



SEX WORK

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Transitioning,
Retiring and
EXITING

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VANCOUVER
Unceded Coast Salish Territories
BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



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Introduction

In an effort to respond to the existing gaps in services and effectively meet the needs of those who do sex work in Vancouver, six local community organizations with a vast range of expertise in delivering services to individuals engaged in the sex industry have formed a Consortium to oversee the design, development, and implementation of a transition and exiting program.

AFDS, BWSS, HUSTLE at HIM, PACE, SWAN, and WISH each has a variety of expertise in working with different groups and individuals engaged in the sex industry, including self-identified female and male sex workers, survival and outdoor sex workers, First Nations women, migrant and immigrant indoor workers, and victims of violence.

The Consortium has worked within the City of Vancouver's Task Force on Sex Work and Sexual Exploitation, which was formed in September 2011 with the mandate of addressing sexual exploitation and protecting vulnerable adults and neighbourhoods affected by sex work.

This report is the first step in the development and implementation of transitioning programs and other related services for sex workers. It aims to situate sex work through the lens of intersectionality, provide a historical and current analysis of sex work in Vancouver, explore research and best practices on the topic of sex work with a particular emphasis on exiting, provide several models of exiting as they currently exist in literature, and finally suggest important recommendations for government, social service providers, and sex work agencies which aim to introduce a transitioning and exiting program.

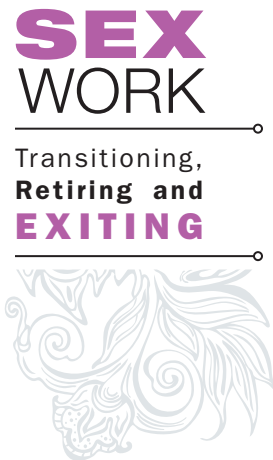
The next step involves strategic planning between all members of the Consortium and securing ongoing sustainable government funding in order to develop and begin to operate transitioning programs at each agency within the Consortium based on their needs, resources, and abilities.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that this report is being written on unceded Coast Salish Territories. Further, we would like to acknowledge that the ability to theorize and write on this topic is due to the varying privileges we possess, and that these privileges are an (in)direct result of the oppression of others. It is our hope that through writing this and acting on some of the recommendations included in the

report that we allow for structural change to take place and foster a re-shifting of resources as part of our long-term goal of substantive equality. This report is rooted in the idea of social justice and is guided by the many personal lived experiences, multitude of agency expertise, and variety of individual and community knowledges (whether formal or subjugated), both in Canada and abroad, which have come to shape our world view and the world we live in.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank all the individuals who have agreed to meet to share their expertise and contribute their knowledge to this report: Ty Mistry, Jessica Wood, Raven Bowen, Sue McIntyre, Kerry Porth, Shannon Skilton and Andi Wiseman. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the funders who made this report possible: City of Vancouver and Ministry of Justice.



Dedications

This report is dedicated to all the missing and murdered women in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) whom we failed to protect from not only insensible violence but a systemic failure of our society and government to care for the members of our community(ies). It is dedicated to all the non-profit volunteers and staff, whose devotion and determination are an inspiration to all. And to all those individuals who are currently involved in sex work in our city!

Preamble

1. While it is our strict conviction that sex workers must be involved in all stages of research and program development, and within all roles, the decision to not conduct qualitative research for this report was intentional. It was based on the fact that sex workers, particularly in the DTES, are an over-researched population. Further, it is due to the fact that numerous studies that include the voices of sex workers point to the fact that research may often not yield concrete results, such as creation of new programmes or agencies, not to mention long-lasting structural-societal changes; some strong exceptions include the AESHA community research project done in Vancouver. Consequently, it was our aim to ensure that the research that has already been done is used to foster real practical solutions in our community. In this report, every effort was made to use studies which approached the subject matter with a sex work lens, which were conducted by sex workers themselves, or commissioned by sex work organizations. The report will be made available and accessible for critique and input by sex workers and sex work agencies.
2. “Sex work” and “sex worker” are terms that will be used throughout this report (see definition in glossary section). We acknowledge that many may not identify as sex workers and that the sex for reward continuum (see Appendices section for an example) is a long and variable line, which individuals may find themselves traversing throughout their entire involvement in the industry as well as throughout their whole lives. Sex work is the most accurate term that can encompass the magnitude of diversity within the field and also one that attempts to legitimize the profession(s). It is vital to note that sex work is used to denote activity rather than identity—whether the individual chooses to identify as a sex worker remains a personal choice.



