



POLICY BRIEF 2022

It's Time We Had "The Talk":

The Case for Comprehensive Sexuality Education Reforms
in British Columbia

Taylor Arnt

The LEVEL Youth Policy Program takes place on the traditional and unceded territories of the *xʷməθkʷəyəm* (Musqueam), *Sḵwx̱wú7mesh* (Squamish) & *səlilwətaɣ* (Tseil-Waututh) Coast Salish peoples.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

And Also Too

COVER ILLUSTRATION

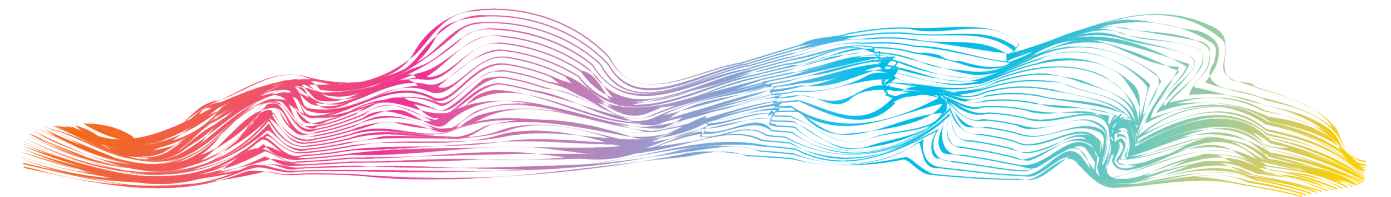
Jessica Joseph

HEADSHOT PHOTOGRAPHY

Mike Wells

Contents

- 3 About the LEVEL Initiative
- 4 Biography
- 5 Executive Summary
- 7 Introduction
- 8 Terminology and Background
- 13 BC's Current Sex Education Curriculum
- 15 Policy Recommendations
- 17 Challenges
- 18 Conclusion
- 19 Endnotes
- 24 Bibliography
- 27 Acknowledgements



About the LEVEL Initiative

LEVEL is a youth engagement initiative of Vancouver Foundation that aims to address racial inequity. We do this by investing in the leadership capacity of Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, and refugee youth to create more opportunities throughout the non-profit and charitable sector.

Despite being the fastest-growing youth populations in British Columbia, Indigenous, immigrant, and refugee youth don't have the same opportunities as other young people. Race continues to be a factor that hinders their ability to have a say in decisions that impact their lives.

LEVEL empowers these youth by building their capacity to challenge and change those systems that hinder their ability to build a more just world.

LEVEL consists of three pillars of work to advance racial equity

1. LEVEL Youth Policy Program
2. LEVEL Youth Organizing
3. LEVEL BIPOC Granting

About the LEVEL Youth Policy Program (LEVEL YPP)

The LEVEL Youth Policy Program (LEVEL YPP) brings together young people between the ages of 19 and 29 from across British Columbia who identify as being Indigenous or racialized immigrants or refugees. Indigenous and racialized Newcomer youth are dispropor-

tionately impacted by certain public policies but are rarely included in the development and implementation of public policy process. The LEVEL YPP aims to provide these youth with equitable training and leadership opportunities to better navigate the public policy landscape, and to develop new tools and skills to influence, shape, and advocate for policy changes that are relevant in their own communities. Having young people directly involved in shaping policies that impact their lives is essential to creating systemic, meaningful change. The LEVEL YPP's training is grounded from and within Indigenous peoples' worldviews, which the program acknowledges, could vary from person-to-person or nation-to-nation. Indigenous worldviews place a large emphasis on connections to the land. This perspective views the land as sacred; where everything and everyone is related and connected; where the quality of the relationships formed are key in life; where what matters is the success and well-being of the community, and where there can be many truths as they are based on individual lived experiences.¹ As such, an important premise of this training is to centre and place a particular focus on the fact that the work that has gone into developing this training, as well as the training itself, has taken and will take place on unceded (never given away/stolen) territories of the *həŋq 'əmin 'əŋ*-speaking Musqueam peoples, of the Halkomelem-speaking Tseil-Waututh peoples, and of the *sníchim*-speaking *Sḵwx̱wú7mesh* (Squamish) peoples.

1. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-worldviews-vs-western-worldviews>

Biography

Taylor Arnt



Taylor Arnt (she/they) is of mixed Anishinaabe (Ojibway) and European heritage, from Treaty 1 territory (Winnipeg, Manitoba). She is a member of Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve, which is signatory to Treaty 4 and located on Treaty 2 lands. They reside as a guest on Xʷməθkʷəyəm, Sḵwxwú7mesh and sə́ilwətaʔ territory.

Taylor holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Affairs and Policy Management and has work experience throughout the federal public service, nonprofit, and Indigenous governance sectors. As the second Indigenous Peoples Specialist hired by the Canadian Red Cross, Taylor has been deployed to 10+ First Nations communities, assisting them through public health and climate crises. Now as a Policy Analyst for the BC Assembly of First Nations, Taylor advocates for the title and treaty rights of the 203 First Nations communities across British Columbia. Taylor will begin their MA in Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice in September 2022.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/taylor-arnt-3692b8123/>

Executive Summary

Content Warning: mentions of gender-based and sexual violence throughout this paper. If you are feeling triggered and require emotional or mental health support, please call VictimLink BC at 1-800-563-0808 or visit <https://endingviolence.org/need-help/> for more resources.

This policy ask proposes comprehensive reforms to British Columbia's (BC's) sexual education curriculum that emphasize consent, sexual well-being, gender-equitable relationships, and the full-inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity.

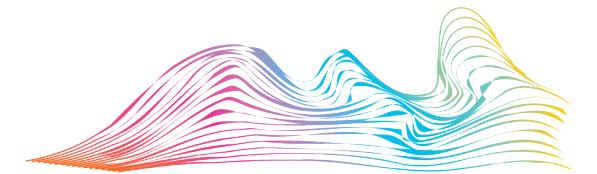
Why?

Because sexual assault is the only violent crime that is not in decline, and gender-based and sexual violence continue to be a reprehensibly common occurrence in BC.¹²

Though it may be deeply entrenched in our patriarchal world, gender-based and sexual violence is 100% preventable. Teaching comprehensive sexuality education ("sex-ed") can play an integral role in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence by creating a culture of consent, gender-equitable relationships, and proactive sexual health amongst BC youth. If we fail to teach these integral lessons, we will subject another generation of children, youth, and young adults to reprehensible harm.

The following recommendations were proposed after a thorough review of best practices in comprehensive sexual education and BC's current sexual education curriculum:

1. Ensure all schools explicitly mention consent in their sexual education lessons.
2. Teach students the role they have to play in eradicating gender-based violence.
3. Include 2SLGBTQIA+ sexual activity and sexual health as part of the sexual education curriculum.
4. Extend mandatory sexual education into Grades 11 and 12.
5. Emphasize sexual well-being (not solely the prevention of negative outcomes) in sexual-education curriculum.
6. Recruit and establish a database of certified sexual-health educators who can supplement classroom sexual education lessons on an ongoing basis.
7. Develop digital and printed resources for parents that elaborate on why the lessons covered in sexual-education curriculum are being taught.



Teaching comprehensive sexuality education ("sex-ed") can play an integral role in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence by creating a culture of consent, gender-equitable relationships, and proactive sexual health amongst BC youth.

These seven policy recommendations proposed, if implemented, have the ability to:

- Teach students how to effectively give, withhold, and withdraw consent, and respect the sexual rights of others;
- Actively dispel gender and other stereotypes, as well as misconceptions about gender-based and sexual violence, in favour of a culture of consent and healthy, equitable relationships;
- Normalize 2SLGBTQQIA+ sexual activity and sexual health so that the sexual education curriculum becomes relevant for all students;
- Ensure all BC students are equipped to make safe, informed decisions about their sexuality;
- Build a database of certified sexual-health educators to improve student access to comprehensive, scientifically accurate information;
- Garner parent buy-in to the sexual education curriculum as it undergoes transformational change;
- Reframe sex as a pleasurable, life-enhancing experience, grounded in consent, safety, and respect.

As a survivor, I have bravely chosen to speak up and shed light on the realities of sexual violence. I hope that in reading, you bravely choose to treat comprehensive sexuality education as an urgent public policy priority, and act as an ally in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence.



