

SHARPP and UNH Host Take Back the Night

UNH community members gathered to raise awareness for interpersonal violence at Take Back the Night 2024.

Rebecca Colby, Staff Writer

On Thursday, Oct. 17, at 8:00 p.m., a large crowd of students gathered in front of Thompson Hall. Take Back the Night (TBTN), an event that began at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) in 1981 but has been a gathering at universities across the country since the 1970s, is a student-led event that aims to increase awareness of issues of interpersonal violence (IPV) on college campuses and beyond.

Currently, this event continues to be student-led and is sponsored and supported by The SHARPP Center for Interpersonal Violence Awareness, Prevention, and Advocacy. Take Back the Night 2024 featured student-decorated posters and t-shirts. Posters lined candle-lit tables, open to attendees to leave notes for SHARPP as well as messages and words to those impacted by IPV.



Taken by SHARPP Marketing Assistant



NH Notables at the Take Back the Night, taken by SHARPP Marketing Assistant

“TBTN is a highly impactful and transformative event for many attendees—and we’re incredibly fortunate to have this powerful event every October here at UNH,” said Erica Vazza, assistant director of engagement and prevention at The SHARPP Center.

Upon arrival, SHARPP representatives greeted attendees and handed them glow sticks. Hot cocoa and apple cider were provided courtesy of Catering & Special Events. One of UNH’s acapella groups, the NH Notables, performed two songs: “Can’t Catch Me Now” by Olivia Rodrigo and “Rise Up” by Andra Day. This is the second year that the Notables have performed at Take Back the Night. Several SHARPP representatives spoke about how IPV has affected them, SHARPP’s mission, and the purpose of Take Back the Night.

The stage then opened up for people from the crowd to share their experiences with interpersonal violence. A SHARPP staff member declared the space a safe space free from mandatory reporting so those who shared their stories could do so without an investigation or follow-up. Many courageous individuals shared their experiences with a silent and attentive crowd, followed by the quiet snapping of fingers in support.

“It’s a moment in time (that we co-create together) where pain, healing, grief, harm, and feelings can be openly discussed,” Vazza said.

Take Back the Night 2024 occurred roughly a month after the Sept. 25 timely alert events. The events were sobering to the UNH community, a reminder that interpersonal violence can occur anywhere, including on our campus.

“One of the most important things the UNH Community can do to work toward prevention is to recognize that interpersonal violence impacts all of us far more frequently than we know,” said Rachel Stewart, Director of The SHARPP Center.

Take Back the Night is a space for students to share their experiences with interpersonal violence as well as a call to action to prevent violence in the UNH community and beyond.

Vazza hopes that Take Back the Night leaves UNH community members with “...a desire to build a better UNH where our student organizations, FSL chapters, athletic teams, departments, hall councils, etc. are made up of individuals who value preventing violence from happening here at UNH in the first place.”

Take Back the Night 2024 was co-sponsored by Military and Veteran Services.

Community partners for TBTN 2024:

Memorial Union Building, Health & Wellness, The Beauregard Center, UNH History Department, Wildcats For Recovery Project, Residential Life & Housing, Catering & Special Events, Enterprise Technology & Services, & Facilities

Below are some links to resources:

[SHARPP Center Volunteer Opportunities](#)

[NH Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence Engagement](#)

[RAINN: How to Help](#)

For any students seeking support:

SHARPP Center resources are available to all. The SHARPP Center is located at Wolff House by UNH Health and Wellness. Resources include scheduling a meeting, stopping by Wolff House, or contacting the SHARPP office at (603) 862- 3494. SHARPP also has a 24/7 helpline at (603) 862-7233. The SHARPP Center offers confidential appointments and a safe space to meet with staff and representatives.