alternative ways to hold people/institutions accountable for perpetuating gender-based violence and rape culture.



TRAUMA CARE

We have ongoing diverse trauma care workshops covering holistic approaches.

The Power of Sisterhood/Siblinghood & Increasing Lateral Violence.

Throughout every part of our work and advocacy runs the bond of sisterhood/siblinghood. We celebrate women and feminized people. We believe that there is more power and progress when we can all have a seat at the table.

There has never been a doubt that the collective knowledge and herstory of women and trans people can rebuild cultures equitably. We believe in collaboration rather than competition and we believe in paying survivors for their work and contributions.

We also honour that trauma, systems, internalized misogyny, and capitalism has created a container for lateral violence. We hope to see more organizations, services and individual leaders in feminized spaces and sectors speak up and out against internal lateral violence so women/trans people in positions of organizing and service are not diminished and dehumanized within this critical work.

Heal + Thrive Series: The Power of Survivor-Centred Care

Through our partnerships with the City of Toronto and WAGE (Women and Gender Equality Canada) we have been able to host and deliver a year of free workshops for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

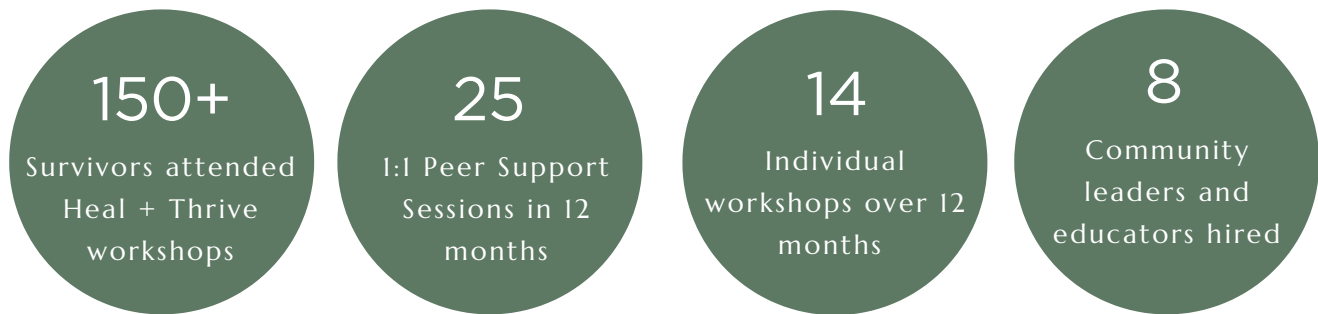
Visit our website to see our Heal + Thrive Booklet with information about our facilitators and survivor's stories.

This series was yet another example of the power of survivor-centred care, and that survivorhood and siblinghood heals. We all come to the table with different experiences, truths, identities, and needs and we collaborate equitably. Through Heal + Thrive we were able to start sowing the seeds of a peer support model rooted in intersectional feminism and trauma care. Through survivor-centred peer models, we are able to build survivors' resiliency, social capital, self-efficacy, and access to supports.



Artwork by the beloved and talented, [Yalla Roza](#).

Heal + Thrive Series Impacts and Feedback



From Series Participants

- "Can't think of an organization that is this effective at creating safe spaces." (A Room of One's Own, February 2020)
- "I feel less scared of these supportive spaces." (Reclaiming the Body, September 2019)
- "Sometimes I lose touch with how I feel affected by being trans in the world as a survivor and it felt good to be around people sharing these ideas that I didn't realize I needed to discuss." (Trans Care for Resiliency, 2019)
- "It's great to know that as things happen and triggers arise, there's still a safe place to come. I've never experienced that." (R o o t e d, January 2020)
- "I am really grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this. I needed it. It made my heart feel full and felt good to connect and talk to other women." (R o o t e d, January 2020)
- "I feel at home." (R o o t e d, January 2020)
- "You have so much wonderful content being put out right now; it really is inspiring. I am a fan of the workshops Dandelion Initiative has been organising. I understand the Heal + Thrive series is over, but I do hope that workshops like those are not off the table indefinitely as they have been so helpful and empowering." (Trauma-Informed Peer Support, 2020)
- "I'm feeling better overall - like I've been geared up and given a shield of protection. I felt so alone for so long and this truly helped me begin to climb out of this well." (Healing Through Monsters, April 2020)

After Heal + Thrive: What Happens Now?

With similar losses to many grassroots and non-profits right now, our survivor services rely on help from everyone to continue.

Our Heal + Thrive Series, funded by the City of Toronto and Women and Gender Equality Canada, provided us with funding for one year to develop and implement community events that serve survivors of gender-based violence in Toronto.

With the support of the Women and Gender Equality Canada, we were able to expand these services to survivors across Canada and additionally provide 1:1 survivor peer counselling. Thank you to the staff and volunteers at the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape who provided us with external support to receive this grant, and for their collaboration to ensure that survivors could access these services.

We were able to produce over a dozen in-person and online workshops by survivors and allies, for survivors of all genders, prioritizing women and trans people in their healing and surviving. Each facilitator was paid an honorarium for their knowledge, time, and facilitation to ensure that they, as individuals, had opportunities for economic empowerment. Using a holistic and culturally diverse model, each workshop also provided trauma-informed and survivor-centred practices for holistic care.

We currently have a growing wait list of survivors seeking supports and workshops. These numbers will only increase, during, and after COVID-19. With no funding for our direct services, we have relied on our donations and Now Serving: Safer Bars & Spaces revenue to ensure survivors receive these supports free of charge. Sadly, like many organizations, we have lost all these sources of revenue for survivor programming.

We are calling on all our partners, stakeholders and *government* to ensure we can continue providing these essential services by providing us with ongoing or project funding to continue the Heal + Thrive series, as a sustained cohort series.

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