As a survivor, I have bravely chosen to speak up and shed light on the realities of sexual violence. I hope that in reading, you bravely choose to treat comprehensive sexuality education as an urgent public-policy priority, and act as an ally in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence.

Introduction

I have been sexually assaulted three times, at 5, 18, and 20 years old. Each time, I felt alone and isolated in my experience. It was only years later, upon reading into statistics on sexual assault, that I realized how reprehensibly common sexual violence actually is.

- Only 28% of Canadians fully understand what it means to give consent.³
- 50% of women in Canada have felt pressured to consent to unwanted sexual activity.⁴
- 44% of women in Canada report experiencing some form of psychological, physical, or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes.⁵
- For those with identities at multiple intersections⁶ of marginalization (including those women who are Indigenous, racialized, disabled, 2SLGBTQQIA+, young, impoverished and/or homeless, or use alcohol and/or drugs), rates of gender-based and sexual violence are higher, and access to justice is decreased.⁷

Teaching comprehensive sexuality education is an important piece of the puzzle in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence. As Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights states:

“Considering the benefits of high-quality sex-ed, it should be an urgent public policy priority. Sex-ed saves lives and is a key intervention to address many of the pressing public health issues in Canada.”⁸

By teaching all youth to value their sexual rights and the sexual rights of others, we can create a culture of consent, gender equitable relationships, and proactive sexual health. If we fail to teach these things, we will allow another generation of children, youth, and young adults to experience reprehensible harm.

As things currently stand, outlooks are dire. Eighty percent of Canadians believe that the next generation of women are just as, or more likely to, experience sexual assault.⁹ But when policymakers listen to, and act on, the recommendations of survivors and advocates, change is possible.



As those with lived experiences of what is not consent, [survivors] are well-equipped to recommend measures that promote what is.

The role of survivors and advocates is to speak up and shed light on the realities of sexual violence. As those with lived experiences of what is not consent, we are well-equipped to recommend measures that promote what is. By treating comprehensive sexuality education as an urgent public-policy priority, policymakers act as integral allies to survivors in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence.

Terminology and Background

WHAT IS GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

Gender-Based Violence: Describes “violence that is inflicted upon a person or persons due to their gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender.”¹⁰ It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms.¹¹ Disproportionately affecting women, girls, transgender, and gender-diverse people, acts of gender-based violence can include:

- Physical violence;
- Sexual violence;
- Emotional violence;
- Psychological violence;
- Economic violence;
- Harassment and/or stalking;
- Femicide;
- Online violence;
- And other forms of violence.¹²

Intimate-Partner Violence: Describes “abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship.”¹³ It refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners, and can vary in both frequency and severity. Acts of intimate partner violence can include:

- Physical violence;
- Sexual violence;
- Emotional violence;
- Controlling behaviours;
- Stalking.^{14 15}

Sexual Violence: Describes “any form of unwanted sexual contact.”¹⁶ It can happen between anyone, though most sexual violence is committed by men towards women, girls, transgender, and gender-diverse people.^{17 18}

Acts of sexual violence can include:

- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual assault;
- Rape;
- Incest;
- Childhood sexual abuse;
- Sexual harassment;
- Stalking;
- Indecent or sexualized exposure;
- Degrading sexual imagery;
- Voyeurism;
- Cyber harassment;
- Sex trafficking;
- And other forms of violence.¹⁹

Sexual Assault: Is “an unwanted act of a sexual nature that is imposed on another person without their consent.”²⁰ It is a crime defined in the Criminal Code of Canada,²¹ as five different types of offences:

- 1. Sexual assault (Level 1) (s.271):** An assault committed in circumstances of a sexual nature such that the sexual integrity of the victim is violated. Level 1 involves minor physical injuries or no injuries to the victim.
- 2. Sexual assault (Level 2) (s.272):** Sexual assault with a weapon, threats, or causing bodily harm.
- 3. Aggravated sexual assault (Level 3):** Sexual assault that results in wounding, maiming, disfiguring, or endangering the life of the victim.
- 4. Other sexual offences:** A group of offences that are meant to primarily address incidents of sexual abuse directed at children. The Criminal Code offences included in this category are: Sexual interference (s.151), Invitation to sexual

touching (s.152), Sexual exploitation (s.153), Incest (s.155), Anal intercourse (s.159), and Bestiality (s.160).

- 5.** Two related offences, not included under the definition of sexual offences, are indecent acts (s.173) and corrupting morals (s.163).²²

Consent: Is “an agreement to engage in an activity; it occurs when you ask or give permission to do something.”²³ In a sexual context, “consent refers to giving voluntary permission to engage in a sexual activity.”²⁴

Consent is:

- A freely given, enthusiastic “yes”;
- Fully-informed;
- Ongoing and continually discussed;
- Specific to each activity;
- Able to be withdrawn at any time.²⁵

Consent is not:

- Pressuring someone until you are given the answer you want;
- Using your power or authority to manipulate someone;
- Able to be given while intoxicated, unconscious, or incapacitated;
- Able to be given by those who are underage;
- Assumed based on a previous romantic or sexual relationship with someone;
- Silence, or simply the absence of a “no.”²⁶

WHAT IS SEX EDUCATION?

Sexual Education: Describes “education about human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexual intercourse, and other aspects of human sexual behavior.”²⁷

Comprehensive Sexual Education: Covers puberty, reproduction, contraception, protec-

tive sexual products, relationships (including 2SLGBTQIA+ relationships), sexual violence prevention, body image, gender identity, and sexual orientation. It treats sexual development as a normal, natural part of human development, and equips youth to make informed decisions about their bodies, sex and sexual health.²⁸ It is taught by trained professionals, taught early and throughout all education levels, includes both information and skill building activities, and is evidence-based.²⁹

For students in Canada, “receiving high-quality sex-ed depends on which province you live in, your school board, principal, and whether nearby health centers

and community

groups can offer

support.”³⁰ Some

school curriculums

choose to define

teenage sexuality

“as a problem to be

contained,”³¹ or hardly

teach sex-ed to youth

at all. Abstinence-un-

til-marriage programs are ineffective.³² By

failing to equip youth with the skills and infor-

mation needed to make informed decisions,

abstinence-based education unnecessarily puts

youth at risk for sexually transmitted infec-

tions, gender-based violence, discrimination,

and negative health outcomes.^{33 34}



Some school curriculums choose to define teenage sexuality “as a problem to be contained,” or hardly teach sex-ed to youth at all.

WHY SHOULD SEX EDUCATION BE COMPREHENSIVE?

1: Comprehensive Sexuality Education is a Human Right

Sexual rights are human rights. As the International Planned Parenthood Federation declares, “they contribute to the freedom,

equality and dignity of all people, and cannot be ignored.³⁵ This is affirmed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights,³⁶ the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women,³⁷ the Convention on the Rights of the Child,³⁸ the Yogyakarta Principles,³⁹ and other international human rights instruments.

What makes sexual rights human rights? Sexual rights emanate from the rights to freedom, equality, privacy, autonomy, integrity, and dignity of all people.⁴⁰ Sexual rights deserve particular attention because sexuality is near-universal to the human condition.

Most Canadian youth will engage in sexual activity; according to the 2015/2016 CCHS, 23.3% of 15-17 year olds, 57.6% of 18-19 year olds, and 78.3% of 20-24 year olds report having sex.⁴¹ Even for those who choose not to engage in sexual activity as youth, the overwhelming majority will engage in it as adults; upwards of 97% of American adults have engaged in sexual activity at least once over the course of a lifetime.^{42 43}

Knowing this, and then choosing not to equip youth with the knowledge and skills to safely, respectfully, engage in this fundamental act, is denying youth the right to their own sexuality and sexual health.

