



**IT'S NEVER OKAY:**  
AN ACTION PLAN  
TO STOP SEXUAL  
VIOLENCE AND  
HARASSMENT  
**MARCH 2015**



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# MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

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SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT are a reality in every community in this province — and that is not acceptable.

After all the work that has been done to eradicate sexual violence and harassment — and the misogyny that underpins them — it is difficult to believe that these actions and ideas are still pervasive today.

We can, and must, do better.


As a student, a mother, a leader and a woman, I have been involved in this struggle for decades. Now, as the Premier of Ontario, I know that we have to act together for change. And we have to act now!

That's what this plan is all about. Through a variety of initiatives, we will raise public awareness of sexual violence and harassment in Ontario, and challenge societal norms and

beliefs. We will help survivors, so they are better supported when they reach out for the assistance they need. We will ensure that those who are brave enough to come forward are not re-victimized by systems that are supposed to help.

We want to strengthen our laws to ensure that our workplaces are free from sexual violence and harassment. We want to improve safety on our campuses, where assault and harassment are too prevalent and often go unreported and unchecked.

Above all, we want to challenge and change the deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours that contribute to sexual violence and harassment. Because these take root at an early age, it is important that our young people learn about gender equality and respectful relationships from the start.



We need to talk about sexual violence and harassment in every community, every classroom and every workplace. And that conversation needs to include everyone — women and men, young people, seniors, people living with disabilities, newcomers and members of culturally diverse communities, aboriginal people, visible minorities, and the LGBTQ community.

The damaging reality of sexual violence and harassment does not appear only when the media and the government start talking about it, but the fact that we are once again focused on these issues moves us a step closer to the safe, fair and respectful society we all believe in and that people deserve.

Through this Action Plan, we are taking steps to do better. They are not the first steps we have taken to end violence against women and they will not be the last.

By building on what we know works — here and around the world — together we can create a place that is safer for all Ontarians.



KATHLEEN WYNNE  
*Premier of Ontario*

# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

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I AM PLEASED TO JOIN Premier Kathleen Wynne in releasing *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*.

Last June, Premier Wynne gave me a mandate to continue Ontario's work to end violence against women. Sexual violence is shockingly prevalent in our society. It crosses all social boundaries, affects people of every age and culture, and is devastating to the lives of survivors and their families.

This Action Plan builds on the strengths and successes of Ontario's first Sexual Violence Action Plan (2011). It recognizes the progress we have made together and deepens our commitment to ending sexual violence and harassment.

Through our Action Plan, we will challenge myths and improve supports for survivors. We will educate and inform a new generation

of boys and girls, and reach out to diverse populations. We will be bold, activist and forward-looking in our attempts to stop sexual assault and harassment before it starts.

Government cannot stop sexual violence on its own. That's why our Action Plan asks everyone to be aware and to step up on behalf of the people in their lives who are affected by sexual violence and harassment. It asks for the commitment of community leaders to help put the Action Plan in place. It recognizes that through collective societal action we can make Ontario a safer place for all of us.

I'd like to thank our community partners and front-line workers, and all those in diverse sectors and communities, who have contributed their thoughts and opinions over the years to this important cause, and who so capably support women who have experienced or are at risk of sexual violence.

In particular, I am grateful to all the courageous men and women who have survived sexual assault and shared their personal and often traumatic stories to help end the violence. I also look forward to working with the permanent violence against women roundtable which will provide advice to government on issues of gendered violence.