3. Throughout this report we have chosen to use the term “First Nations”, which is a term that describes original inhabitants of Canada and their descendants. The term came into our lexicon in the 1980’s to replace the more controversial and outdated term “Indian”. “First Nations”, unlike the term “Indian”, does not have any legislative or legal connotations. We acknowledge that beginning with the colonial acquisition of lands and the continued violence against First Nations people, the relationship between First Nations people of Canada and the state remains complex, which is why we aim to use the less nuanced term in order to encapsulate more identities within it. Just like the term “sex worker”, this term can be used as a self-identifier and it is not our intention to enforce this identity onto people. Please note: “Indigenous” is also sometimes used within this report in direct quotes by other authors; it is a term that, for the purposes of this report, is synonymous with “First Nations”.

4. It is essential to make clear that this report is not aimed to be part of a saviour or rescue project, rather it attempts to allow for a provision of options that have been limited by governmental policies and societal attitudes around sex, sexuality, gender, race, class, and ability. While the criminalized nature of sex work does impede individuals from lessening their reliance on sex work or securing alternative methods of generating income, it is not our goal to argue on the subject of legalization and/or decriminalization, as much has been written on the topic (see Pivot Legal Society, for example, for more information). A sex worker led exiting options program (PEERS) did exist in Vancouver but it was closed in 2012 due to governmental cuts. This is not an attempt to recreate that particular program, but rather an acknowledgment of the essential service they provided, which has since been lacking.

5. Sex work is often conflated with trafficking (see glossary for definition), which it is NOT. It is our intention to make it very clear that while we view sex work as an individual choice within the confines of the individuals’ social, political, economic, and personal position, trafficking is forced (whether physically or through coercion) and is thus not condoned by us. Further, it is vital to mention that migrant (see glossary for definition) sex work is most often conflated with trafficking and thus it is imperative to again stress the distinction between individuals who experience acts such as kidnapping, forced confinement, coercion, threats, sexual/emotional/financial/physical abuse, violence, and other violations of human rights and migrant workers who engage in sex work but may be subjected to labour law violations (laws which are not currently applicable to many within the sex worker spectrum in Canada.) Finally, experiences of migrant sex workers are larger than the ‘victim versus criminal’ dichotomy and are rather more complex in nature.

It is essential to make clear that this report is not aimed to be part of a saviour or rescue project, rather it attempts to allow for a provision of options that have been limited by governmental policies and societal attitudes around sex, sexuality, gender, race, class, and ability.

6. Given that fact, we further acknowledge that sex work is not homogeneous or static, neither monolithic nor univocal. Thus, this report will attempt to address specific issues that sex workers may face rather than solely focus on populations within the industry in order to avoid boxing people in and ascribing identities to others.