2: Comprehensive Sexuality Education is Preventative Action Against Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Gender-based and sexual violence are “one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations across the globe.”⁴⁴ They pose major public and clinical health problems.⁴⁵ They cost governments billions of dollars annually to address.^{46 47} Most importantly, gender-based and/or sexual

violence is one of the most traumatising experiences a person can go through.⁴⁸

The effects of experiencing gender-based and sexual violence include, but are not limited to:

Physical Effects:

- Physical injury (bruising, vaginal or anal bleeding, difficulty walking, soreness, broken or dislocated bones, etc.);
- Sexually transmitted infections and diseases;
- Unwanted pregnancy;
- Negative changes to eating or sleeping patterns;
- Difficulties with menstrual cycle;
- Difficulties with fertility;
- Chronic fatigue;
- Muscle tension;
- Shortness of breath;
- Involuntary shaking;
- Sexual dysfunction.^{49 50}

Emotional Effects:

- Guilt, shame, self blame;
- Fear and distrust;
- Embarrassment;
- Shock and disbelief;
- Sadness;
- Betrayal;
- Confusion;
- Denial;
- Anger;
- Vulnerability;
- Isolation;
- Lack of control;
- Numbness.⁵¹

Psychological Effects:

- Hyper-alertness and hypervigilance;
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD);⁵²
- Anxiety;

- Eating disorders;
- Substance misuse or abuse;
- Nightmares;
- Flashbacks;
- Depression;
- Difficulty concentrating;
- Phobias;
- Low self esteem;
- Dissociation;
- Suicidal thoughts, attempts, or death by suicide.^{53 54}

Gender-based and sexual violence continue to be a reprehensibly common occurrence in BC. In 2021, 4,524 sexual assaults were reported to police in BC, an increase from both 2020 (3,890) and 2019 (4,152).⁵⁵ If we take into consideration that 95% of sexual assaults experienced by Canadians aged 15 and older are never reported to police, we can estimate that the true number of sexual assaults that occurred in BC in 2021 is closer to 90,000.^{56 57}

Sexual assault is the only violent crime which is not in decline.^{58 59} In fact, from 2013-2018, rates of sexual abuse, dating violence, and sexual harassment experienced by BC students increased.^{60 61} Amongst young women,⁶² 29% reported experiencing intimate-partner violence⁶³ in the past 12 months, and 15% had been physically or sexually assaulted by a non-intimate partner in the past 12 months.^{64 65}



It is imperative that comprehensive sex-ed be taught to BC students—because gender-based and sexual violence disproportionately affect them.

It is imperative that comprehensive sex-ed be taught to BC students—because gender-based and sexual violence disproportionately affect them.⁶⁶ By dispelling rape myths,⁶⁷ emphasizing consent, and promoting gender equality, comprehensive sex-ed has the potential to make a significant impact in eradicating gender-based and sexual violence.⁶⁸

3: Comprehensive Sexuality Education Leads to Positive Health Outcomes

Current sex education approaches have often focused primarily, if not exclusively, on the biological aspects of sexual health and the prevention of negative outcomes. This approach is ineffective. A significant percentage of BC youth still do not know where:

- to get tested for an STI (57%);
- to get emergency contraception if they need it (52%);
- to get free sexual protection (condoms, dental dams, gloves) and contraception (38%);
- to access birth control (47%).

According to 2010 national STI surveillance data, 63% of new cases of chlamydia, 49% of new cases of gonorrhoea, and 14.9% of new cases of infectious syphilis were among young

people aged 15–24.⁶⁹ One quarter of positive HIV tests were also attributed to young people between the ages of 15 and 29.⁷⁰ This means that youth are contracting the vast majority of sexually transmitted infections.⁷¹

Additionally, the percentage of BC youth whose only method of pregnancy prevention was withdrawal (“pulling out”) increased from 6% in 2013 to 10% in 2018;⁷² This may demonstrate that youth do not know of other contraceptive options available, do not know where to access them, or do not feel comfortable advocating for their use.

While the cultural myth that sexual education encourages youth to become more sexually active may be pervasive, it is not true. Comprehensive sexual education actually delays the onset of sexual relations, and increases the use of protection against unintended pregnancy and STIs during sexual intercourse.⁷³

When sexual health and well-being are primary objectives of sexual education, the curriculum becomes more-relevant to the needs of BC students. By providing the information and skills to use effective contraception, navigate reproductive health care, and access services and supports, implementing comprehensive sexual education can play an integral role in equipping BC youth to make safe and informed reproductive choices.⁷⁴



Implementing comprehensive sexual education can play an integral role in equipping BC youth to make safe and informed reproductive choices.

BC’s Current Sex Education Curriculum

Provincial governments are responsible for curriculum development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.⁷⁵ The responsibility to provide comprehensive, scientifically accurate sex-ed to youth in BC lies in the hands of the government of BC and the province’s educators.

Sexual education is taught in BC under the umbrella of physical education, from Kindergarten until Grade 10. Some teachers deliver lessons in the classroom, while others have school health nurses or community-based sexual health educators present to students and/or parents.⁷⁶ Physical health education is not mandatory after Grade 10, and does not include sexual health lessons in its Grade 11 or 12 iterations.⁷⁷

The table below details which topics are covered by BC schools’ current sex-ed curriculums.⁷⁸ School districts such as Vancouver, Nanaimo-Ladysmith, and Central Okanagan have gone above and beyond to compile their

own detailed teaching guidelines for sexual education. These districts have included lessons on:

- Basic anatomy and physiology;
- Health, hygiene, and safety;
- Developmental changes of puberty;
- Reproduction and conception;
- Effective contraception;
- Prevention of STI/HIV;
- Healthy relationships;
- Setting personal boundaries and limits;
- Sexual orientation;
- Communication;
- Media influences;
- Accessing information and resources;
- Prevention of abuse and exploitation;
- Safe decision-making, healthy behaviour, and critical thinking.^{79 80 81}



Having all genders in sexual education lessons together [...] builds empathy and combats misinformation about the opposite sex.

The grade at which children are expected to know the names of all body parts:	The grade at which children are introduced to the concept of sexual orientation:	The grade at which children are introduced to the concept of gender identity:	The grade at which children are told about STIs and their prevention:	The grade at which children are told about Internet safety and/or sexting:	The grade at which children are told about birth control:	The grade at which children are told about sexual abuse:
Kindergarten	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 4	Grade 6 (unclear)	Kindergarten

One best practice Nanaimo-Ladysmith employs is having all genders in sexual education lessons together. This “builds empathy and combats misinformation about the opposite sex. In addition to that, it creates an inclusive environment that doesn’t put kids “on the spot” if, perhaps, they don’t identify as the gender others assume.”⁸²

British Columbia also leads the rest of the country, with regards to education about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). SOGI 123, a bundle of supplementary sexual orientation and gender-identity resources, has three essential components to build more inclusive schools:

1. Policies and procedures that explicitly reference SOGI;
2. Inclusive learning environments—including SOGI-inclusive signage, word choices, and extra-curricular opportunities; and
3. Lesson plans that teach diversity and respect and include examples of SOGI topics and 2SLGBTQ+ community members.⁸³

The SOGI 123 strategies have been proven to:

- Reduce discrimination, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts for all students;
- Create a positive and welcoming space for all students; and
- Reflect the SOGI diversity in students’ lives and society.⁸⁴

This is a positive start; however, there are still areas for improvement.

While BC’s sexual-education curriculum cites sexuality and gender identity as examples of what influences a person’s identity, it does not explicitly mention 2SLGBTQQA+ people in its sections on sexual health or activity.⁸⁵ Doing so implicitly assumes that individuals are heterosexual, identify with the sex they were

assigned at birth, and have bodies that fit traditional biological definitions of male/female.⁸⁶ In reality, 4% of the Canadian population identifies as 2SLGBTQQA+, and young people represent the 2SLGBTQQA+ community at higher rates than ever before.^{87 88}

It is also important to note that the provincial curriculum employs the vague term “healthy relationships,”⁸⁹ which does not equip youth to value theirs and others’ sexual rights in settings outside of romantic partnerships.⁹⁰ In legal proceedings on sexual assault, it is consent which is at issue, not healthy relationships. Take, for example, the recent Supreme Court of Canada’s ruling that “stealthing”⁹¹ violated the legal grounds for consent in the case of a BC man who did not wear a condom during sexual intercourse after being asked to.⁹²

Finally, we know an integral part of the success of sexual-health education is its implementation. As the BC Government curriculum document, “Supporting Secondary Student Health” describes, “While BC teachers have embraced a variety of different physical education approaches, they have often lacked the resources to teach health education topics with confidence.”⁹³ The province’s most recent update to its K-12 curriculums in 2020 allows teachers more autonomy in designing lessons; however, we cannot allow teachers who are not comfortable with, or prepared to teach, sexual education to gloss over important lessons.