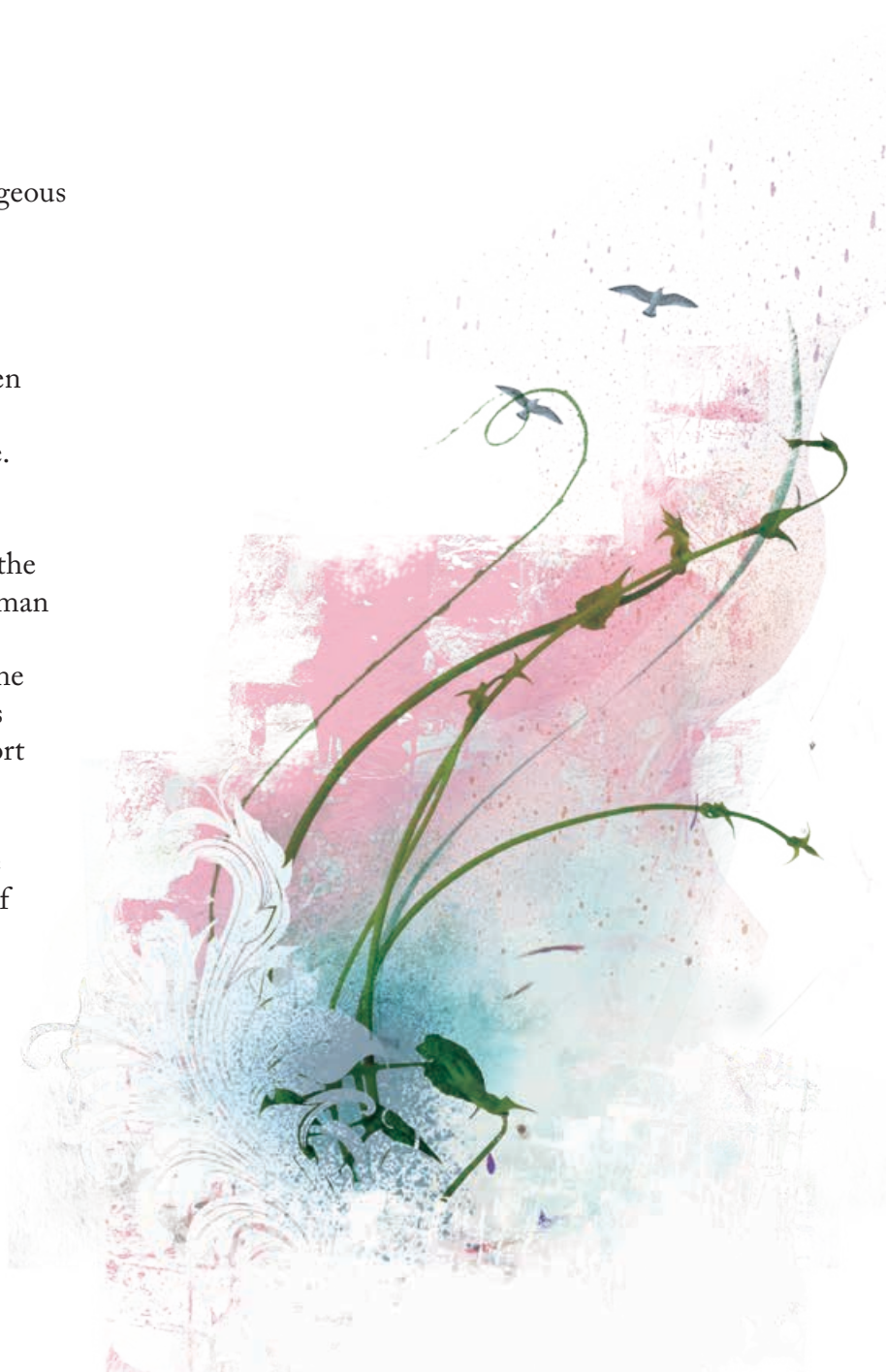
We believe there is urgency to our plan's implementation. With every new report in the media, with every new indication that a woman has been sexually violated or harassed, we recognize anew that there is much to be done and a long way to go. The Ontario Women's Directorate will chart our progress and report regularly to Ontarians.

By working together, we can help all people in Ontario live their lives free of this kind of violence and fear.

TRACY MACCHARLES



*Minister Responsible for Women's Issues*



# THE TRUTH ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

FOR EVERY STORY WE HEAR about a friend being attacked at the end of a first date, or a student being assaulted at a campus party, or a colleague being harassed at work, many more incidents are not reported to authorities.

**!** **ONE IN THREE WOMEN WILL**  
EXPERIENCE SOME FORM OF SEXUAL  
● ASSAULT IN HER LIFETIME.



! **ALTHOUGH WE KNOW THAT SEXUAL VIOLENCE OFTEN GOES UNREPORTED, RESEARCH INDICATES THAT THERE ARE 460,000 SEXUAL ASSAULTS IN CANADA EACH YEAR. FOR EVERY 1000 SEXUAL ASSAULTS, ONLY 33 ARE EVER REPORTED TO THE POLICE; 12 RESULT IN CHARGES LAID; ONLY 6 ARE PROSECUTED AND ONLY 3 LEAD TO A CONVICTION.**

Very few reach the courts and far too many survivors don't access support and counselling. This means that survivors aren't getting the help that they need, and perpetrators of sexual violence are not being held accountable.

Why? Because too many of us have attitudes towards women, men, relationships and rape that are sexist, misogynist and often just plain wrong.

We've all heard "no means no," but what about if she's drunk? What if he is? What if she promised to have sex with a text — can she change her mind? In fact, anything short of an enthusiastic YES to be involved in a specific sexual activity is not actually consent. And yet many of us skip this step because we don't have the tools to understand and establish consent.

Rape myths, attitudes and behaviours — so prevalent in our society — have had the effect of downplaying sexual violence and harassment. These norms prevent people from seeking help or reporting an assault. They support a rape culture, which has led to normalizing, even condoning, sexual violence and harassment. And Ontario is not unique. This is a nation-wide and international problem.

Most people agree that unwanted sexual attention is wrong. We know this. We understand it conceptually. Yet today's reality is that many people cross the line or act like it's no big deal. That leaves people who are targets of sexual assault or harassment feeling guilty, ashamed and reluctant to speak out.

But we can do something to stop sexual violence and harassment — right here, right now — in our own province.

How? By challenging rape myths and misogynistic attitudes. These are learned behaviours that we absorb through early influences: what we see, what we learn, what we experience. Challenging and changing them requires public education, raised awareness, a better understanding of healthy relationships and consent, and affirmation that all people deserve to be treated with dignity, equality and respect.

The initiatives in this Action Plan address many aspects of the problem through measures to support survivors, change attitudes and enhance safety in our workplaces, schools, campuses and communities. This plan is based on our belief that we all — including governments, employers, justice partners, community leaders, service providers and others — have a role to play and we all share responsibility for stopping sexual violence and harassment.

The road to success begins with conversations in every community, in every classroom and in every workplace. We must challenge ourselves to reflect gender equality in the way we parent, teach, police, serve and support those who have experienced sexual violence and harassment. And we all need to step up and challenge sexual violence and harassment when we see it.

If we can accomplish this, we will help create a future for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren that is safe and free from sexual violence and harassment.