7. Finally, we approached this report through a multi-faceted lens, drawing from feminist, queer, and anti-oppression theories. We make our best attempt to centre it around women, First Nations and other racialized workers, LGBTQ+ folk, men who have sex with men (MSM), youth and people with (dis)abilities. Further, we have made our best effort to situate the topic within both historical and current contexts and within an anti-oppression framework. We use a polymorphous paradigm to theorize and contextualize about sex work. By moving away from an empowerment approach, which focuses on agency and is sex positive in nature, or an oppression approach, which sees sex work as violence, we aim to capture a more varied experience. A polymorphous paradigm attempts to look at sex work as a complex relationship between individual agency, structural conditions, and various organizational factors. It recognizes that sex work is as varied as the world we live in and thus allows for inclusion of a variety of different lived experiences.¹

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Limitations

One significant limitation of this report is that the focus lies mainly on sex workers within Metro Vancouver. We acknowledge that while many suburban and rural sex workers may also require assistance with transitioning out of sex work (as well as supports to work safely in sex work), it is beyond the scope of this report to explore their unique needs and barriers to transitioning out of the industry. It is our hope that this report may serve as impetus for further action that will attempt to ameliorate some of the conditions that prevent rural sex workers from choosing the life path that they deem appropriate for themselves.

Abstract

Current literature on sex work and the supports required to allow for sex workers to transition out of the industry is as varied as the sex industry itself. Much has been written on and about sex workers but, with few exceptions, few studies exist that are done by sex workers or that take into account all the voices within particularly marginalized populations of sex workers. This report aims to circumvent that reality by focusing on research done either by sex workers, by sex work organizations, or which included voices of those who have been traditionally left out of the discourse on sex work and social service provision. An intersectional analysis of sex work is provided in Part 1 to outline the relationship between sex work and racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and homo and transphobia, among other forms of oppression(s). A brief historical analysis is provided in Part 2 to situate sex work within Vancouver, with special attention paid to the Downtown Eastside. Models of exiting that currently exist are discussed and critiqued to offer insight into various methods of exiting frameworks that could be adapted in the development of a transition program, and are included in Part 3 A. An overview of a variety of research is included in Part 3 B to highlight the needs and wants of sex workers (as identified by them), in terms of service provision, access to resources, as well as the socio-structural components that hinder the ability of individuals and communities to lead healthy and socially just lives. Best practice approaches in terms of service provision are outlined in Part 3 C. Finally, recommendations for government, social service agencies, and sex work-specific agencies aiming to deliver transitioning programs are located in Part 4.

1 Ronald Weitzer, "The Mythology of Prostitution: Advocacy Research and Public Policy," *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 7 (2010): 15–29.



Sex Work Exiting and Transitioning Consortium

A. BWSS

Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) is a feminist organization which, for over 35 years, has worked towards ending violence against women and girls. Situated within a decolonizing and anti-oppression framework, BWSS acknowledges that violence against women continues to occur due to a multitude of socially structured oppressions, in particular within the context of unequal distribution of power and privilege.

Located in Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories, the organization provides support, advocacy, education, training, and referrals, while working for systemic change throughout Metro Vancouver, within the province of British Columbia, within Canada, and internationally. Although BWSS works with self-identified women of all ages, classes, and cultures, it provides a specific focus on eliminating barriers to service for women who have been historically marginalized, such as First Nations women, women of colour, women with precarious immigration status, Immigrant and Refugee women, women involved in the sex economies, lesbians, and women with disabilities.

Core service provision includes operation of the crisis line, crisis support and accompaniment, counselling, support groups, an employment program, an outreach program, legal advocacy, victims' services, and specialized support services for First Nations women and Immigrant women. Currently, BWSS responds to over 13,000 service requests annually. All services are provided by trained workers who work from a trauma informed empowerment model and from a feminist, decolonizing, and anti-oppression perspective.



Each year, BWSS works with over 220 women who identify as relying on the sex economies as part of their income and/or survival. Their involvement in the sex economy includes work in massage parlours, performing as exotic dancers, adult film and print work, webcam work, outcall sex work, in-call sex work, and street-based sex work. Their primary reason for accessing BWSS services is due

to an abusive/violent partner, boyfriend, husband, and/or pimp. Women will also access the BWSS employment program AWARE in order to receive support to transition from sex economies to other forms of revenue generation.