Policy Recommendations

Given what we know about the benefits of comprehensive sexual education and BC’s current sexual-education curriculum, it is apparent that further transition to a comprehensive, scientifically accurate model is needed. Providing universal access to comprehensive sexual-health education in Canada will require the dedicated efforts of policy makers to ensure its implementation.

These are my recommendations to make BC’s sexual education curriculum more comprehensive:

1 Ensure all schools explicitly mention consent in their sexual education lessons.

Only 28% of Canadians have been taught to understand what it means to give consent.⁹⁴ Consent is also the subject most requested by students to be covered in Canadian sexual education curriculums; this demonstrates that while most people don’t understand what consent means, many would like to learn.⁹⁵

Understanding what consent is, as well as concepts of autonomy, giving, withholding, and withdrawing consent, are central components of every individual’s sexual health.⁹⁶ Students have a right to learn about these topics, and we have a responsibility to teach them.

2 Teach students the role they have to play in eradicating gender-based violence.

While “healthy relationships” are mentioned throughout BC’s sexual education curriculum, discussions about gender inequality, intersectional identity, and gender-based violence are not; this means that students are not learning to actively dispel gender and other stereotypes, as well as misconceptions about gender-based and sexual violence.

The results of this gap in knowledge are that dispiringly often, gender-based and sexual violence goes unchecked. When one in three women globally experiences violence,⁹⁷ we need to make it an urgent public policy priority to find solutions that prevent and eradicate it. Gender-based violence is not merely a “woman’s issue”; it is an issue that affects everyone.⁹⁸

Sexual education is an integral piece of the puzzle in preventing and eradicating gender-based and sexual violence; it challenges harmful gender norms, creates cultures of consent, and gives young people the tools to build healthy relationships.⁹⁹

3 Include 2SLGBTQIA+ sexual activity and sexual health as part of the sexual education curriculum.

SOGI 123 has been effective at improving student mental health, creating safer spaces for students, and reflecting diversity in society. However, there remains work ahead to undo implicit assumptions of cisgender identity and heteronormativity in the classroom.

One way to further the work of SOGI 123 is to integrate 2SLGBTQIA+ sexual activity and sexual health into the sexual education curriculum. Equipping 2SLGBTQIA+ youth with the information they need to explore their sexuality ensures that sexual education is relevant for all students.

4 Extend mandatory sexual education into Grades 11 and 12.

The average person in Canada has sex for the first time at age 18, and the vast majority of young people engage in sexual activity.^{100 101} Under the current BC curriculum, sexual education lessons end in Grade 10, which means that they are being missed at an integral time in a young person's life.¹⁰² Extending mandatory sexual education into Grades 11 and 12 would better ensure that all BC students are equipped to make safe, informed decisions about their sexuality.

5 Emphasize sexual well-being (not solely the prevention of negative outcomes) in sexual-education curriculums.

Most young people are not having sex solely to procreate; common reasons for engaging in sexual activity include intimacy, sexual pleasure, and social status.¹⁰³

To make sexual education more relevant and meaningful to students' needs, we need to be realistic, promoting safe sex practices while acknowledging that "sex is a pleasurable and life-enhancing experience when it is consensual, safe, caring and respectful."¹⁰⁴

6 Recruit and establish a database of certified sexual-health educators who can supplement classroom sexual education lessons on an ongoing basis.

At times, a teacher's comfort level with the subject matter of sexual health can hinder students' access to comprehensive sexual education.

In scenarios where teachers do not feel comfortable teaching sexual education (or do not have enough subject-matter expertise to teach it sufficiently), having a provincial database of certified sexual health educators to call upon can fill those gaps. These individuals, who possess the necessary certifications and knowledge to teach sexual education, could be brought into the classroom on a regular, ongoing basis to ease the burden on educators while ensuring lessons are imparted to students in a comprehensive, scientifically accurate manner.

7 Develop digital and printed resources for parents that elaborate on why the lessons covered in sexual-education curriculums are being taught.

While the province already has a letter template prepared for teachers to send home to parents at the onset of each academic year regarding sexual education, these letters do not elaborate on the research that backs sexual education curriculum decisions. As a result, parents who feel offended by terminology and/or concepts taught in their childrens' sexual education lessons may choose to "opt out" of the subject entirely.

Students have a right to access information that equips them to make safe, informed, consensual, and pleasurable decisions about their own sexuality. Wherever possible, this right should not be denied by their parents. While there will always be parents who feel that sexual education is theirs alone to teach at home, many parents would likely support the province's sexual-education curriculum if they better understood the critical importance of certain terminology and/or concepts being taught to their children.

Creating digital and printed resources for parents that elaborate on the "why" behind their childrens' sexual-education lessons will result in more parents 'opting in' to them being taught.

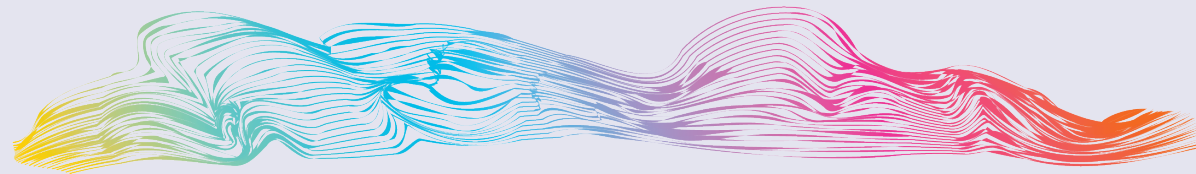
Challenges

There will always be backlash when transformative change is proposed; the West Coast Christian Accord anti-SOGI campaign is evidence of this.¹⁰⁵ Claire Guy, Assistant Superintendent in the Langley School District, illustrated that in the case of SOGI 123, two major challenges their school district faced were:

1. **Parents "opting out" of these conversations:** "They want to know in advance of every lesson, every conversation, every group we bring in, every presentation we do. How come we're not sending home letters every time. There are parents who believe this is theirs to teach at home."¹⁰⁶
2. **Staff who don't "buy-in" to these priorities:** "We still have staff [who] don't buy-in, and who are actually part of the problem. We're not proud of the fact that a couple of years ago, we were making the news because one of our staff members said homophobic things to students. That's still happening. We can say this is important and why, but there are still staff sneering and making side remarks. Kids notice it."¹⁰⁷

I foresee parent and teacher "buy-in" as challenges to prepare for in the case of implementing the above seven proposed policy recommendations, too. However, in the case of SOGI 123, 99.9% of BC public schools have "bought-in" and made SOGI resources available to their student body.¹⁰⁸ I firmly believe that a success of this magnitude demonstrates BC's readiness for further education transformation.

Conclusion



After having researched BC's current sexual-education curriculum and the benefits of comprehensive sexual education, I believe that the seven policy recommendations I have proposed will:

- Teach students how to effectively give, withhold, and withdraw consent, and respect the bodily autonomy of others;
- Actively dispel gender and other stereotypes, as well as misconceptions about gender-based and sexual violence, in favour of a culture of consent and healthy, equitable relationships;
- Normalize 2SLGBTQQA+ sexual activity and sexual health so that the sexual education curriculum becomes relevant for all students;
- Ensure all BC students are equipped to make safe, informed decisions about their sexuality;
- Build a database of certified sexual-health educators to improve student access to comprehensive, scientifically accurate information;
- Garner parent buy-in to the sexual-education curriculum as it undergoes transformational change;
- Reframe sex as a pleasurable, life-enhancing experience, grounded in consent, safety, and respect.

As a survivor myself, I deeply care about this policy topic. Had I been taught this information sooner, I could have known the difference between "good touch and bad touch" as a child.

As a teenager, I could have learned that sex isn't supposed to hurt, that my sexuality is valid, and that my personal bodily autonomy deserves to be respected. As an adult, these lessons could have prepared me to identify unsafe people in my life, and leave abusive relationships before they escalated to the levels of violence they did.

I was failed by my sexual-education system. But the youth of today in BC don't have to be, if the proposed changes are implemented.

Moving forward, with the proposed changes in an ethical fashion, will mean garnering support from every demographic who will be affected: teachers, parents, school boards and districts, religious and cultural organisations, relevant programs and services, the Ministry of Education, and above all, students.

Not everyone's values will align with those taught in a secular, non-sectarian public education system, and that's okay—but it does not change the fact that students have a right to access information that equips them to make safe, informed, consensual, and pleasurable decisions about their own sexuality and sexual health.