! **ACCORDING TO A 2013 GLOBAL REVIEW OF AVAILABLE DATA, 35% OF WOMEN WORLDWIDE HAVE EXPERIENCED EITHER PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE OR NON-PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE.**

# EXPLAINING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS A WIDESPREAD and deep-rooted problem. It crosses all social boundaries. It is experienced by women, girls, men and boys of every age and culture. It can occur anytime, anywhere, anyplace. It is a crime.

**!** IN 99% OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS, THE ACCUSED PERPETRATOR IS MALE.

**! WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES ARE  
● THREE TIMES AS LIKELY TO BE FORCED INTO  
SEXUAL ACTIVITY BY USE OF THREATS OR FORCE.**

Sexual violence is about power and control, not sexual desire. It is an act of aggression against another person. It is never the survivor's fault. It is never okay.

Less than 10 per cent of sexual assaults in Canada are reported to police, making it one of the most underreported violent crimes. We know that survivors describe feeling afraid that they won't be believed. They feel ashamed; they blame themselves and fear public scrutiny. Survivors have also reported that their experience of the justice system made them feel revictimized.

**Sexual Assault** is a crime under the Criminal Code of Canada. It is any assault of a sexual nature that violates a person's sexual integrity.

**Sexual Harassment** is a form of discrimination. It involves unwanted behaviour that intimidates or causes another person offence or humiliation. It can cause severe anxiety, shame and fear. Cyber-harassment is having an especially devastating impact on young people.

**Rape Culture** is a culture in which dominant ideas, social practices, media images and societal institutions implicitly or explicitly condone sexual assault by normalizing or trivializing male sexual violence and by blaming survivors for their own abuse.



**ONE IN THREE WOMEN  
WILL EXPERIENCE  
SOME FORM OF SEXUAL  
ASSAULT IN HER LIFETIME.**

**! SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMIZATION  
● RATES ARE FIVE TIMES HIGHER FOR  
WOMEN UNDER THE AGE OF 35.**



The background is a vibrant yellow with abstract, painterly brushstrokes in shades of green, brown, and orange. Several thick, curved arrows in green, brown, and orange point towards the upper right corner. The overall aesthetic is artistic and forward-looking.

IO

IT'S NEVER OKAY

# THE WAY FORWARD

THROUGH IT'S NEVER OKAY: AN ACTION PLAN TO STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT, we are doing our part to establish an Ontario where everyone lives in safety and is free from the threat, fear or experience of sexual violence and harassment.



The plan includes commitments to:

1. ■ Introduce legislation to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing, and through the civil claim process.
  2. ■ Launch a public education and awareness campaign across Ontario to challenge attitudes, promote immediate change in rape culture behaviour, and encourage a longer-term generational shift to end deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours.
  3. ■ Develop tools and identify best practices to support a compassionate and sensitive response from law enforcement authorities to encourage more survivors to report sexual assaults.
  4. ■ Increase supports and develop an enhanced prosecution model to improve the experience of survivors navigating the criminal justice system.
  5. ■ Update the Health and Physical Education curriculum to help students from grades 1–12 gain a deeper understanding of a host of important issues, including healthy relationships and consent.
  6. ■ Introduce legislation to require colleges and universities to work with students to adopt campus-wide sexual violence and harassment policies that include training, prevention, complaint procedures and response protocols.
  7. ■ Strengthen supports provided by hospital-based Sexual and Domestic Violence Treatment Centres to maintain 24/7 access to excellent, appropriate and timely care.
  8. ■ Develop up-to-date training for front-line workers in the health, community services, education and justice sectors to better support survivors of sexual assault and harassment and develop training for workers in the hospitality sector to empower them to know how to help when they encounter high-risk situations.
  9. ■ Stabilize and increase funding for community-based sexual assault centres.
  10. ■ Create a pilot program to provide free independent legal advice to sexual assault survivors whose cases are proceeding toward a criminal trial.
  11. ■ Establish a permanent roundtable to make Ontario a leader within Canada on issues of violence against women.
  12. ■ Enhance workplace laws to strengthen enforcement under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, including establishing a Code of Practice to help employers develop stronger sexual harassment policies.
  13. ■ Launch a creative engagement fund that supports Ontario artists to develop projects that provoke conversation and dialogue on issues of consent, rape culture and gender inequality.
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# MEASURING SUCCESS

OUR GOVERNMENT IS CONFIDENT  
this Action Plan will help us stop  
sexual violence and harassment.



To ensure that the plan delivers on our commitment to a safer Ontario, we will monitor progress and results and update Ontarians on the plan's first year anniversary. Various means will be used to track our progress including:

- Incorporating performance metrics to measure outcomes for new Action Plan initiatives.
- Conducting surveys and polls to measure Ontarians' experiences and opinions relating to sexual violence and harassment, for example, changed attitudes regarding rape myths or reduced vulnerability of women and girls in diverse communities.
- Tracking reporting levels and working with sector partners to gauge whether the Action Plan is achieving success at improving the outcomes and experiences of those who have experienced sexual violence and harassment.
- Determining cultural shifts through data analysis to find out whether:
  - › more people who experience sexual assault and harassment are reaching out for help and accessing supports and services;
  - › more people who experience sexual violence and harassment reach out to tell their stories, and feel supported in doing so; and
  - › more bystanders feel empowered to intervene in incidents safely and effectively.





