

SHARPP Data

Data has a central role in SHARPP's work

Thursday, February 7, 2019

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Data: What It Does
and Why We Need It

Last November, Jordyn Haime '20 wrote an excellent piece on the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous people. It was well-researched, and she discussed many unsettling trends and stories. If you haven't read it, I would certainly recommend doing so [here](#). A central part of Jordyn's piece was the data she presented. The troubling numbers showed the issues facing communities. By using averages, percentages and surveys, Jordyn was able to communicate scale and urgency.

The first 6 to 8 weeks at college can be the most exciting and challenging for a first year student.

I want to talk about that data. The word is thrown around often in life. Companies collect and sell data. UNH students often are asked to take campus, dorm or dining hall surveys. The word data even has its own subject code in the UNH course catalog. Data has a central role to play in what SHARPP does as well.

The collection of data allows SHARPP to understand, firstly, what problems UNH faces. We know that one in four women will be sexually assaulted in college. We know that the time of highest risk is the first 6 to 8 weeks on campus for [first-year students](#) and alcohol is the [number-one date rape drug](#). This means that SHARPP prevention programs are especially important when first-year students arrive and emphasize that alcohol does not excuse a perpetrator's actions. Scroll all the way down to the references of [this link](#). There you will find the data SHARPP is using. There is documentation and reason behind the prevention and response SHARPP does. Data allows SHARPP to approach issues with confidence, precision and knowledge because it is evidence-based, meaning it is research-driven and constantly being re-evaluated.

Here I would like to return to Jordyn's article. As important as the data in that article is, the data that is not there is also important. If data is not collected, problems can be harder to identify or prevent. The LGBTQ+ community, for example, faces issues with domestic violence but only recently has had statistics that show how serious an issue it is. Data collection can show where those problems exist. It forces us to ask questions. Why do we collect data for certain populations and not others? Who is collecting data, and who is using it? How can problems be solved if society does not know they are there?



The data that is out there can be hard to understand. An [examination](#) of the government's collection of sexual assault information revealed discrepancies. There were different terms used by different agencies or collection teams. What was defined as rape in one study would be defined as assault-sexual in another. Efforts focusing on different populations would be searching for different things and sensitive to different keywords. These differences greatly affected what information was in the data collected. However, there is no guarantee that there is a publicly available description of collection methods and terms. Many people are not data-literate or have trouble making it through a government report on sexual assault.

That is why data recording is not the end of the story. It is only useful because SHARPP actively employs data to make our campus a safer place. Information is made accessible and understandable. It is applied to the lives of everyone on campus and off. Data ensures that it all happens with a solid foundation.

[Learn more about SHARPP.](#)

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UNH TALES



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The stories are written by the staff of [UNH Communications and Public Affairs](#).

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