



Sustainability

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Keeping Our Community Safe

“Did you know?” A series to shine a light on sustainability initiatives, research, and projects across UNH.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2022

by Cassie Hollasch '22 | English, Writing and Business Administration

Did you know UNH has special resources to protect victims of sexual assault and prevent future instances of sexual violence on campus?

2021 [UNH Sustainability Award](#) recipient and Professor, Sharyn Potter, continues to work diligently to make our campus a safe place for all students. Dr. Potter is commended for her research work at the [Prevention Innovations Research Center](#) (PIRC) at UNH.

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The PIRC has developed the app [uSafeUS](#), which is used in over fourteen New Hampshire higher education institutions and has been implemented in other schools in Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Florida. The app promotes two useful features: the prevention of sexual violence and how to respond after crimes have occurred. Prevention features include methods to leave an uncomfortable situation with help from a bar tender or waitress and the user can send themselves a text message that appears like it's from a contact of the user's choice, providing them with an excuse to leave an uncomfortable date with ease. The app also features response resources specific to the college campus of the user.

Dr. Potter also participates in research for "[Bringing in the Bystander](#)," the most known bystander intervention program in the country. She develops, administers, and then evaluates the success rate of a specific method of intervention. Her research helps determine effective ways to educate the public on how to be an active bystander.

In order to successfully respond to a situation where someone might be in danger, students need to be educated on the nature of how domestic violence and violent crimes occur. After being educated, it's important for everyone to have a mental plan of action. Dr. Potter cites the creativity of the students she works with who come up with various intervention techniques such as changing the music at a party to a song that forces the movement of a crowd (i.e. cha cha slide, conga line).

Dr. Potter enjoys combining her passions with her academic background as a medical sociologist. She states, "Doing this research is a way to use the skills I have as a scientist to address a global issue that affects 20% of people who identify as female and 12% of people who identify as male and even more who identify as transgender."

Dr. Potter emphasizes that universities need more resources for survivors of sexual assault. She envisions a future where students are supported by faculty and given resources to continue with their education after an assault occurs: "In communities where there are high

rates of sexual assault and relationship violence that’s happening, that doesn’t contribute to community sustainability. People need to have healthy and respectful lives in order for communities to be sustainable, sexual assault and rape prevention and response needs to be a part that.”

To find out more about campus resources check out [Sexual Harassment & Rape Prevention Program \(SHARPP\) | \(unh.edu\)](#)

To participate in UNH’s increasing efforts to improve campus safety take the UNH 2022 Sexual Misconduct Climate Survey.

The survey is part of a state-wide attempt to gather critical feedback about sexual misconduct across colleges and universities in New Hampshire. The survey is anonymous and available for students of all identities, both on and off campus, remote and in-person learners.

☐ **Complete the survey [here](#) by Sunday, February 12th.**

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