I4

OWNING  
THE PROBLEM—  
SHARING  
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# RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS of sexual violence and harassment is a key to change. We can do this in many ways. By teaching our children about healthy, equal relationships. By demonstrating how sexual violence devastates and how harassment traumatizes lives. We must intervene when we see this behaviour and stop it before it happens. It's never okay.



**DRAW-THE-LINE/TRAÇON-LES-LIMITES** IS AN ONGOING CAMPAIGN THAT CHALLENGES COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND EQUIPS THOSE CLOSEST TO WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH THE SKILLS TO INTERVENE EFFECTIVELY.



**!** **IT STARTS WITH YOU, IT STAYS WITH HIM/ÇA COMMENCE AVEC TOI. ÇA RESTE AVEC LUI** IS AN ONLINE-BASED SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN THAT **●** ENCOURAGES MEN TO BE POSITIVE ROLE MODELS TO BOYS AND TO EDUCATE BOYS IN GENDER EQUALITY, CONSENT AND RELATIONSHIP SKILLS.

Along with the release of this Action Plan, our government is launching a multi-media public education and awareness campaign to engage Ontarians in a discussion about how to prevent sexual violence and harassment.

This campaign goes to the heart of the problem by challenging behaviour that currently exists — and naming every person's role in changing it.

To support this goal, we will:

- Continue to fund existing public education campaigns, including bystander campaigns that encourage individuals to challenge the attitudes and norms that perpetuate sexual violence, and to intervene safely and effectively.
- Initiate a public education campaign to ensure that survivors know they are entitled to receive a supportive response when reporting an assault to police.
- Through public education, reach out to diverse groups of Ontarians, including the LGBTQ community, newcomers and those in diverse communities, people living with disabilities, and seniors to ensure they know every person has the right to be protected against sexual violence and harassment, and how and where to get help if it happens to them.
- Launch a creative engagement fund to provoke discussion of challenging issues — such as rape culture, consent, gender inequality and social norms — through funding projects by Ontario artists.



**WOMEN WITH  
DISABILITIES ARE  
THREE TIMES AS LIKELY  
TO BE FORCED INTO  
SEXUAL ACTIVITY BY USE  
OF THREATS OR FORCE.**

**I5**

**!** **KIZHAAY ANISHINAABE NIIN/I AM A KIND MAN** IS A CAMPAIGN **●** THAT ENCOURAGES ABORIGINAL MEN AND BOYS TO SPEAK OUT TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

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# MORE TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS

WHEN A SURVIVOR of sexual violence accesses services, a sensitive and appropriate response from service providers is essential to recovery and healing — regardless of the venue through which they seek help.



**WE WILL CREATE A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE** INCLUDING POLICE, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, VICTIM SERVICES AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ORGANIZATIONS TO INFORM BEST PRACTICES AND PROTOCOLS THAT CAN BE SHARED ACROSS THE PROVINCE TO **ENSURE BETTER RESULTS FOR SURVIVORS.**

Our Action Plan includes:

- Training for front-line workers in health, education, justice and community services to help shift norms and improve responses to those who experience sexual violence, and to help workers in the hospitality sector safely intervene if they witness sexual violence or people at risk.
- Training for mental health and addictions professionals in trauma-informed care.
- Standardizing police training to ensure that police understand victimization and respond in a compassionate and appropriate way to survivors of sexual assault.
- Enhancing education and training for Crown attorneys and police, aimed at the swift and effective prosecution of sexual assault cases and attention given to the needs of survivors.
- Training for support workers to ensure those who work with vulnerable populations are equipped to detect and respond to sexual violence and harassment.
- Developing training materials for new teachers to assist them in understanding root causes of sexual violence and harassment.

**IN FALL 2015, OUR GOVERNMENT WILL HOST A PROVINCIAL SUMMIT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT. IT WILL BRING TOGETHER HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITY LEADERS—AND MORE VIA LIVE WEBCAST—TO DISCUSS THE LATEST NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS AND STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT.**





PUBLIC EDUCATION

POST-SECONDARY POLICIES

ENHANCED PROSECUTION

STRONGER WORKPLACE LAWS

COMMUNITY NETWORKS

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

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# MORE CHOICES AND BETTER OUTCOMES FOR SURVIVORS THROUGH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

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SOME SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS say that going through the justice system as a complainant can be almost as traumatic as the sexual assault itself. The often lengthy and public nature of a trial, reliving the event to provide testimony, methods of questioning and cross-examination: these can all cause extreme distress, and often don't feel fair to survivors.

**!** OUR GOVERNMENT IS WORKING WITH THE LAW SOCIETY OF UPPER CANADA AND LAW SCHOOLS TO **ENSURE ALL ONTARIO LAWYERS UPHOLD THEIR PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS WELL AS CANADA'S RAPE SHIELD LAWS**, WHICH LIMIT THE USE OF A SURVIVOR'S PREVIOUS SEXUAL HISTORY AS EVIDENCE IN CRIMINAL CASES.

Survivors of sexual assault should feel safe coming forward to police and deserve a swift and dignified response from the justice system. And we all expect perpetrators of sexual violence to be held to account.

To strengthen the response of the justice system, we will:

- Introduce an enhanced prosecution model for sexual assault cases, including:
  - A sexual assault advisory group to provide legal and strategic advice to trial Crown attorneys;
  - A mentorship program for Crown attorneys new to sexual assault prosecutions;
  - Education, training and data collection to be sure survivors are experiencing an improved system; and
  - A resource for survivors that explains the function of the criminal trial, the roles and obligations of the participants in the process, as well as the right to be safe and treated with civility by all those participating in the proceeding. The resource will also provide survivors and their advocates with information about what to do if things go wrong.

