



Community Consultation Report: Challenges and Solutions to Gender and Sexuality-Based Violence Prevention

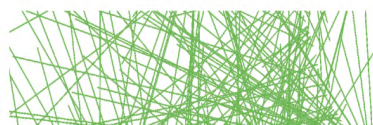
The Transformation Hub: Gender and sexuality-based
violence prevention through transformative
education

Authors

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I. Project Overview

Context

Formed in 2023, *The Transformation Hub*—the partnership between Éduconnexion and the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University—was built to create a research hub for the development and distribution of popular educational resources and tools that can help support community organizations that serve under-resourced and racialized youth and their families in the fight against gender and sexuality-based violence (GBV). In 2025 Project 10 joined The Transformation Hub as a partner.

Mission and Objectives:

This collaborative project aims to develop and distribute gender and sexuality-based violence prevention educational tools with an intersectional, transformative approach focused on cultural safety and empowerment. Our objective is to help build the capacity of under-funded community organizations in Montreal to apply innovative prevention approaches. We aim to support community organizations that are not part of the gender-based violence sector but serve neighbourhoods and communities that lack comprehensive prevention programs. We have three main objectives:

Our objective is to help build the capacity of under-funded community organizations in Montreal to apply innovative prevention approaches. We aim to support community organizations that are not part of the gender-based violence sector but serve neighborhoods and boroughs characterized by a lack of health and social services programs. We have three main objectives:

1. Challenge the systemic roots of gender and sexuality-based violence, guided by the values of transformative justice and cultural safety.
2. Co-create a resource hub for open-access tools for gender and sexuality-based violence prevention.
3. Strengthen values of agency, autonomy, and collaboration within communities in preventing gender and sexuality-based violence.

II. Our Methodology

Through consultations, our goal was to develop a strategic plan to support and strengthen the capacities of community organizations in Montreal to prevent gender and sexuality-based violence.

This report documents the experiences of community organizations in Montreal serving communities that are under-resourced when it comes to gender- and sexuality-based violence prevention and support services. To achieve this goal, we organized a series of consultations between December 2024 and April 2025 to identify:

- current challenges facing community organizations and their stakeholders in the work of gender and sexuality-based violence prevention,
- gaps in currently available services and resources,
- areas where we can support the work currently performed by community groups by bridging services and resources.

We aim to develop educational tools and resources that can be accessed by any organization, group, or initiative that is interested in drawing on transformative justice approaches to violence prevention.

We identified community organizations that serve racialized communities (including youth and their families) located in neighbourhoods where residents face multiple social and systemic barriers, including:

- a desert of health and social service resources (i.e. there are few or no services or resources available or accessible in the neighbourhood or local and adjacent areas);
- communities are heavily impacted by police surveillance and at risk of criminalization; and
- limited access to organizations mandated to work on gender-based violence prevention, which places demands on organizations that are not funded to carry out this work to serve as a resource gap or bridge when these services are not readily available.

Organisations and Groups Consulted: Amal Center for Women, Black Community Resources Centre, Clinique Mauve, Heads and Hands, Maison d'Haïti, Café Jeunesse, and Brique par Brique.

III. Consultation Outcomes

Through our consultations, we identified a number of key challenges and needs facing service providers and community groups and organizations in the fight against gender and sexuality-based violence in Montreal. We briefly outline a summary of these findings below.

Context, Challenges, and Obstacles:

Context

In the context of government cutbacks, community organizations have become essential in filling the gaps left by the public system, often without receiving sufficient recognition or resources. Despite these challenges, the groups consulted have developed resources and programs that address the diverse and urgent needs of their communities, even when funding and staffing are limited. Peer-based support groups and programs play a critical role in bridging the gaps where safe and accessible services are unavailable. Moreover, some organizations are already implementing approaches that are anti-oppressive, anti-racist, intersectional, decolonial, queer and trans affirmative, trauma-informed, and grounded in harm reduction principles, demonstrating the resilience and adaptability of communities in response to changing needs.

Challenges

- **Disadvantaged and under-resourced neighborhoods:**
 - Public resources are scarce, especially for the most disadvantaged, leading to a high level of vulnerability and increased risk of structural violence. This violence is exacerbated by systemic racism.
 - Stakeholders face accessibility issues due to lack of public transportation, language barriers, and other contexts of isolation.
- **Systemic barriers and under-investment in public services and resources:**
 - Lack of funding for gender-based violence and prevention programs.
 - Lack of accessible social and community services.
 - Low priority given to neighborhood social development in municipal and other government budgets.
 - Stakeholders who are isolated and/or cannot access services because of lack of transportation, social isolation, language barriers, stigma, etc.
 - Communities that face higher structural risks of violence, housing insecurity, street involvement, overdose, STIs, etc.
 - Intersecting structural barriers to accessing formal and informal health care, social services, and community services.
- **Serving racialized and diverse socio-cultural communities:**
 - Racialized populations and diversity of religions and cultural norms (i.e. people who hold multiple identities).

- Cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity of community stakeholders (e.g. Haitians, Arabs, Muslims, Indigenous, Latinos, and people with multiple identities).
- Diversity across sexual orientation and gender expression.
- Migrant communities with precarious status, including asylum seekers and non-status people.
- **The impact of criminalization, which creates more needs for support:**
 - Significant police surveillance in public spaces.
 - Funding programs and conditions that rely on collaboration with the police and judicial system.
 - Service providers function as mediators and advocates in liaison with the justice, health, and social services sectors.
- **Government austerity measures that impact community development:**
 - Lack of sustainable, long term, and stable funding and/or subsidies.
 - Funding that is poorly adapted to the real needs of communities and organizations and/or that requires programming to meet funder-expectations rather than community needs.
 - Under-resourced community organizations must act as gateways to a wide range of services requiring expertise in different sectors.
 - Barriers to working in collaboration on intersecting social issues across community organizations.
 - Limited funding available for prevention of gender- and sexuality-based violence.
- **Absence of prevention resources that are adapted for community needs:**
 - Intersectional, culturally responsive and culturally safe, and inclusive resources are generally available only in English.
 - Unclear whether other organizations are adapted to or safe for the intersecting needs of community members who are facing multiple systems of oppression (e.g. transphobia, systemic racism, islamophobia, etc.).
 - Challenges around addressing violence when it is embedded within organizational practices and/or coming from service providers to service users, or even between service users.
 - The challenge of moving beyond referrals to actually collaborate across organizations and service providers.
- **Limited availability of funding and resources for training and skills development:**

- Insufficient culturally adapted training for service providers who work with diverse communities (missing intersectional understanding).
- When programming or training is available, there are challenges with seeing these skills translated into behavioural changes in community participants.

Needs:

- **Strengthening community networks for gender and sexuality-based violence prevention:**
 - Need to strengthen the community network in order to increase the capacity for joint and effective interventions between the various community organizations, groups, and service providers (e.g. skill sharing).
 - More “Tables locales de concertation” as spaces for learning, skill building, and networking.
- **Reliable and accessible resources:**
 - A clear mapping of accessible and safe shelters, services specialized in gender and sexuality-based violence and related services that truly meet the needs of the community.
 - Statistical data on gender-based violence, family violence, homelessness, etc.
 - Multilingual materials for distribution in communities.
 - Interactive activities and games that can be adapted for diverse and intergenerational groups.
- **Training needed:**
 - De-escalation and harm reduction tools and strategies.
 - Trauma-informed responses to disclosures.
 - Equipping families with tools for conflict resolution and better communication skills, building healthy relationships.
 - Alternatives to policing in the context of gender and sexuality-based violence.
 - Training that can help service providers address sensitive subjects (e.g. homophobia, or inability to name genitalia).
 - Peer-facilitation or peer-based leadership training.
 - Gender and sexuality-inclusivity, including trans affirmative approaches.
 - Mental Health Support: emotional safety, bereavement practice, suicide prevention/intervention/follow up (e.g. after the death of community member), supporting people with mental health

challenges, crisis intervention, navigating feelings of powerlessness as a worker, setting boundaries.

IV. Action Plan

Proposal for the next two years of planning for the Transformation Hub.

Guiding Values

- A transformative and non-punitive approach.
- Tools and resources in English and French.
- Open access.
- Popular education tools that are “practice-based” (i.e. not just theoretical but can be easily applied in community settings).
- Evaluation of available resources to ensure inclusive and accessible services are actually provided.

Timeline: Short / Medium / Long Term

Short-Term (3-6 months)

1. Skill and information sharing.
2. Develop a tool identifying alternatives to calling the police.
3. Provide statistical information on the state of gender and sexuality-based violence in Montreal and Quebec.
4. Develop materials on safety planning and knowing your rights around gender and sexuality-based violence.

Medium-Term (6-12 months)

5. Develop a Montreal Resource List (culturally safe and accessible), including:
 - a. Mental health.
 - b. Sexual violence
 - c. Domestic violence
 - d. Reproductive, obstetric and perinatal health
 - e. Legal aid (family, criminal and immigration law)

Long-Term (1-2 years)

6. Support advocacy work against the defunding of the community sector, and for the creation of prevention services and programs in

under-resourced neighborhoods with a high representation of racialized and immigrant communities.

7. Connecting a network of advocacy resources for Montreal orgs, including linking experts (e.g. lawyers, psychologists, etc.).
8. Training Program for Community Organizations (i.e. developing facilitator training and toolkit).

Topics:

- a. De-escalation and harm reduction.
- b. Conflict resolution (interpersonal).
- c. Frontline skill building (e.g. needs assessments)
- d. Gender and sexuality inclusivity in service provision.
- e. Intersectional and inclusive service provision.
- f. Mental Health and Well-Being Support within Communities

March 2025

- Present Draft Report & Action Plan.
- Hold additional consultations.
- Revise Report and Action Plan.

April 2025-August 2025

- Schedule 1 or 2 Skill and Information Sharing sessions.
- Develop "Alternatives to Policing" resources for distribution.
- Begin developing Montreal Resource List.
- Develop a statistics sheet on gender and sexuality-based violence in Quebec.
- Apply for funding for long-term activities.

September 2025-December 2025

- Complete Montreal Resource List.
- Develop advocacy plan for 2026.
- Begin work on a Training Program.
- Apply for funding for long-term activities.

January 2026-March 2027

- Develop and pilot Training Program