



a future without violence.

May 30, 2025

STATEMENT RE: OHL INTERVIEW WITH CBC

Let us be clear: as far as we can tell, the OHL does not care about sexual violence prevention education. They care about the *perception* of sexual violence prevention education. Let's break it down together, shall we?

For context, the Onside program was developed in a partnership between the OHL and two sexual assault centres in Ontario who had funding to develop prevention curriculum for young men. That program was then shared with sexual assault centres across the province, and every OHL team in Ontario was matched with a local organization who had the expertise to run this particular program.

In his interview with CBC when Bryan Crawford, the Commissioner of the OHL, says "there's certainly no exemption from receiving this important training," he's not talking about the mandatory Onside program. Indeed, based on what we've seen—despite assurances otherwise—the Onside program is **not** mandatory. It appears as though any team who asks for an exception is granted one, as long as they check an undefined box that says they've completed some sort of sexual violence training—with no consistency or oversight in terms of content, learning outcomes, or length of training.

Bryan goes on to say that "there are other great organizations and great providers who are able to supply [sexual violence prevention education]." That's certainly true—we know that the London Abused Women's Centre (LAWC) provides excellent community programming. But what they're not providing, what they *can't* provide, is the Onside program. The reason they can't provide it? Because they don't have the materials. LAWC was never told by the Knight's that their one hour session was replacing the Onside program, or that it was checking a mandatory box of providing an "equivalent" training. LAWC would have no idea if what they deliver is an equivalent training, because they don't have the Onside training to compare their content to. Because, again, *they weren't told that their presentation was replacing the Onside program*. They were under the impression that the Knight's were receiving their training in addition to Onside from us. You can imagine how that lack of communication from the Knight's would easily lead to gaps in key information that players are supposed to be receiving (and that Bryan is on the radio insisting that players *are* receiving, despite all signs indicating otherwise.)

The idea that consent education "must begin in homes and at schools," as Bryan suggests, is a wonderful one that we certainly agree with. But the fact of the matter is that a large percent of boys in the OHL are not living in their homes—they're billeting with families who live in the city where their team is. From our perspective, the OHL has a duty of care for these boys to ensure that they're receiving such education while they're away from their homes. Moreover, the boys and young men who play on OHL teams have a higher degree of power from their local celebrity status, and need additional information than other teenagers with regards to consent, groupthink, pressure, coercion, and risk management in sexual situations. These are topics that Onside was developed to cover, which standard prevention programming may not.

Finally, a great deal was made in Bryan's interview about a "lack of central leadership" in the OCRCC and the need for each team to deal with centres locally. In fact, the OCRCC *provides* central leadership for centres across Ontario. Moreover, the OHL were offered the ability to have one centre run the administration and program management for all of the teams in Ontario and they never responded to that proposal. The money that Bryan brags about raising for us has come almost entirely from 50/50 draws at games, which we are required to send staff and volunteers to sell tickets for.

The OHL are not good community partners. They are not invested in sexual violence prevention work. And they appear deeply uninterested in trying to change that. It's no wonder that there's a sexual assault trial involving their former players just metres away from the rink.