This model is based, in part, on our experience with the measures taken to make Ontario's criminal justice system more responsive to survivors of domestic violence.

- Create a pilot program to provide free independent legal advice to sexual assault survivors whose cases are proceeding toward a criminal trial.

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*The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is an administrative tribunal that hears claims from survivors of violent crimes and family members of deceased victims of violent crimes, including sexual violence. It provides modest financial compensation to survivors according to the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act. In 2013-14, the CICB received approximately 3,400 claims, completed just over 3,200 hearings and paid out more than \$28 million in awards to survivors and victims' families.*

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- Amend the Limitations Act to remove the limitation period for any civil sexual assault claim.
- Remove the current two-year limitation period for claims of crimes relating to sexual violence brought to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board under the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act.
- Develop policing tools to improve the response to sexual violence by law enforcement through a comprehensive review of challenges, opportunities and best practices for investigation.

**!** OUR GOVERNMENT WILL REVIEW THE CRIMINAL CODE OF CANADA PROVISIONS AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE CHANGE TO **IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE SURVIVORS WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.**

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# SEEDING GENERATIONAL CHANGE

LIFE-LONG ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS solidify at an early age. For systemic, generational change to occur, it's important that young people learn respectful behaviours from the beginning.

**!** 47% OF VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST  
GIRLS UNDER THE AGE OF 12  
ARE SEXUAL IN NATURE.



We are bringing these ideas to schools and classrooms through the Action Plan by:

- Updating the Health and Physical Education curriculum to help students to develop an understanding of the root causes of gender inequality, and — from a very early stage — understand healthy relationships and consent.
- Ensuring that all students learn concepts, in age-appropriate ways, that will address such issues as physical and emotional well-being, mental health, online safety, sexual orientation, equity and inclusion.
- Developing resources to help teachers implement the new curriculum, and help parents support their child's learning.
- Creating activities and resources to raise student awareness in an engaging way.
- Giving students the opportunity to lead projects and research that support healthy relationships and safe, inclusive school environments.

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*In September 2014, two eighth-grade students, Tessa Hill and Lia Valente, began a social media campaign called "We Give Consent" to encourage the government to include the concept of consent and healthy relationships in Ontario's updated Health and Physical Education school curriculum. The girls want to raise awareness and be sure that students are able to learn in class what asking permission and giving consent look like and sound like, and how the absence of "no" does not mean "yes." Their petition gathered over 40,000 signatures and the Health and Physical Education curriculum (released in February 2015) includes these important issues.*

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**!** FEMALE YOUTH AGED 12 TO 17 ARE EIGHT TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN MALE YOUTH TO BE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT OR ANOTHER TYPE OF SEXUAL OFFENCE.

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# SAFER WORKPLACES

ALL EMPLOYEES are entitled to a safe and healthy workplace, free from sexual violence and harassment. Our government takes this very seriously.

**!** **28% OF CANADIANS** SAY THEY HAVE BEEN ON THE RECEIVING END OF UNWELCOME SEXUAL ADVANCES, REQUESTS FOR SEXUAL FAVOURS, OR SEXUALLY-CHARGED TALK WHILE ON THE JOB.



Sexual harassment in the workplace can undermine dignity. It can prevent people from doing their jobs effectively, keep them from reaching their full potential, and compromise their ability to earn a living. This harassment, left unchecked, also has the potential to escalate into violent behaviour.

Workers in Ontario deserve safer workplaces, so we will:

- Introduce legislation to strengthen the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include a definition of sexual harassment. The legislation would set out explicit requirements for employers to investigate and address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment complaints in the workplace, and include an obligation for employers to make every reasonable effort to protect workers from harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace.
- Create a new Code of Practice for employers under the Act that will describe steps employers can take to comply with the law and assist employers in making their workplaces safer for all employees.
- Establish a special enforcement team of inspectors trained to address complaints of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, and enforce the Act's harassment provisions across the province.
- Develop educational materials to help employers create a safer workplace, free of harassment.

## HOLDING OURSELVES TO ACCOUNT

Ontario's government policies, procedures and training for political staff are being reviewed and strengthened to ensure a working environment free of workplace discrimination, violence and harassment.

Ontario's Premier, Cabinet Ministers and all government MPPs are required to undertake training to raise awareness and prevent workplace sexual violence and harassment, and all ministers' offices and Premier's Office staff have received training on workplace discrimination, harassment and violence prevention.

The Ontario Public Service, one of the largest employers in the province, has developed a Sexual Harassment Prevention Action Plan. This plan includes reviewing policies to further address sexual harassment in the workplace; services and supports for employees, including those to ensure they feel safe to raise concerns or report issues; and a campaign designed to increase awareness, strengthen accountability and drive behavioural change in the workplace.






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# SAFER CAMPUSES



FOR MANY STUDENTS, university or college marks an important milestone in their lives. As students become part of a new campus community, we know that far too often adapting to life on campus includes navigating rape culture or surviving an experience of sexual violence or harassment.

