

Help At Their Fingertips

New app provides assault support resources to campus communities

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It's hard to decide which statistic is more alarming: the one that says approximately 20 percent of all female college students (and 5 percent of their male counterparts) are victims of campus sexual assault, or the one that indicates almost

95 percent of these assaults go unreported — by either the victims themselves or bystanders. “Most victims, if they tell anyone at all, will confide in a friend,” says [Sharyn Potter](#), director of research at the UNH [Prevention Innovations Research Center](#), “but then these friends do not know how to help their friends following the disclosure.”

Starting this fall, students, faculty and staff at colleges across New Hampshire will have instant access on their smartphones to geographically coordinated information and resources to help victims in the aftermath of an assault, thanks to a new app developed by a statewide collaboration under the leadership of

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Prevention Innovations. Called [uSafeNH](#), the app uses geospatial technology to provide information on nearby crisis centers, hospital and police, as well as campus resources. The app is available, free of charge, to all 26 New Hampshire colleges and universities.

The idea for the app came out of a conversation Potter had last year with a retired New Hampshire state trooper, who lamented that while the state offered a wide array of resources to sexual assault victims and their supporters, it was difficult to get these resources into the hands of a distressed 19- or 20-year-old student. What is in virtually every college student's hands, of course, is a cell phone, and Potter and Prevention Innovations director of practice [Jane Stapleton](#) turned to the UNH Manchester [STEM Discovery Lab](#) to develop the application. In May, Prevention Innovations was awarded \$25,000 from the Entrepreneurial Fund of NH to finalize the development of uSafeNH.

Stapleton says it's Prevention Innovations' goal to "put this app in the hands of 170,000 New Hampshire college students, their friends and their families." A companion website will be available also.

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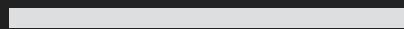
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