

# Saying Goodbye: My Last Post for SHARPP

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It is still so hard to believe that I am about to close out my four years at UNH, especially in these circumstances. Many of us seniors will be left unfulfilled with our final semester as we will not get closure with our friends, professors, and organizations. We will not get to see them in person or hug them goodbye. For me, the goodbye that hurts the most is the one I'll have to say to SHARPP.

I knew about SHARPP before I even got to UNH. I had seen the documentary [The Hunting Ground](#) during my senior year of high school, which left a heavy impression on me and motivated me to get involved with sexual violence prevention. I soon found out that UNH, unlike

most other universities, has a confidential crisis center dedicated to preventing interpersonal violence and educating the community, and I immediately knew I had to be part of it. I was signed up for the community educator class before I had even moved into my dorm.

At age 18, I still didn't realize that my status as a survivor is what drew me to SHARPP. After four years of involvement, I am immensely proud of my development as an educator, advocate, activist, writer and organizer. I've led campaigns against street harassment and helped put on events for the UNH community; I've written countless blog posts about how discussions around sexual violence are changing and went through hours of training to be a confidential advocate for survivors on our campus. But my time at SHARPP has also helped me come to terms with my own identity as a survivor, and that's a major accomplishment I need to acknowledge.

Healing is not linear. As a first-year student, I didn't know I was worthy of the acknowledgement that something had happened without my consent. I didn't know it was wrong. I doubted my own experience and convinced myself that I was making it up. Joining SHARPP was my first step toward healing. I was denying myself the right to be heard and the right to hurt, but I was granting others the right to tell their stories, to step out and take their voices back. Sometimes, the survivors on the other end of the helpline would tell a story too similar to my own and I would give them the advice that I needed to hear, too. I stood up for those survivors when I spoke truth to power. Eventually, I granted myself permission to do it for myself, too.

The community I have found with my coworkers and fellow volunteers at SHARPP is irreplaceable and the thing I will miss the most. You will find that the people who are involved in SHARPP are some of the most kind, passionate, energetic and empathetic on this campus. If there is one piece of advice I could give to a first-year student who even has a minor interest in getting involved in SHARPP, it would be to just do it. You will become a better person because of it and you will learn so much about yourself and the world around you.

Although saying goodbye is never easy, now made even more difficult because it must be done digitally, I leave knowing my peers will go above and beyond what I was able to do and continue promoting a culture of healing, community, awareness and support that any campus would be lucky to have.

- WRITTEN BY:

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SEXUAL ASSAULT EDUCATION AND PREVENTION



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