

COSHARE

Our second issue is here!

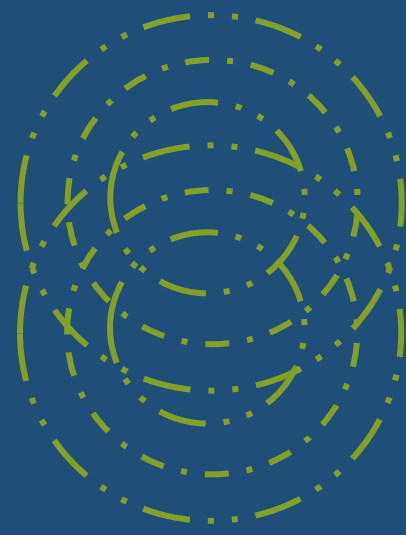
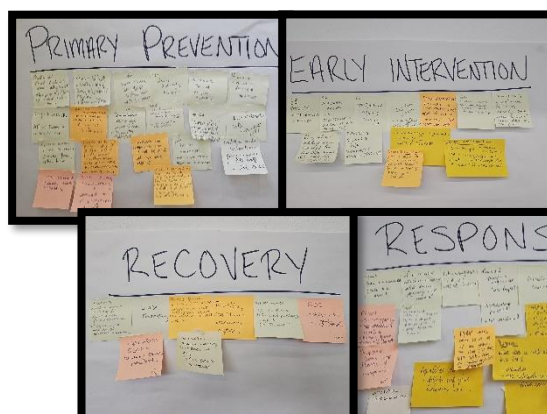
Welcome to the second issue of the COSHARE Network Newsletter and a big welcome to all of our new members! Given that the COSHARE network seeks to foster knowledge exchange by connecting like-minded colleagues across the HE sector (be it, academia, practice, policy or beyond!), we find it encouraging to watch the network grow so organically.

This issue begins with two pieces, one by the network's Co-Chair (Dr Susan Lagdon, Ulster University), and the other by Dr Ngozi Anyadike-Danes (Ulster University). First, a summary by Susan about the network's first in-person meeting in Belfast and then, second, a reflection from Ngozi about a recent event held by Active* Consent that drew together scholars and practitioners from the UK, the US, New Zealand and Ireland. Following this, a short piece about the COSHARE survey which is now out and awaiting responses! And last, but by no means least, we have our 'Meet our Members' section where we introduce you to two of our members and their work. As with our previous issue, we've also highlighted some resources and events that you might be interested in seeking out. For more information, scroll further down!

Rethinking Resistance and Barriers

We were delighted to host many of you in the MAC Belfast for our first COSHARE members workshop led by the fantastic Clarissa J. DiSantis. Clarissa is a practitioner, trainer, and leading authority on addressing gender-based violence at universities and was the first person to hold a dedicated role in this area in the United Kingdom. She is also the co-author of Addressing Student Sexual Violence in Higher Education, co-editor of Stopping Gender-based violence in Higher Education, and author of Epigeum's Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence 2.0 (UK) online course.

Clarissa led a full day of workshops entitled "Rethinking Resistance and Barriers - Progressing SVH Initiatives in Higher Education with the Comprehensive Institution-Wide Approach". The interactive workshops were designed to support staff in championing gender-based violence prevention and response initiatives. In the morning, participants were supported to build their knowledge and understanding of how to use a comprehensive institution-wide approach to address sexual violence and related forms of gender-based violence in a higher education setting. In the afternoon, attendees work together to identify types of resistance to gender-based violence prevention and response work and consider strategies to overcome resistance tactics.



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Resources

[From policy to practice: the evidence base for ending gender-based violence in higher education and research](#)
(UniSAFE)

[UniSAFE Toolkit to support HEIs in ending GBV](#)
(UniSAFE)

Training opportunities

[Dare to Care: Wellness, self and collective care](#)
(Sexual Violence Research Initiative, free, online)

[Consent, Sexual Violence and Harassment: Practitioner Skills and Practice](#)
(Active* Consent, [deadline: January 17th](#))

Events

[UN Day For the Elimination of Violence against Women – 24th November, 1100-1230](#)
(Women's Aid, free, online)

The Grass is Always Greener on the Other Side

At the end of October, Susan and I were invited to Galway by Active* Consent to meet with members of their team, including our COSHARE colleagues (Rebecca Connolly and Dr Pádraig MacNeela), and a number of US academics and sexual violence prevention practitioners. Seeing Galway was a delight in itself (having never been!) but the opportunity to meet and chat with individuals who have been “doing the work” was incredibly restorative. Still, it also offered the opportunity for reflection.