Mission: Provide critical gender violence prevention and intervention services and programs. Gender violence includes relationship abuse and sexual assault. Programming includes crisis line, support groups, legal advocacy, counselling, employment services, volunteer opportunities, outreach, workshops, and training and advocacy for individuals, community and professionals. Our programs include specialized support for those who do sex work, First Nations, youth, Immigrant, senior, and LGBTQ2S communities and those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and those with severe mental health and addiction presentations.

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B. WISH

WISH Drop-In Centre Society (WISH)² has been in operation since 1984, starting off as a drop-in centre out of the St. Michael's Anglican Church. The program was closed as a result of funding loss which came along with legislative changes focused at 'eliminating prostitution' in Mount Pleasant. In 1986, WISH began functioning as a women's-only space, moving to the First United Church in Vancouver's DTES, registering as a non-profit society in 1991.

Operating within a non-judgemental framework, WISH provides services exclusively for self-identified female sex workers and is operated by a women-only team of staff and volunteers. Its core function is to provide participants with essential services which include meals, personal care products and showers, clothing and make-up, referrals, access to nursing care, bad date reporting, and a warm, safe and non-discriminatory environment. In addition, WISH also runs a Learning Centre, in collaboration with Capilano University, and an Aboriginal Culture and Creativity Program which, through a series of workshops and activities, focuses on traditional arts and creative projects in a safe, positive and empowering space.

WISH operates the nightly Mobile Access Project (MAP) Van, an overnight support van which works to fill the wide gap in service provision to women who work at night. This project was born from a partnership with the PACE Society. In addition, WISH has partnered with the BCCfE, Sex Workers United Against Violence (SWUAV), and other community organizations on a number of community-based research projects, including AESHA (An Evaluation of Sex Workers' Health Access) project, a longitudinal evaluation of female sex workers' health and safety.

Recognizing that a multitude of backgrounds and experiences make up the lived experiences of the women who work in the survival sex industry, WISH works to assist and support women through fostering a sense of inclusion, safety, unconditional acceptance, empathy, compassion and opportunity for growth for those who face the daily threats of violence, social exclusion, and multiple and overlapping structural oppressions. Recognizing that histories of abuse, economic down-turns,

Operating within a non-judgemental framework, WISH provides services exclusively for self-identified female sex workers and is operated by a women-only team of staff and volunteers.

2 WISH Drop-in Centre Society, accessed June 2014, <http://wish-vancouver.net/>.

trauma, poverty, mental health issues, addictions, historical implications of colonization and other social marginalities contribute to individuals' reliance on sex work as a survival mechanism, WISH provides much-needed support for women engaging in sex work in the Downtown Eastside community.

Mission: To increase the health, safety, and well-being of women who work in the survival sex industry.

Vision: That each woman has access to the opportunity to make her own choices affecting her health, safety, and well-being.

Core Values: Acceptance, Caring, Dignity, Respect

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C. PACE

The Providing Alternatives, Counselling, and Education (PACE) Society has provided peer-led and peer-driven programs and services to sex workers for more than twenty years. Located within Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) neighbourhood, PACE operates under a rights-based, harm reduction model. Programs and services are based on a peer education model that recognizes that experiential knowledge is critical to culturally appropriate service delivery. PACE provides non-judgemental support services that reflect the self-identified needs of sex workers.



PACE operates a drop-in for Sex Workers open in the day where sex Worker's can grab a cup of coffee, book an appointment, pick up some clothing, harm reduction supplies, and or resources. Support Services includes one-to-one counseling, health and legal advocacy, housing support, violence prevention education and outreach services. PACE program and services recognize that intersecting social and structural inequities, including poverty, racism, and transphobia, negatively impact the lives of sex workers in our community, and seek to improve

access to resources such as housing and health care services, promote health and well-being, and disrupt stigma. In 2013, over 500 Sex Worker's accessed PACE services. The most requested services are assistance with housing, drug use (including drug treatment referrals), and mental health needs.