**!** ACCORDING TO THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS, MANY ON-CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULTS OCCUR DURING THE FIRST EIGHT WEEKS OF CLASSES. ORIENTATION WEEK IS AN EXCITING TIME, BUT IT ALSO PRESENTS A HEIGHTENED RISK OF SEXUAL ASSAULT ON CAMPUSES. THAT'S WHY, IN SEPTEMBER 2015, **ALL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WILL PARTICIPATE IN A PROVINCE-WIDE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.**

This is a problem. We know it. Universities and colleges know it. Most of all, students know it.

This is not a new problem. Student leaders have been calling for action for decades, and now it's time to act.

We want to eliminate rape culture on campus. We want school environments to be safe and respectful. We want every student, in every university and college in Ontario, to be able to learn and study and experience campus life at its finest, free from sexual violence and harassment. And we know that to get there, we must work together to find solutions.

Ontario's campuses should be safe for everyone. We will:

- Introduce legislation to require colleges and universities to adopt a sexual assault policy, developed with significant input from students, and renewed — with student involvement — every four years.
- Ensure each campus has clearly stated complaint procedures and response protocols; effective training and prevention programs; and services and supports for survivors available 24/7.
- Require universities and colleges to report publicly on incidence of sexual violence, as well as initiatives underway to address sexual violence and harassment, and their effectiveness.



**IN THREE-QUARTERS OF SEXUAL ASSAULTS THE WOMAN KNOWS HER ATTACKER.**

- Support initiatives by colleges and universities to reduce sexual violence and harassment, and ensure safe campuses.
- Make sure all students have information about preventing sexual violence and harassment and are informed of resources and supports, starting with their first week of orientation and continuing throughout the year, for students in all years of study.

! IN 2013, THE ONTARIO WOMEN'S DIRECTORATE RELEASED A GUIDE TO SUPPORT ONGOING EFFORTS ON CAMPUS TO REDUCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE. **A RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE: A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ONTARIO'S UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES** PROVIDES PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO DEVELOP OR ENHANCE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICIES AND RESPONSE PROTOCOLS. IT WILL BE REVIEWED AND UPDATED ON AN ONGOING BASIS.

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UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH'S  
S.A.F.E (SEXUAL ASSAULT  
FREE ENVIRONMENT)  
PROGRAM

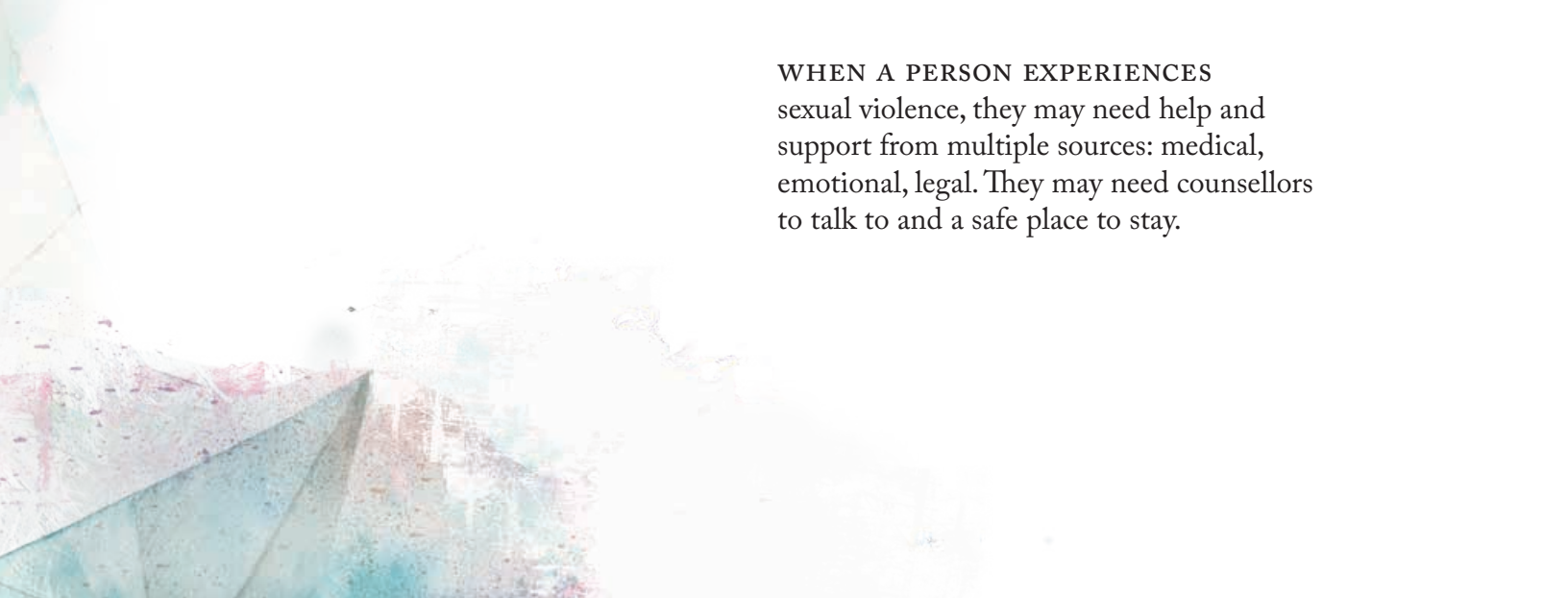
*S.A.F.E promotes healthy relationships and consent in the University of Guelph community. This program educates students on issues of sexual assault, consent, healthy relationships and partner abuse. It works with campus and community partners to develop and deliver workshops and events that support a Sexual Assault Free Environment. It also introduces the topic of consent to all University of Guelph students during their first week on campus through The Date Safe Project's "Can I Kiss You?" production.*

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# MORE HELP AND BETTER SUPPORTS FOR SURVIVORS IN THE COMMUNITY



WHEN A PERSON EXPERIENCES sexual violence, they may need help and support from multiple sources: medical, emotional, legal. They may need counsellors to talk to and a safe place to stay.



