

For Immediate Release: September 26, 2022

Press Contact: Alexandria Taylor, Deputy Director, [alexandriat@nmcsap.org](mailto:alexandriat@nmcsap.org)

## **NMCSAP on Centering Survivors in the Face of Abuses of Power**

The core of our work at the New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs is to center and believe survivors. Often, when accounts of sexual harassment and abuse enter the public sphere, survivor experiences and the real impact on their lives gets silenced. At NMCSAP, we want to always re-center the conversation.

When a plant is sick, we cannot merely cut it off at the top and expect it to re-grow. We must get to the root of the problem and we must be willing to change the environment it is growing in. Similarly, if we are committed to safe communities free from sexual harassment and abuse, we must be willing to get at the root causes and to engage in culture change. Centering people with power and silencing survivor voices will continue to produce the same result- abuse will grow and be emboldened. Alternatively, centering survivor experiences and holding those who abuse power accountable will produce something entirely new- communities and environments free of abuse.

### **Sexual Harassment and Abuse is an Expression of Power**

Sexual harassment and abuse are never acceptable in any workplace, including in our state legislature. Sexual harassment and abuse are not about desire, sexuality, or humor. They are solely about power. Power unchecked cedes nothing and is emboldened. Sexual harassment and abuse happen in a workplace that permits and exhibits a culture of abuse. This behavior must not be tolerated within our state legislature. It has created a hostile and unsafe work environment for those who have been harmed directly and has set a tone for those visiting the roundhouse about what is acceptable behavior.

### **Survivors Deserve Accountability**

We expect the state legislature to condemn sexual assault and harassment by members of its body and to have effective mechanisms in place to investigate and repair all claims of harassment and abuse. We believe people can grow and change. That change can only come when those who have caused harm are willing to fully engage in the process of accountability and accept consequences without further leveraging their power and causing more harm. When our systems of response to sexual harassment and abuse fail to hold an offender accountable, we are denying them the opportunity to grow. When someone avoids an opportunity for this growth, their abusive behaviors can be emboldened and future harm may be caused.

## Seeking Institutional Change in the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Assault

The New Mexico legislature must reflect with rigor and honesty on the culture they will either tolerate or create. We ask them to create a culture of consent in the institutions that govern us, and to hold elected officials to the same standards as all others who don't hold similar positions of power. Protecting survivors, the public, and preventing sexual harassment and abuse is not political. We remain committed to systemic change.

## Resources for Survivors

If you or someone you know is in need of support or would like to get involved please reach out to any of the resources below:

- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673) or [Chat Online](#)
- StrongHearts Native Helpline: 1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)
- New Mexico Asian Family Center (Support available in Vietnamese, Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Farsi/Dari): 505-717-2877
- Casa Fortaleza (Support available in Spanish and English): 505-485-4826
- Rape Crisis Center of Central New Mexico (Albuquerque): 505-266-7711
- Alternatives to Violence (Clayton): 575-643-5335
- Sexual Assault Services of NW NM (Farmington): 505-326-4700
  - (Gallup): 866-908-4700
- La Piñon Sexual Assault Recovery Services (Las Cruces): 575-526-3437
- Valencia Shelter Services (Los Lunas): 505-864-1383
- Arise Sexual Assault Services (Portales): 575-226-7263
- Solace Crisis Treatment Center (Santa Fe): 800-721-7273
- Silver Regional Sexual Assault Support Services (Silver City): 866-750-6474
- Community Against Violence (Taos): 575-758-9888
- Or visit <https://nmcsap.org/find-help/>