In addition to frontline services, PACE has engaged in research and advocacy that builds upon the wisdom and experiences of sex workers for more than twenty years. PACE has been centrally involved in successfully challenging the constitutionality of Canadian sex work legislation. PACE's Violence Prevention Coordinator, Sheri Kiselbach, and SWUAV won the right to challenge Canadian sex work laws in *SWUAV & Kiselbach v. Canada*. In addition to this challenge PACE also was an intervener in *Bedford v. Canada*, and joined with sex worker allies from across Canada to successfully

challenge three provisions of Canadian sex work laws (prohibitions against operating brothels, living on the avails of sex work, and communicating in public with clients). PACE remains involved in sex worker rights advocacy and recently appeared before the House of Commons Justice Committee in opposition to newly proposed Sex Work legislation bill c-36.

Mission: “By, with, and for sex workers.” PACE promotes safer working conditions by reducing harm and isolation through education and support. We believe that sex workers are valuable members of our community and are entitled to the same rights as all other human beings.

Vision: We envision a future where all sex workers are free from the risk of violence, discrimination, social stigmas, and harms so they may enjoy the same rights as all other Canadian citizens, including the rights to life, liberty, security of the person and equal protection under the law.

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D. AFDS

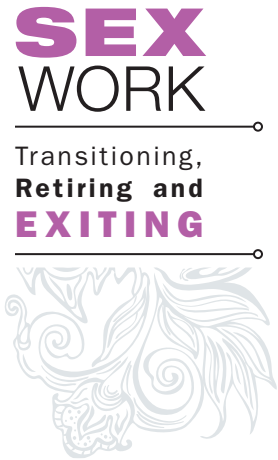
The Aboriginal Front Door Society (AFDS) is a safe, non-judgemental space for Aboriginal Peoples situated in the DTES, offering a variety of programs which focus on providing support through Aboriginal cultural traditions, caring, and acceptance. AFDS functions as a drop-in and resource centre that strives to bring awareness to the issues faced by the DTES Aboriginal community and reconnect individuals to Aboriginal culture through participation in the society's culturally structured ceremonies, teaching, and activities. Encouraging and supporting individuals on their healing journeys in all aspects of their lives, the AFDS recognizes and works towards overcoming the many historical, structural, and situational challenges that are faced by residents in the DTES. Situated in Canada's most impoverished postal code, AFDS provides regularly scheduled healing circles, Elder teachings, and activities such as smudging, drumming, singing, traditional crafts, sweat lodges, and medicine gathering. The Society also operates within a harm reduction framework, providing educational materials and harm reduction supplies in order to improve quality of life and reduce health concerns related to active addictions. While the centre operates mainly as a drop-in, it also offers other services, such as serving as a crisis centre, brokering long-term and specialty trauma counselling, and doing court accompaniments. AFDS is further recognized by Amnesty International for the compassionate, humanitarian work it is doing to raise awareness of Missing and Murdered Women (MMWI), including bringing hope, help, and healing to the family members.

The Aboriginal Front Door Society (AFDS) is a safe, non-judgemental space for Aboriginal Peoples situated in the DTES, offering a variety of programs which focus on providing support through Aboriginal cultural traditions, caring, and acceptance.

Vision: The Vision of the Aboriginal Front Door Society is that the DTES Aboriginal people are able to walk through life with love, honour, respect, and compassion for all things in creation, including themselves, having addressed addictions, dependencies, and other issues in a holistic manner using Aboriginal teachings, as much as possible.