The responsibility to provide comprehensive, scientifically accurate sex-ed to youth in BC lies in the hands of the government of BC and the province's educators. I hope you choose to take that responsibility on as though the lives of our youth depend on it—because they do.

ENDNOTES

1. "Gender Based Violence in Canada: Learn the Facts," CWF (Canadian Women's Foundation, August 2, 2022), <https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/gender-based-violence/>.
2. Samuel Perreault, "Criminal Victimization in Canada, 2014," Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, November 30, 2015), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241-eng.htm>. "Gender Based Violence in Canada: Learn the Facts," CWF (Canadian Women's Foundation, August 2, 2022), <https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/gender-based-violence/>.
3. Samuel Perreault, "Criminal Victimization in Canada, 2014," Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, November 30, 2015), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241-eng.htm>.
4. Stacey Rodas, "Survey Finds Drop in Canadians' Understanding of Consent," Canadian Women's Foundation (Canadian Women's Foundation, May 16, 2018), <https://canadianwomen.org/survey-finds-drop-in-canadians-understanding-of-consent/#:~:text=We%20empower%20women%20and%20girls,women's%20foundations%20in%20the%20world>.
5. Ibid.
6. Statistics Canada, "Intimate Partner Violence in Canada, 2018," The Daily (Government of Canada, April 26, 2021), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210426/dq210426b-eng.htm>.
7. See Kimberle Crenshaw's work on intersectionality. https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en
8. Department of Justice, "The Impact of Trauma on Adult Sexual Assault Victims," PART I—The Traumatic Impact of Sexual Assault on Victims (Government of Canada, March 26, 2019), <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/trauma/p2.html>.
9. Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights, "The State of Sex-Ed in Canada," Action Canada SHR, 2020, https://www.actioncanadashr.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Action%20Canada_StateofSexEd_F%20-%20web%20version%20EN.pdf.11.
10. Canadian Women's Foundation, "Cyberviolence and Online Hate Against Women: Learn the Facts," Canadian Women's Foundation, January 15, 2019, <https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/online-hate-and-cyberviolence/>.
11. "What Is Gender-Based Violence?," OCTEVAW, accessed August 8, 2022, <https://www.octevaw-cocvff.ca/what-is-gbv>.
12. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Gender-Based Violence," UNHCR (United Nations, 2020), <https://www.unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html>.
13. UN Women—Headquarters, "Frequently Asked Questions: Types of Violence Against Women and Girls" (United Nations), accessed August 8, 2022, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>.
14. Violence Prevention Injury Center, "Fast Facts: Preventing Intimate Partner Violence," CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 2, 2021), <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>.
15. Claudia Garcia-Moreno, Alessandra Guedes, and Wendy Knerr, "Understanding and Addressing Violence Against Women: Intimate Partner Violence," WHO (World Health Organization, 2012), https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf;sequence=1.
16. Violence Prevention Injury Center, "Fast Facts: Preventing Intimate Partner Violence," CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 2, 2021), <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>.
17. Canadian Women's Foundation, "Sexual Assault and Harassment in Canada: The Facts," CWF, June 1, 2022, <https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/sexual-assault-harassment/>.
18. "Sexual Violence Quick Facts: Support and Prevention," Human Rights Office (University of Ottawa), accessed August 8, 2022, <https://www.uottawa.ca/sexual-violence-support-and-prevention/quick-facts>.

19. See Jackson Katz' Ted Talk "Violence Against Women: It's a Men's Issue". https://www.ted.com/talks/jackson_katz_violence_against_women_it_s_a_men_s_issue/transcript?language=en.
20. Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, "Sexual Violence," Ontario.ca (Government of Ontario, August 20, 2021), <https://www.ontario.ca/page/sexual-violence>.
21. "What Is Gender-Based Violence?," OCTEVAW, accessed August 8, 2022, <https://www.octevaw-cocvff.ca/what-is-gbv>.
22. As an Indigenous woman/femme and survivor, I have two caveats to make: 1) Including the Criminal Code of Canada in this paper does not mean I unequivocally support the way the Canadian justice system handles cases of sexual assault; and 2) I do not believe the seriousness of sexual assaults can be ranked solely by physical affects on survivors. However, expanding on both these points was beyond the scope of this paper.
23. Andrea Taylor-Butts and Shannon Brennnan, "Sexual Assault in Canada," Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, December 4, 2008), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.htm>.
24. Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, "What Is Consent?," Province of British Columbia (Province of British Columbia, January 19, 2022), <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safe-campuses-bc/what-is-consent>.
25. Ibid.
26. Planned Parenthood, "What Is Sexual Consent?: Facts about Rape & Sexual Assault," Planned Parenthood (Planned Parenthood Federation of America), accessed August 8, 2022, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/relationships/sexual-consent>.
27. Kids Help Phone, "Consent: What It Is and Why It's Important," December 7, 2021, <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/consent-what-it-and-why-its-important>.
28. ScienceDaily, "Sex Education" (Wikipedia), accessed August 8, 2022, https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/sex_education.htm.
29. Emily Bridges and Debra Hauser, "Sexuality Education," Advocates for Youth, April 8, 2014, <https://www.advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/sexuality-education-2/>.
30. Youth Health Services, "Goals of Sex Education for Teenagers," Planned Parenthood (Planned Parenthood Federation of America), accessed August 8, 2022, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/for-educators/what-are-goals-sex-education-youth>.
31. Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights, "The State of Sex-Ed in Canada," Action Canada SHR, 2020, https://www.actioncanadashr.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Action%20Canada_StateofSexEd_F%20-%20web%20version%20EN.pdf. 5.
32. Judit Illes, Young sexual citizens: reimagining sex education as an essential form of civic engagement, *Sex Education*, 12:5 (2012), DOI: 10.1080/14681811.2011.634152. 618.
33. Rebecca Wind, "Abstinence-Only-until-Marriage Programs Are Ineffective and Harmful to Young People, Expert Review Confirms," Guttmacher Institute, August 22, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2017/abstinence-only-until-marriage-programs-are-ineffective-and-harmful-young-people#>.
34. Judit Illes, Young sexual citizens: reimagining sex education as an essential form of civic engagement, *Sex Education*, 12:5 (2012), DOI: 10.1080/14681811.2011.634152. 614.
35. Students for Consent Culture, "#VoteWith-SurvivorsMB," SFCC Canada, 2019, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc4e7bcf4755a6e42b00495/t/5d644c9b96bad20001f76f14/1566854302904/Final+S-FCC+%23VWSMB+ALL+Info+Sheets.pdf>. 3-6.
36. International Planned Parenthood Federation, "Leaving No One Behind," IPPF, 2008, https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/ippf_jtf_leaving_no_one_behind_2018.pdf. i.
37. "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, December 16, 1966), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.
38. "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women," OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, December 18, 1979), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>.
39. "Convention on the Rights of the Child," OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, November 20, 1989), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>.
40. "The Yogyakarta Principles," Yogyakarta Principles, March 2007, http://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/principles_en.pdf.
41. International Planned Parenthood Federation, "Sexual Rights: An IPPF Declaration," IPPF, 2008, https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/sexualrightsippfdeclaration_1.pdf. vi.
42. Michelle Rotermann and Alexander McKay, "Sexual Behaviours, Condom Use and Other Contraceptive Methods Among 15 to 24 Year Olds in Canada," Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, September 16, 2020), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2020009/article/00001-eng.htm>.
43. Gary Langer, Cheryl Arnedt, and Dalia Sussman, "POLL: American Sex Survey," ABC News (ABC News Network, October 21, 2004), <https://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/PollVault/story?id=156921&page=1&fbclid=IwAR0pvRpXz8tYb8BD4v2C87bgS-j0aHbF9HQeOctxVzuNO02MyurN-S5jAHte8#:~:text=The%20big%20picture%2C%20sexually%20speaking,-involved%20in%20a%20sexual%20relationship>.
44. I wasn't able to find a comparable Canadian statistic; however, one can make an educated guess, based on behaviours, that rates in Canada and the United States are similar.
45. Public Health Agency of Canada, "Government of Canada Supports Initiatives to End Gender-Based Violence," Canada.ca (Government of Canada, December 3, 2018), <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2018/11/government-of-canada-supports-initiatives-to-end-gender-based-violence.html>.
46. World Health Organization, "Violence Against Women," WHO, accessed August 10, 2022, https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-women#tab=tab_1.
47. Department of Justice, "An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Violent Victimization in Canada," Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, December 14, 2009), https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rr14_01/conc.html.
48. World Bank Group, "Gender-Based Violence (Violence Against Women and Girls)," World Bank (World Bank Group, March 12, 2021), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>.
49. "The Impact of Trauma on Adult Sexual Assault Victims," Department of Justice (Government of Canada, March 26, 2019), <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr-trauma/p2.html>.
50. "Effects of Sexual Assault and Rape," Joyful-heartfoundation.org (Joyful Heart Foundation), accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.joyful-heartfoundation.org/learn/sexual-assault-rape/effects-sexual-assault-and-rape>.
51. Ibid.
52. "Impact of Sexual Violence," NSVRC (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2010), https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC_Publication_Factsheet_Impact-of-sexual-violence.pdf.
53. Karestan Koenan, "PTSD Affects Majority of Sexual Violence Survivors," Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (Harvard University, May 5, 2020), <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/ptsd-affects-majority-of-sexual-violence-survivors/>.
54. Ibid.
55. "Effects of Sexual Assault and Rape," Joyful-heartfoundation.org (Joyful Heart Foundation), accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.joyful-heartfoundation.org/learn/sexual-assault-rape/effects-sexual-assault-and-rape>.
56. Jane Skrypnek, "Record Number of Sexual Assaults Reported to Police in B.C. in 2021," Prince Rupert Northern View (Black Press Media, August 3, 2022), <https://www.thenorthernview.com/news/record-number-of-sexual-assaults-reported-to-police-in-b-c-in-2021/>.
57. Research and Statistics Division, "Justfacts," Department of Justice] (Government of Canada, December 18, 2019), <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr-jf-pf/2019/apr01.html>.
58. Jane Skrypnek, "Record Number of Sexual Assaults Reported to Police in B.C. in 2021," Prince Rupert Northern View (Black Press Media, August 3, 2022), <https://www.thenorthernview.com/news/record-number-of-sexual-assaults-reported-to-police-in-b-c-in-2021/>.

