

Mission

- ▶ To provide a secure network of support for those who have experienced or are experiencing assault, abuse, and/or harassment
- ▶ To inspire people to come forth and tell the story of their journey through trauma and recovery, particularly as it relates to cosplay convention culture
- ▶ To encourage inclusivity of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability; it doesn't matter who you are or how it happened. **We believe you.**
- ▶ To provide resources for those in crisis or those helping people in crisis: mental health and physical wellness as well as long-term solutions and other support groups
- ▶ To encourage qualified programs and trained individuals to respond to situations of this nature at conventions
- ▶ To treat survivors, their bodies, and their cosplay work with utmost respect and spread positivity

Resources

If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or your local emergency number.

In the United States

National Sexual Assault Hotline:
800-656-HOPE (4673)

National Street Harassment Hotline:
855-897-5910

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
800-799-SAFE (7233)

**State Dept. Emergency Hotline
(for Americans abroad):**
1-888-407-4747

Uplift Together:
uplifttogether.org

**Rape, Abuse, & Incest
National Network:**
rainn.org

Learn more at cosplayer-ssn.org
info@cosplayer-ssn.org

Help support the CSSN at:
patreon.com/Trickssi
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To see how your money is used, visit:
<https://cosplayer-ssn.org/faq.php>

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Cosplayer Survivor Support Network

Responding to Harassment
as a Bystander

We Believe You.

What is Harassment?

While laws vary from state to state, harassment is generally defined as unwanted behavior that creates a hostile environment for the person being targeted. It can include:

- ▶ Making comments about a person's appearance, sexual and/or vulgar statements, offensive jokes, or anything disparaging a person's gender, race, religion, sexuality, identity, et cetera
- ▶ Whistling or catcalling
- ▶ Following someone or impeding their path
- ▶ Attending a person's panels solely to heckle them
- ▶ Photographing or recording someone without their permission
- ▶ Spreading rumors or attempting to get a person banned from a convention on false pretenses
- ▶ Exposing oneself or "flashing"
- ▶ Bathroom policing
- ▶ Touching someone without their permission
- ▶ Repeated texting, phone calls, or emails, after being told to stop
- ▶ Any persistent action that creates a hostile environment for the person or persons being targeted—harassment is when a person is feeling harassed, period

Remember

The blame for harassment lies solely with the person committing the offensive behavior. It is never appropriate to make someone feel as though they "asked for" harassment or somehow "brought it on themselves."

Each situation is unique and there is no one perfect way to respond to every incidence. The most important thing is to know that even the strongest and most confident individual shouldn't have to deal with harassment alone. Harassment is about taking power away from an individual, and abandoning someone who's being targeted can make that person feel even more powerless and alone, amplifying the trauma.

As a bystander, it's not your fault if harassment happens, nor you should feel guilty if you do try to help and the situation escalates negatively. Do the best you can. If you're traveling with someone who's been harassed before, consider making a safety plan in case it happens again.

If you don't know what to do or you feel you can't handle it alone, get help. Ask a friend to stay with you. Flag down staff members or venue security. Together, we can make harassers feel unwelcome and make the convention environment safer for everyone.

What to Do

- ▶ If you don't feel safe or equipped enough to do something yourself, **seek out help from someone else.**
- ▶ Assess the situation and act accordingly; if the harasser is aggressive or may have a weapon, do not directly confront. Take the route of action that seems safest for all parties.
- ▶ If it feels safe to do so, tell the harasser to stop and call out what they are doing for what it is—harassment.
- ▶ Approach the target and start a conversation unrelated to the harassment—compliment their outfit, ask them a question about their wig or makeup, talk about the weather. Anything to change the flow of the situation. If possible, get the person to another location, away from the harasser.
- ▶ If the harassment escalates, get help from a staffer, your friends, or emergency personnel if necessary.
- ▶ If the harassment is over before you get a chance to intervene, still go over to the targeted person and ask them if they're okay, or if they need help. Validate their feelings and let them know you understand what happened was not their fault or acceptable.
- ▶ If you documented the harassment in still photos or on video, **never** post it online without speaking to the target and evaluating safety issues.