Indeed, the greatest moment of clarity (for me) emerged in the Burren College of Art (highly recommend!) as we sat in a circle and sought to workshop how to engage different audiences on GBV.

I am guilty of placing US work on a pedestal. Much of the available literature charts their successes over the past decade or so – their President called for nationwide action to tackle campus sexual assault, Title IX mandates the minimum level of actions required by all universities, climate surveys are commonplace on many campuses yet, it soon became clear that our fights are not that dissimilar. They meet the same level of resistance from administrators, suffer from extensive budget cuts and have had to adapt when political landscapes have led to instability across multiple sectors.

Whilst the grass may be greener on the other side, what the other side offers is perspective. We may be able to offer new insights to some of their problems and, comparatively, they may be able to solve our issues using their wealth of experience. And that is the power of collaborative action. What we managed to achieve in Galway over those few days mirrors what we hope can provide through the COSHARE network – a space to support one another, tackle problems from new angles and redirect when things don't go as planned.

In the Spotlight: NI/ROI COSHARE Survey of HE Staff #ItsTimeToShare

Our staff survey is live! It seemed rather fitting that our survey went out across the north and south of Ireland whilst we were gathered as a team. As many of you may be aware, the survey seeks to better understand the knowledge and experiences of HE staff with respect to consent, sexual violence and harassment. We also focus on their awareness of key policies (e.g., sexual misconduct policy) and their confidence in responding to disclosures or sign-posting staff (or students) towards support services. We have been busy sending out e-mails about the survey and using social media to recruit by way of our [promo video](#) but there are still more people to reach!

With this issue, we have included a short recruitment e-mail that we would ask you disseminate amongst your contacts and colleagues in HE. The survey is for **all staff in Higher Education – North and South**. We have provided you with two documents, one for colleagues in the North and one for colleagues in the South. If you have any further questions, please feel free to reach out.





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Meet our Members: Gemma MacNally

What do you do?

I am a Psychotherapist working at the University of Galway.



Why do you do it?

As a dedicated Psychotherapist working in Galway city for a number of years, I am passionate about empowering young people to navigate life's challenges and build resilience. I've completed a masters MSc Adolescent Psychotherapy. For eleven years, alongside my private practice, I worked with Galway Rape Crisis centre (GRCC), as a psychotherapist (long and short term therapy), as an Emotional Support Worker in the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU), and I was also a member of their Board of Management for 3 years. This was a challenging and rewarding time in my career where I honed my skills in crisis intervention and trauma recovery. During this time I became acutely aware of the levels of Sexual Violence in our society, working with people with trauma and the long term impact of that.

At the beginning of 2021, I started working full time in Student Counselling at the University of Galway. With my knowledge of trauma work and sexual violence I know that psycho education in this area is so important and co-developed an evidence based training for First Point of Contact in collaboration with my colleagues in GRCC and the Active* Consent Programme, University of Galway.

What project are you currently working on?

I am currently splitting my time with Student Counselling and the Active* Consent Programme.

I work as a therapist working one-to-one with students in a therapy setting.

One of my key roles with Active* Consent is to facilitate the First Point of Contact training (FPOC), to staff and students on campus in Galway, our CPD Module: Consent, Sexual Violence and Harassment: Practitioner Skills & Practice (PS6158) and to the Further Education and Training and YouthReach sector across

Meet our Members: John Darragh



What do you do?

I was appointed to the role of Safe and Healthy Relationships Advisor with the Ulster University in October 2023.



Why do you do it?

I feel this work is important to ensure students have appropriate support and feel safe when attend Higher Education, in order to achieve their full potential. Through preventative education, trauma informed responses and collaborative working - culture can be changed to address the issues of sexual violence and misconduct.

What project are you currently working on?

I am currently finding my feet in the University and across the three campuses in Belfast, Coleraine and Derry/Londonderry. Over the next few months we plan to roll out workshops on Active* Consent and being an Active Bystander, while also providing support to students who have experienced unwanted sexual experiences.