IN CANADA, OUT OF EVERY 1000 SEXUAL ASSAULTS, **ONLY 33 ARE REPORTED TO POLICE AND ONLY THREE LEAD TO CONVICTION.**

IT'S NEVER OKAY

Most of all, survivors need to know they did nothing wrong and they are not alone. Services and people are available in communities across Ontario to provide aid and support.

Survivors of sexual violence have complex needs. In serious cases, a survivor could need access to emergency care, crisis intervention, trauma counselling, collection of forensic evidence and medical follow-up. We know that it often falls to community supports to respond to these needs, but we also know that we can and must do better. Our government will respond through the Action Plan to:

- Enable Ontario's 42 sexual assault centres to help more people through increased funding and greater community coordination.
- Boost funding and increase services at Ontario's 35 hospital-based Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres.
- Continue to provide excellent, specialized and timely care at all Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres and hospitals, consistent with best international practices and standards of care.
- Develop materials specific to child welfare workers and youth in care and leaving care, who are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and harassment, to address the specific risks they face.



**!** **PHYSICAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT CAN INCLUDE PERSONAL INJURY, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE AND UNWANTED PREGNANCY. MENTAL HEALTH**  
**● CONSEQUENCES CAN BE SEVERE AND LONG-TERM, INCLUDING ANXIETY AND PANIC ATTACKS, EATING DISORDERS, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, DEPRESSION AND OTHER MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.**

We want women and girls, men and boys to know who to call and where to turn if they (or someone they love) experience sexual violence. They need to be able to connect swiftly and easily to a seamless system of supports.

The government has an important role to play to enhance community initiatives and facilitate coordination and delivery of services. Through this Action Plan, we will:

- Ensure counselling services and help lines that currently exist across several sectors are coordinated and integrated.
- Continue to provide services in over 150 languages.
- Introduce an Innovation Fund to test new service-delivery approaches based on best practices, for example, community ‘hub’ models.
- Strengthen the focus on sexual violence at Ontario's 48 Domestic Violence Community Coordinating Committees, which work locally to prevent domestic violence and improve services to women who experience domestic abuse.
- Amend the Residential Tenancies Act to allow tenants who are fleeing sexual or domestic violence to break their lease with less than 60 days' notice.



# LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

IN FALL 2015, following consultation with experts, survivors and impacted stakeholders, our government will introduce legislation that, if passed, would strengthen the Action Plan's impact and ensure results where the strength of law is needed.



To ensure the Action Plan is effectively delivered, its implementation will be supported through these steps:

- The Ministerial Steering Committee on Violence Against Women, chaired by the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, will oversee and monitor implementation.
- A committee comprised of senior leaders within the Ontario Public Service will coordinate activities across ministries and ensure effective implementation from the highest levels of the public service.
- A 10-member, All-Party Committee will develop recommendations to prevent sexual violence and harassment, improve the response to Ontarians who have experienced sexual violence and harassment, and consider ways to shift norms and barriers that prevent survivors from coming forward. Its report will be provided in December 2015.
- The Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women is developing a long-term strategy to end violence against Aboriginal women. It is developing a separate strategy specific to ending sexual violence.

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**SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST  
ABORIGINAL WOMEN  
AND GIRLS: WE DEMAND  
ANSWERS...**

*The Government of Ontario is united with all other provinces and territories in calling on the federal government to support the National Aboriginal Organizations' call to establish a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. We need to shine a light on this devastating issue, listen and learn, and take strong actions collectively to end this violence.*


*Ontario continues to work with the other provinces and territories on a socio-economic action plan for Aboriginal women to respond to some of the root causes of violence, including exploring issues of housing, education, employment and poverty. On February 27, 2015, Ontario's Premier and related ministers attended the first National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to participate in a discussion aimed at coordinating action to address and prevent violence against indigenous women and girls. It is the first of its kind.*

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# CONNECTING TO THE BIGGER PICTURE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



WE KNOW THAT SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT are expressions of misogyny and rape culture. And we know that social change on these issues cannot be realized in isolation from other issues of gender inequality.

Engendering the shifts in cultural norms that are contemplated by this Action Plan will also require engagement on these broader issues.

■ To that end, we will draw on the knowledge and expertise of those who are on the front lines of this work. Through the Action Plan we will establish a permanent stakeholder roundtable on Violence Against Women that will provide advice to government on ongoing and emerging issues of gendered violence. This sector roundtable will include experts on gender-based violence response and prevention whose knowledge will be fundamental to the government's continuing work to end sexual violence and harassment.

*It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment* is a series of commitments and a roadmap for ongoing work. But most of all, it is a call to action for all Ontarians to achieve important social change and progress, together.

Sexual violence and harassment — like domestic violence, human sex trafficking and the gender wage gap — are connected to gender inequality. To make real progress as a society, it is crucial that we leave behind damaging ideas about sex and gender, that we become aware of behaviours and attitudes that — however subtly — promote misogyny, and that we become diligent about challenging them when we see them.

