

SHARP

Office of Sexual Harassment and
Assault Response and Prevention

Advocating for survivors of sexual harassment
and assault, and transforming the systems used
to address sexual violence in San Francisco.

MISSION

The Office of SHARP works to ensure that survivors are believed, responded to and treated with dignity by San Francisco city government when voicing their experience of sexual violence. We advocate for survivors in navigating the current response systems and we work with community to transform and create new system approaches to addressing and ending sexual violence.

OUR STORY

In July 2018, the Office of Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) (Ordinance No 215-18) was created by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors created by Supervisor Hillary Ronen as a City office department under the direction and oversight of the Human Rights Commission. In September 2019, Director Kelly Lou Densmore joined as SHARP staff. The Office of SHARP is a was legislated in response to survivors of sexual assault in San Francisco sharing coming forward to share their experiences of the mishandling of their cases from substandard medical treatment, to further traumatization by law enforcement, to not being taken seriously by attorneys. SHARP exists because of the brave voices of survivors who attempted to use the current city systems to address their cases with disheartening outcomes. SHARP joins the national movement to end sexual violence in being a force for political action, structural change and healing.

The Office of SHARP is a survivor-centered and survivor-led office. SHARP follows the leadership of survivors society hears from least, the most marginalized survivors who do not report, who's communities do not have a trusted relationship with government agencies, and are often kept down by the structural oppressions of society. The Office of SHARP has the authority to hold accountable the current systems used in San Francisco to respond to sexual harassment and assault and SHARP commits to building beyond the current structures to address the unique needs and wants of all survivors in order to heal and thrive.

VALUES

Our work is led and shaped by survivors of sexual violence, particularly survivors who do not report, who have a history of mistrust of city government and court systems, and who's voices are often left out of the conversation on sexual violence. We center Black women, Latinas, Asian/Pacific Islander women, Native women, transgender and gender non-conforming people, youth, workers in low-wage jobs, sex workers, undocumented people, people with disabilities and currently or formerly incarcerated people.

We seek to support those harmed by sexual violence to be heard, heal and take action towards systemic change in the ways San Francisco responds to sexual harassment and assault.

We understand that sexual violence does not occur in a silo. To address sexual harassment and assault we must also address larger structures of violence and oppression including racism, sexism, economic injustice, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, and xenophobia.

VISION

The Office of SHARP envisions a San Francisco with no incidents of sexual assault or harassment. Should it occur, we envision a San Francisco with a variety of accessible options that a survivor can choose from to address their harm and healing process, each approach working to end the immediate violence as well as the conditions in which it was able to occur.

Our work reflects the complex connections of all forms of domestic violence, harassment, coercion and gender-based violence.

We practice accessibility solidarity by providing services in multiple languages, offering culturally relevant support, following ADA compliance in our spaces, and responding to the unique needs of those who are both people with disabilities and survivors.

We understand our work within city government to be one strategy that is a part of a larger movement to end sexual violence. We understand that to end sexual violence change much be institutional, interpersonal, policy driven and cultural.

We honor the legacy of feminists and anti-violence organizers who have come before us, particularly feminists of color whose work and analysis have created the space and foundation for us to be able to do this work today.

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WHAT SHARP CAN DO

LISTEN: Take complaints from survivors of sexual assault and harassment who have previously attempted to bring their case to San Francisco City agency(s) (such as the police, the district attorney or the hospital), and had an inadequate experience.

Complaints should be made with regard to the City agency's response to the sexual assault or harassment allegations.

- **RESEARCH:** Research case law and City employee's duties imposed by law in responding to survivor's allegations.
- **NOTIFY** Notify the City department alleged of failure to act or to respond reasonably to complainant's allegations.
- **FACILITATE:** Require city departments or employees to meet with complainant and/or SHARP staff.
- **REQUEST:** Request city departments to respond fully to the complainant's concerns.
- **COLLECT INFO:** Collect information (data, current policies) to assess responses to sexual assault and harassment allegations.
- **DEVELOP:** Meet with community organizations and individual survivors to develop policy changes necessary for improving the City's efforts to address sexual assault and harassment.
- **RECOMMEND:** Develop policy recommendations for city agencies, the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor's office.
- **REFERRALS:** Offer referrals to our community partners for direct services.
- **EDUCATE:** Host panels and informational sessions related to sexual assault, harassment, violence prevention, conflict within community members, healing & surviving, and ending rape culture broadly.

WHAT SHARP CANNOT DO

SHARP does not provide direct services and cannot take cases to court or represent survivors in any legal matters.

HOW ARE WE WORKING TOWARDS ENDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

We expose gaps and disparities in the systems used to respond to sexual violence.

We address the wounds and mistrust of survivors who have historically been harmed by government-sanctioned disbelief, ignorance and silence in response to sexual violence.

We center the voices of survivors who are least heard, and least likely to report sexual violence due to the larger structures of systemic oppression

We build survivor-led community coalitions to recommend new and meaningful policies that provide support and resources for survivors of sexual harassment and assault within and without the criminal legal system.

We advocate for survivors navigating city agencies to resolve complaints regarding the mishandling of sexual assault allegation.

We collaborate with community partners to engage in prevention efforts, public education and culture shifts.

FILE A COMPLAINT

Have you attempted to use city services such as the police, the hospital or the District Attorney, to address an incident of sexual assault or sexual harassment? Was your experience inadequate?

File a complaint with the Office of SHARP to address the way your sexual assault claim was responded to.

CALL: (415) 252-2512

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