59. "Gender Based Violence in Canada: Learn the Facts," CWF (Canadian Women's Foundation, August 2, 2022), <https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/gender-based-violence/>.
60. Samuel Perreault, "Criminal Victimization in Canada, 2014," Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, November 30, 2015), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241-eng.htm>.
61. A. Smith, K. Forsyth, C. Poon, M. Peled, E. Saewyc, & McCreary Centre Society (2019). Balance and connection in BC: The health and well-being of our youth. Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society. 8.
62. Ibid, 71.
63. 'Young women', in this case, refers to women ages 15-24 years old.
64. Intimate partner violence, in this case, includes sexual assault, physical assault and emotionally, financially or psychologically abuse by an intimate partner.
65. Gregory Moreau, "Intimate Partner Violence: Experiences of Young Women in Canada, 2018," Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, July 27, 2021), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00013-eng.htm>. 4.
66. Ibid, 6.
67. Shana Conroy and Adam Cotter, "Self-Reported Sexual Assault in Canada, 2014," Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, July 11, 2017), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14842-eng.pdf?st=6B-WiHnZZ.7>.
68. 'Rape myths', or sexual assault misconceptions, are misconceptions and false beliefs that influence society's understanding of sexual assault. See https://www.ontario.ca/page/dispelling-myths-about-sexual-assault?_ga=2.176961189.1617928026.1553027262-1774434441.1553027262 for more information.
69. SIECCAN. (2019). Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education. Toronto, ON: Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN).16.
70. "Population-Specific Status Report," Public Health Agency of Canada (Government of Canada, 2014), <https://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/aids-sida/publication/ps-pd/youth-jeunes/assets/pdf/youth-jeunes-eng.pdf>.
71. Ibid.
72. Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control, "Government of Canada," Public Health Agency of Canada (Government of Canada, February 11, 2019), <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/diseases-conditions/update-sexually-transmitted-infections-canada-2016.html#3.2>.
73. A. Smith, K. Forsyth, C. Poon, M. Peled, E. Saewyc, & McCreary Centre Society (2019). Balance and connection in BC: The health and well-being of our youth. Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society. 9.
74. Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education, "International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An Evidence-Informed Approach for Schools, Teachers and Health Educators," UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, December 2009), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000183281>. 10.
75. SIECCAN. (2019). Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education. Toronto, ON: Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN). 14.
76. Daniel B. Robinson, Vikki MacLaughlin, and Jason Poole, "Sexual Health Education Outcomes Within Canada's Elementary Health Education Curricula: A Summary and Analysis," *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 28, no. 3 (January 2019): pp. 243-256, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjhs.2018-0036>. 243.
77. "Administrative Procedure 206: Sexual Health Education," VSB (Vancouver School Board, 2018), https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Departments/Office_of_the_Superintendent/Administrative-Procedures-Manual/Pages/Default.aspx.
78. Katie Hyslop, "BC's Sex Ed Curriculum Has a Consent Problem," *The Tyee* (The Tyee, July 6, 2022), <https://thetyee.ca/News/2022/07/06/BC-Sex-Ed-Curriculum-Consent-Problem/>.
79. Leslie Young, "Sexual Education Compared Across Canada," *Global News* (Corus Entertainment, February 24, 2015), <https://globalnews.ca/news/1847912/sexual-education-compared-across-canada/>.
80. "Administrative Procedure 206: Sexual Health Education," VSB (Vancouver School Board, 2018), https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Departments/Office_of_the_Superintendent/Administrative-Procedures-Manual/Pages/Default.aspx.
81. Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, "Appendix C K-10 Personal & Sexual Health Social Justice Curriculum," SD68 (Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, 2018), <https://www.sd68.bc.ca/document/appendix-c-k-10-personal-sexual-health-social-justice-curriculum/>.
82. "Sexual Health Education," SD23 (Central Okanagan Public Schools), accessed August 10, 2022, [http://sd23.bc.ca/ProgramsServices/SexualHealthEducation/Pages/default.aspx#/=](http://sd23.bc.ca/ProgramsServices/SexualHealthEducation/Pages/default.aspx#/).
83. Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, "Appendix C K-10 Personal & Sexual Health Social Justice Curriculum," SD68 (Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, 2018), <https://www.sd68.bc.ca/document/appendix-c-k-10-personal-sexual-health-social-justice-curriculum/>.
84. "Approach / SOGI 1 2 3," SOGI123 (SOGI Education), accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.sogieducation.org/approach>.
85. Ibid.
86. Katie Hyslop, "BC's Sex Ed Curriculum Has a Consent Problem," *The Tyee* (The Tyee, July 6, 2022), <https://thetyee.ca/News/2022/07/06/BC-Sex-Ed-Curriculum-Consent-Problem/>.
87. SIECCAN. (2019). Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education. Toronto, ON: Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN). 25.
88. The Daily, "A Statistical Portrait of Canada's Diverse LGBTQ2+ Communities," *Statistics Canada* (Government of Canada, June 15, 2021), https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm?fbclid=IwAR1DJ88SxbItM63Ew2DjehIH-gvqrYGGYdFhl2TY75_i_3Td-yA1m1ZKlk.
89. Nico Lang, "Gen Z Is the Queerest Generation Ever, According to New Survey," *Them* (Them., February 24, 2021), <https://www.them.us/story/gen-z-millennials-queerest-generation-gallup-poll>.
90. Katie Hyslop, "BC's Sex Ed Curriculum Has a Consent Problem," *The Tyee* (The Tyee, July 6, 2022), <https://thetyee.ca/News/2022/07/06/BC-Sex-Ed-Curriculum-Consent-Problem/>.
91. That being said, the Province explicitly mentions consent in this supplementary resource: https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/subject/phe/Supporting_Student_Health_Secondary.pdf.
92. 'Stealthling' is the act of pretending to use a condom, or removing one prior to sex without the partner's consent.
93. Richard Raycraft, "Supreme Court Rules Not Wearing Condom Against Partner's Wishes Could Lead to Sexual Assault Conviction," *CBC* (CBC Radio Canada, July 29, 2022), <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/scc-condom-use-case-decision-1.6535127>.
- 94.
95. Ministry of Education, "Supporting Student Health: Secondary Key Topics and Ideas for Instruction" (Government of BC), accessed August 10, 2022, https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/subject/phe/Supporting_Student_Health_Secondary.pdf.
96. Stacey Rodas, "Survey Finds Drop in Canadians' Understanding of Consent," *Canadian Women* (Canadian Women's Foundation, January 19, 2021), <https://canadianwomen.org/survey-finds-drop-in-canadians-understanding-of-consent/#:~:text=We%20empower%20women%20and%20girls,women's%20foundations%20in%20the%20world>.
97. Carli Whitwell, "Hey Canada, Consent Should Be Sex Education 101," *Canadian Kids are Not Taught About Consent in School* (Refinery 29, August 24, 2021), <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/2021/08/10559610/consent-not-in-sex-ed-curriculum-canada>.
98. SIECCAN. (2019). Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education. Toronto, ON: Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN). 8.
99. In this case, violence refers to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner. See <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>.
100. "Why Is Gender-Based Violence a Problem?," COE (Council of Europe), accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/why-is-gender-based-violence-a-problem->
101. Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights, "The State of Sex-Ed in Canada," *Action Canada SHR*, 2020, https://www.actioncanadashr.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Action%20Canada_StateofSexEd_F%20-%20web%20version%20EN.pdf. 10.
102. "First Sex: Using a Condom and Its Impacts on Future Sexual Behaviour," *Dr. Felix* (Durex Condoms, 2012), <https://www.dr.felix.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Global%20>