Change is possible. Our Action Plan leads us in the right direction. But to truly make a difference, to truly stop sexual violence and harassment, we need to commit to taking action together.

That's why we're asking bystanders to get involved, communities and the justice system to better support survivors, parents and teachers to seed a generational change in attitudes toward consent and healthy relationships, and workplaces and campuses to ensure the safety of their employees and students.

We have the will and we have the opportunity. So let's do this — for our sisters, daughters, brothers and sons. Let's do this — for our colleagues at work, our friends on campus and our neighbours in our communities.

Take a stand — and stand with us — to declare that sexual violence and harassment are never okay.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[ONTARIO.CA/ITSNEVEROKAY](https://ontario.ca/itsneverokay)





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JANICE KUN is an award-winning Ontario illustrator, whose mixed media work incorporates a unique blend of photography, hand rendering and digital collage.

*For this project, her illustration takes a conceptual approach to the urgency and acknowledgment of taking action on the issue of sexual violence and harassment.*

*Three figures work together to reshape a landscape that moves rhythmically from the darkness of an abstracted, geometric background, into one of brighter, bolder colours and organic shapes. Their dialogue sparks the process of change by writing a new script, painting a new horizon and cultivating new growth.*

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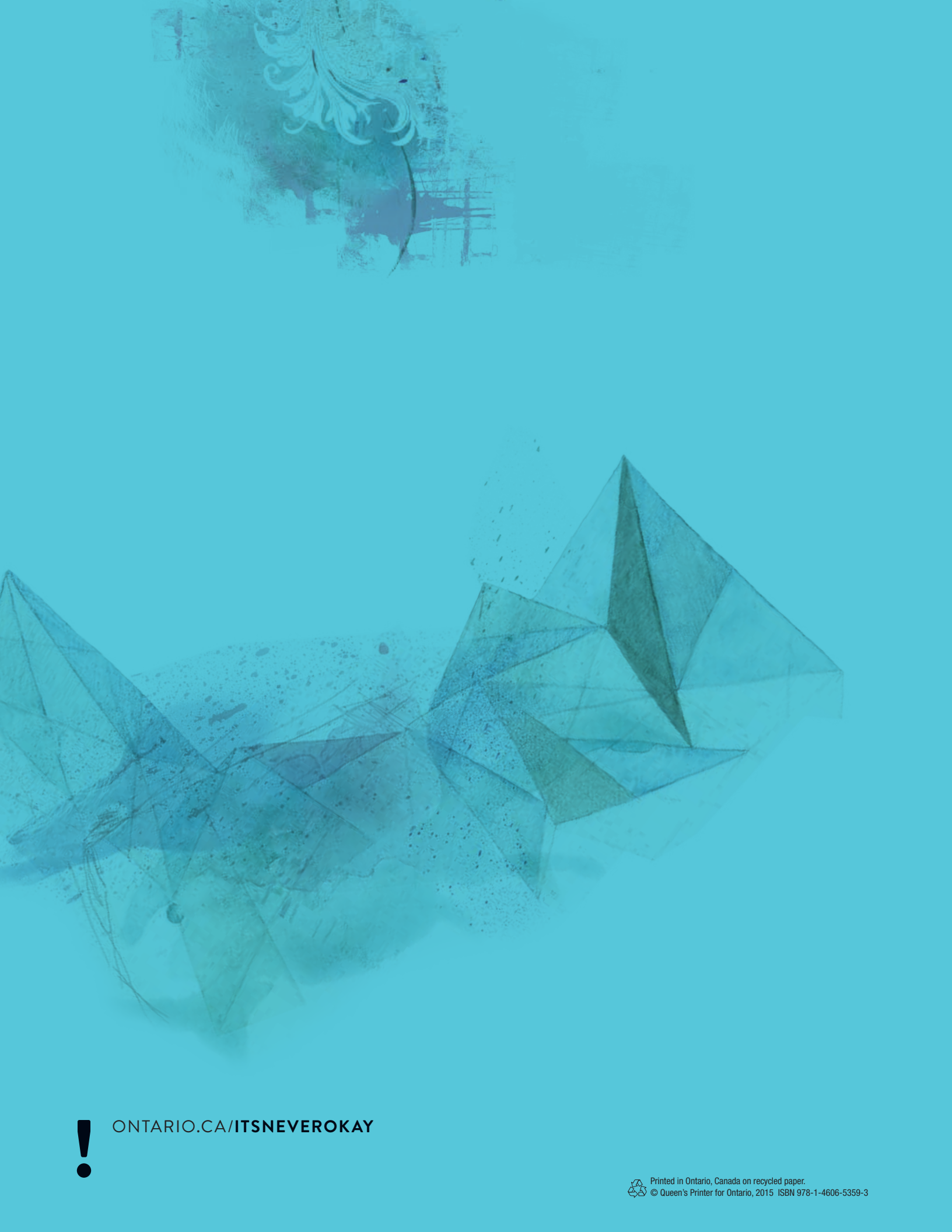
THIS ACTION PLAN IS THE START OF CHANGE — not the end. Real change takes a sustained commitment over many years. It requires dedication and support by those both inside and outside the government.

We acknowledge the contribution of those whose work is already making Ontario a safer place, and we stand with the survivors in every part of this province who know that they deserve better.

We call on all Ontarians through their actions and beliefs to make change happen. We cannot do it without you.

TO BE  
CONTINUED...





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