Mission: The Mission of the Aboriginal Front Door Society is: secure, develop, and operate a safe place for DTES Aboriginal people that will be an entry point to begin the implementation of an Aboriginal-specific drug and alcohol strategy in the DTES; Be a place where Aboriginal people can experience,

learn, and participate in traditional Aboriginal culture, teachings, and ceremonies as part of their healing journey through life; Be a place DTES Aboriginal people can call their own and feel at home, an informal, non-institutional place for people to come in for time-out, help, and activities; Be an accessible storefront, if possible, which will have areas for use and meetings such as a food preparation area, a ceremonial meeting area and a multi-use area; Provide leadership through respected Elders and other role models; Be developed and operated by and with the DTES Aboriginal people themselves, and; Foster, support and encourage personal healing, development, education, and employment of the DTES people through the culture, language, ceremonies, traditions, and teachings of the Aboriginal people as well as modern conventional and alternative methods.



E. HUSTLE

HUSTLE³ (an acronym for How U Survive This Life Everyday⁴) has been providing frontline services to self-identified men in the sex industry since May 2007 and fills the much-needed gap for services focused on the needs of men involved in the sex industry, as well as experiential involved youth. Since its inception 7 years ago, HUSTLE has moved to providing its services through the Health Initiative for Men (HIM), after PEERS Vancouver, which offered transitioning services to sex workers seeking employment outside of the industry, closed its doors in 2012. Partnering with HIM, a well-established gay men's health and community engagement organization, allowed HUSTLE to reach a much broader population, one that may be at different points on the sex work continuum than the population they have previously engaged with.

With a substantial component of HUSTLE's services focusing on "survival sex work," the team operates both through on-the-street outreach, including outreach at spaces like the Boys R US drop-in, as well as through online outreach, to accommodate the changing nature of the sex industry in Vancouver.

With the traditional methods of sex work communication and presence quickly changing to an online existence, the HUSTLE team is committed to building relationships with sex workers and youth that reflect the realities of a community which is expanding to include a variety of SNS (social networking sites), dating sites and online classifieds. HUSTLE has been successfully involved in netreach efforts since 2011. On-the-street outreach, however, remains an integral part of community outreach, providing individuals with one-on-one peer and crisis support, harm reduction supplies, safer sex materials, nutrition, and hygiene items. Continuing its existing partnerships with allied community organizations, HUSTLE adopts a non-judgmental approach to ensure better access to resources, while focusing on improving health and safety options for its participants.



3 HUSTLE at HIM!, accessed June 2014, <http://checkhimout.ca/hustle-at-him-blo/>.

4 Acronym retrieved from urbandictionary.com.

Key findings from the 2010 HUSTLE program evaluation showcase the immediate need for further service provision to self-identified men working in the sex industry. First Nations individuals were over-represented in the statistics, making up 29% of those surveyed. Poverty during and after involvement in the sex industry was another persistent factor, with over 70% of participants living in SROs, and over 70% on income assistance. Online involvement in the selling of services was over 45%. HUSTLE's focus on engaging with street involved youth is guided by the early entrance age of many involved in the sex industry, which for 80% of HUSTLE participants is before the age of 19.⁵

HUSTLE is also currently involved in a number of other projects, such as HUSTLE'N'FLOW, a monthly night that facilitates access by men in the sex industry to community resources (which may involve anything from physical grooming to spiritual healing), to augment their ONE:ONE individual support services. HUSTLE is also actively involved in macro level work by partnering with the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (BCCfE) in the CHAPS (Community Health Assessment of Men who Purchase and Sell Sex) project within the recruitment and outreach component, as well as the SPACES (Sex Power Agency Consent Environment Safety) project, which looks at all genders within the Vancouver sex industry with a primary focus on indoor sex work (also in partnership with UBC). Due to the limited knowledge available on both men who sell sex as well as men who purchase sex (particularly in Vancouver but also world-wide), CHAPS is an invaluable future resource which aims to provide demographic data on sex workers and buyers, as well as to describe the social and structural factors that are associated with the male sex industry.

Program Mandate: HUSTLE is an outreach and support program for self-identified men in the sex industry created and run by experienced individuals. We also support and identify the needs of experiential youth in Vancouver communities. In other words, we come to you!