- face%20of%20sex%202012%20report.pdf.
103. Michelle Rotermann and Alexander McKay, "Sexual Behaviours, Condom Use and Other Contraceptive Methods Among 15 to 24 Year Olds in Canada," Statistics Canada (Government of Canada, September 16, 2020), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2020009/article/00001-eng.htm>.
104. Katie Hyslop, "BC's Sex Ed Curriculum Has a Consent Problem," The Tyee (The Tyee, July 6, 2022), <https://thetyee.ca/News/2022/07/06/BC-Sex-Ed-Curriculum-Consent-Problem/>.
105. Mary A. Ott et al., "Greater Expectations: Adolescents' Positive Motivations for Sex" (Guttmacher Institute, December 6, 2016), <https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/2006/greater-expectations-adolescents-positive-motivations-sex>.
106. Anne Bokma, "Sex Ed Report," Parents Canada (Parents Canada Group, December 29, 2019),

- <https://www.parentscanada.com/health/parentscanada-sex-ed-report/>.
107. Ashley Wadhvani and News, "Updated: Nearly 200 B.C. Pastors Launch Anti-SOGI Campaign," Langley Advance Times (Black Press Media, September 28, 2018), <https://www.langleyadvancetimes.com/news/nearly-200-b-c-pastors-launch-anti-sogi-campaign/>.
108. Claire Guy, "Policy Best Practices and Lessons Learned," SOGI123 (SOGI Education BC, 2016), <https://bc.sogieducation.org/sogi-policy-summit/#dress-guidelines>.
109. Ibid.
110. "Change Is Here: Results of SOGI 123," SOGI123 (SOGI Education, 2019), <https://www.sogieducation.org/results>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights. "The State of Sex-Ed in Canada." Action Canada SHR, 2020. https://www.actioncanadashr.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Action%20Canada_StateofSexEd_F%20-%20web%20version%20EN.pdf.
- "Administrative Procedure 206: Sexual Health Education." VSB. Vancouver School Board, 2018. https://www.vsb.bc.ca/District/Departments/Office_of_the_Superintendent/Administrative-Procedures-Manual/Pages/Default.aspx.
- Bokma, Anne. "Sex Ed Report." Parents Canada. Parents Canada Group, December 29, 2019. <https://www.parentscanada.com/health/parentscanada-sex-ed-report/>.
- Bridges, Emily, and Debra Hauser. "Sexuality Education." Advocates for Youth, April 8, 2014. <https://www.advocatesforyouth.org/resources/fact-sheets/sexuality-education-2/>.
- Canadian Women's Foundation. "Cyberviolence and Online Hate Against Women: Learn the Facts." Canadian Women's Foundation, January 15, 2019. <https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/online-hate-and-cyberviolence/>.
- Canadian Women's Foundation. "Sexual Assault and Harassment in Canada: The Facts." CWF, June 1, 2022. <https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/sexual-assault-harassment/>.

- Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control. "Government of Canada." Public Health Agency of Canada. Government of Canada, February 11, 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/diseases-conditions/update-sexually-transmitted-infections-canada-2016.html#3.2>.
- "Change Is Here: Results of SOGI 123." SOGI123. SOGI Education, 2019. <https://www.sogieducation.org/results>.
- "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women." OHCHR. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, December 18, 1979. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>.
- "Convention on the Rights of the Child." OHCHR. Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, November 20, 1989. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>.
- Department of Justice. "An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Violent Victimization in Canada." Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, December 14, 2009. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rr14_01/conc.html.

Department of Justice. "The Impact of Trauma on Adult Sexual Assault Victims." PART I—The Traumatic Impact of Sexual Assault on Victims. Government of Canada, March 26, 2019. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/trauma/p2.html>.

Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education. "International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An Evidence-Informed Approach for Schools, Teachers and Health Educators." UNESCO. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, December 2009. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000183281>.

"First Sex: Using a Condom and Its Impacts on Future Sexual Behaviour." Dr. Felix. Durex Condoms, 2012. <https://www.dr.felix.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Global%20face%20of%20sex%202012%20report.pdf>.

Garcia-Moreno, Claudia, Alessandra Guedes, and Wendy Knerr. "Understanding and Addressing Violence Against Women: Intimate Partner Violence." WHO. World Health Organization, 2012. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf;sequence=1.

"Gender Based Violence in Canada: Learn the Facts." CWF. Canadian Women's Foundation, August 2, 2022. <https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/gender-based-violence/>.

Hyslop, Katie. "BC's Sex Ed Curriculum Has a Consent Problem." The Tyee. The Tyee, July 6, 2022. <https://thetyee.ca/News/2022/07/06/BC-Sex-Ed-Curriculum-Consent-Problem/>.

Illes, Julia. Young sexual citizens: reimagining sex education as an essential form of civic engagement, *Sex Education*, 12:5 (2012), DOI: 10.1080/14681811.2011.634152

"Impact of Sexual Violence." NSVRC. National Sexual violence Resource Center, 2010. https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/NSVRC_Publication_Factsheet_Impact-of-sexual-violence.pdf.

"International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights." OHCHR. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, December 16, 1966. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.

International Planned Parenthood Federation. "Sexual Rights: An IPPF Declaration." IPPF, 2008. https://www.ippf.org/sites/default/files/sexualrightsippfdeclaration_1.pdf.

Kids Help Phone. "Consent: What It Is and Why It's Important," December 7, 2021. <https://kidshelp-phone.ca/get-info/consent-what-it-and-why-its-important>.

Koenan, Karestan. "PTSD Affects Majority of Sexual Violence Survivors." Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Harvard University, May 5, 2020. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/ptsd-affects-majority-of-sexual-violence-survivors/>.

Lang, Nico. "Gen Z Is the Queerest Generation Ever, According to New Survey." Them. Them., February 24, 2021. <https://www.them.us/story/gen-z-millennials-queerest-generation-gallup-poll>.

Langer, Gary, Cheryl Arnedt, and Dalia Sussman. "POLL: American Sex Survey." ABC News. ABC News Network, October 21, 2004. <https://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/PollVault/story?id=156921&page=1&fbclid=IwAR0pvRpX-z8tYb8BD4v2C87bgSj0aHbF9HQeOctxVzu-NO02MyurNS5jAHte8#:~:text=The%20big%20picture%2C%20sexually%20speaking,involved%20in%20a%20sexual%20relationship>.

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training. "What Is Consent?" Province of British Columbia. Province of British Columbia, January 19, 2022. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safe-campus-es-bc/what-is-consent>.

Ministry of Education. "Supporting Student Health: Secondary Key Topics and Ideas for Instruction." Government of BC. Accessed August 10, 2022. https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/subject/phe/Supporting_Student_Health_Secondary.pdf.

Moreau, Gregory. "Intimate Partner Violence: Experiences of Young Women in Canada, 2018." Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, July 27, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00013-eng.htm>.

Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. "Appendix C K-10 Personal & Sexual Health Social Justice Curriculum." SD68. Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, 2018. <https://www.sd68.bc.ca/document/appendix-c-k-10-personal-sexual-health-social-justice-curriculum/>.

Ott, Mary A., Indiana University, Susan G. Millstein, Susan Ofner, and Bonnie L. Halpern-Felsher. "Greater Expectations: Adolescents' Positive Motivations for Sex." Guttmacher Institute, December 6, 2016. <https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/2006/greater-expectations-adolescents-positive-motivations-sex>.

Perreault, Samuel. "Criminal Victimization in Canada, 2014." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, November 30, 2015. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2015001/article/14241-eng.htm>.

Planned Parenthood. "What Is Sexual Consent?: Facts about Rape & Sexual Assault." Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Accessed August 8, 2022. <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/relationships/sexual-consent>.

Public Health Agency of Canada. "Government of Canada Supports Initiatives to End Gender-Based Violence." Canada.ca. Government of Canada, December 3, 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2018/11/government-of-canada-supports-initiatives-to-end-gender-based-violence.html>.

Raycraft, Richard. "Supreme Court Rules Not Wearing Condom Against Partner's Wishes Could Lead to Sexual Assault Conviction." CBC. CBC Radio Canada, July 29, 2022. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/scc-condom-use-case-decision-1.6535127>.

Research and Statistics Division. "Justfacts." Department of Justice. Government of Canada, December 18, 2019. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/jf-pf/2019/apr01.html>.

Robinson, Daniel B., Vikki MacLaughlin, and Jason Poole. "Sexual Health Education Outcomes Within Canada's Elementary Health Education Curricula: A Summary and Analysis." *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 28, no. 3 (2019): 243–56. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjhs.2018-0036>.

Rodas, Stacey. "Survey Finds Drop in Canadians' Understanding of Consent." Canadian Women's Foundation. Canadian Women's Foundation, May 16, 2018. <https://canadianwomen.org/survey-finds-drop-in-canadians-understanding-of-consent/#:~:text=We%20empower%20women%20and%20girls,women's%20foundations%20in%20the%20world>.

Rotermann, Michelle, and Alexander McKay. "Sexual Behaviours, Condom Use and Other Contraceptive Methods Among 15 to 24 Year Olds in Canada." Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, September 16, 2020. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2020009/article/00001-eng.htm>.

ScienceDaily. "Sex Education." Wikipedia. Accessed August 8, 2022. https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/sex_education.htm.

"Sexual Health Education." SD23. Central Okanagan Public Schools. Accessed August 10, 2022. [http://sd23.bc.ca/ProgramsServices/SexualHealthEducation/Pages/default.aspx#/=](http://sd23.bc.ca/ProgramsServices/SexualHealthEducation/Pages/default.aspx#/).

"Sexual Violence Quick Facts: Support and Prevention." Human Rights Office. University of Ottawa. Accessed August 8, 2022. <https://www.uottawa.ca/sexual-violence-support-and-prevention/quick-facts>.

SIECCAN. (2019). Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education. Toronto, ON: Sex Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECCAN).

Skrypnek, Jane. "Record Number of Sexual Assaults Reported to Police in B.C. in 2021." Prince Rupert Northern View. Black Press Media, August 3, 2022. <https://www.thenorthernview.com/news/record-number-of-sexual-assaults-reported-to-police-in-b-c-in-2021/>.

Smith, A., Forsyth, K., Poon, C., Peled, M., Saewyc, E., & McCreary Centre Society (2019). Balance and connection in BC: The health and well-being of our youth. Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society.

Statistics Canada. "Intimate Partner Violence in Canada, 2018." *The Daily*. Government of Canada, April 26, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210426/dq210426b-eng.htm>.

Students for Consent Culture. "#VoteWithSurvivorsMB." SFCC Canada, 2019. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc4e7bcf4755a6e42b00495/t/5d644c9b96bad20001f76f14/1566854302904/Final+SFC-C+%23VWSMB+ALL+Info+Sheets.pdf>.

Taylor-Butts, Andrea, and Shannon Brennan. "Sexual Assault in Canada." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, December 4, 2008. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85f0033m/85f0033m2008019-eng.htm>.

The Daily. "A Statistical Portrait of Canada's Diverse LGBTQ2+ Communities." Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, June 15, 2021. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm?fbclid=IwAR1DJ88SxbltM63Ew2DjehIHgvrYGGJJYdFhl2TY75_i_3Td-yA1m1ZKlk.

"The Impact of Trauma on Adult Sexual Assault Victims." Department of Justice. Government of Canada, March 26, 2019. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/trauma/p2.html>.

"The Yogyakarta Principles." Yogyakarta Principles, March 2007. http://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/principles_en.pdf.

UN Women—Headquarters. "Frequently Asked Questions: Types of Violence Against Women and Girls." United Nations. Accessed August 8, 2022. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Gender-Based Violence." UNHCR. United Nations, 2020. <https://www.unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html>.

Wadhvani, Ashley, and News. "Updated: Nearly 200 B.C. Pastors Launch Anti-SOGI Campaign." *Langley Advance Times*. Black Press Media, September 28, 2018. <https://www.langleyadvancetimes.com/news/nearly-200-b-c-pastors-launch-anti-sogi-campaign/>.

"What Is Gender-Based Violence?" OCTEVAW. Accessed August 8, 2022. <https://www.octevaw-cocvff.ca/what-is-gbv>.

Wind, Rebecca. "Abstinence-Only-until-Marriage Programs Are Ineffective and Harmful to Young People, Expert Review Confirms." *Guttmacher Institute*, August 22, 2017. <https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2017/abstinence-only-until-marriage-programs-are-ineffective-and-harmful-young-people#>.

Whitwell, Carli. "Hey Canada, Consent Should Be Sex Education 101." Canadian Kids are Not Taught About Consent in School. *Refinery 29*, August 24, 2021. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/2021/08/10559610/consent-not-in-sex-ed-curriculum-canada>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy proposal takes place on the unceded territories of the xwməθkwəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səɪ ilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. I created this policy ask because I see education as an indispensable tool in the prevention of gender-based and sexual violence. I raise my hands in gratitude to the 2022 Vancouver Foundation LEVEL Youth Policy Program (LEVEL YPP) facilitators, mentors, and participants involved, who shared their lived experiences with me and guided me along this journey. In particular, I would like to thank Andrea Reimer, Chantelle Spicer, and Melanie Stewart for the wisdom they lent to my project.

"Why Is Gender-Based Violence a Problem?" COE. Council of Europe. Accessed August 10, 2022. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/why-is-gender-based-violence-a-problem->

World Bank Group. "Gender-Based Violence (Violence Against Women and Girls)." World Bank. World Bank Group, March 12, 2021. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>.

World Health Organisation. "Violence Against Women." WHO. Accessed August 10, 2022. https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-women#tab=tab_1.

Young, Leslie. "Sexual Education Compared Across Canada." *Global News*. Corus Entertainment, February 24, 2015. <https://globalnews.ca/news/1847912/sexual-education-compared-across-canada/>.

Youth Health Services. "Goals of Sex Education for Teenagers." Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Accessed August 8, 2022. <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/for-educators/what-are-goals-sex-education-youth>.



*Teaching comprehensive
sexuality education (“sex-ed”)
can play an integral role in eradicating
gender-based and sexual violence by
creating a culture of consent, gender-
equitable relationships, and proactive
sexual health amongst
BC youth.*

Vancouver Foundation is Community Inspired. We are a community foundation that connects the generosity of donors with the energy, ideas, and time of people in the community. Together, we’ve been making meaningful and lasting impacts in neighborhoods and communities since 1943. We work with individuals, corporations, and charitable agencies to create permanent endowment funds and then use the income to support thousands of charities. We recognize that communities are complex and that collaboration between multiple stakeholders is needed to help everyone thrive and evolve. Vancouver Foundation brings together donors, non-profits and charities, government, media and academic institutions, local leaders, and passionate individuals to build meaningful and lasting change in the province of British Columbia. We see young people, their voices and experiences as part of that vision to building meaningful change.

200–475 W. Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC, V6B 4M9

level@vancouverfoundation.ca www.levelvf.ca 604.688.2204

[f @LEVELVF](#) [t @LEVEL_VF](#) [@LEVEL_VF](#)