Approach: Harm reduction, non-judgemental support, health promotion

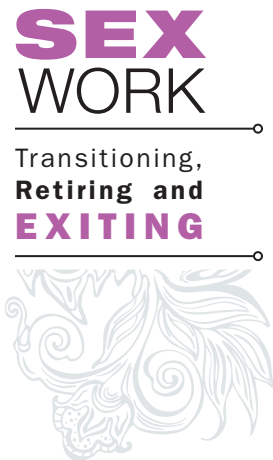
F. SWAN

SWAN⁶ is a non-profit organization providing culturally appropriate and language specific support, education, outreach and advocacy to newcomer, migrant and immigrant indoor sex workers. The organization works to expand awareness and bring a larger focus to the needs and priorities of women in indoor sex work. Established out of a research project focusing on assessing sex workers' health care access, the organization began as a pilot project dedicated to providing outreach services for women who worked in massage parlours. According to the results of the original research study, women who work in off-the-street venues were dealing with a multitude of issues far beyond the study's limited focus of sexual health and HIV.

Officially launched as an independent program in 2004 after securing funding from the Status of Women Canada, the organization began to expand its services to focus on migrant and immigrant women, who otherwise had little to no access to services. Becoming registered as a non-profit society in 2008, the organization officially took on the name SWAN Vancouver Society (Supporting Women's Alternatives Network) to best reflect the varied identities of women who access SWAN's services, not all of whom personally identify as sex workers.

5 Amanda Walker and Matthew Taylor, "HUSTLE: Men on the Move, Evaluation Report," 2012.

6 Supporting Women's Alternatives Network (SWAN), accessed June 2014, <http://swanvancouver.ca/>.



According to SWAN's 2013 Annual Report, outreach currently visits 30–50 indoor sex work sites in Metro Vancouver each month, providing over 500 annual contacts with newcomer, migrant and immigrant women in indoor sex work. SWAN also distributes over 800 outreach bags, containing free harm reduction supplies, safer sex items, SWAN literature as well as health, legal, employment, and immigration information resources.⁷ SWAN has also recently launched an online outreach service to newcomer, migrant, and immigrant women working in private residences or micro-brothels.

Operating within a framework guided by non-discrimination and social justice, and taking into account the multiple forms of oppressions which impact women's lives, constrain their options, and contribute to exploitation in the sex work sector, SWAN works together with women towards self-empowerment. Collaborating with other organizations to address various oppressions in the form of laws, policies, and practices, SWAN works towards the protection of human rights for those involved in indoor sex work. Its goal is to ensure that women who are engaged in sex work have access to the law, health care, education, and social services.

Services are offered to women working in indoor sex work (such as massage parlours and private residences) as well as newcomer, migrant and immigrant women who find themselves in vulnerable situations or at risk for exploitation, regardless of race, class, age, language ability, immigration status, physical conditions, or other factors they may be facing.

Vision: We are a group of women working to make indoor sex work safer, to inform ourselves and others about sex workers' rights, and to bring forward the opinions of working women into public policy and social services. We are concerned about issues related to sex work, sexual exploitation, and the human rights of migrant, immigrant and trafficked women. Through community consultation and participatory enquiries, we represent women who encounter multiple barriers to equal opportunity.

Operating within a framework guided by non-discrimination and social justice, and taking into account the multiple forms of oppressions which impact women's lives, constrain their options, and contribute to exploitation in the sex work sector, SWAN works together with women towards self-empowerment.

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7 Supporting Women's Alternatives Network, "SWAN Vancouver Society Annual Report, June 2012–June 2013," 2013.



fuck survivor poems

by emi koyama⁸

i don't write survivor poems
i don't write about the journey
from a survivor to a thriver
from a wounded child to a
bad-ass feminist revolutionary
that is not me most of the time

i don't write about healing
about forgiveness
about grief and letting go

i don't write about strength
i don't write about the courage to heal
and i never want to hear again
oh you are so courageous to speak out
about your story
that i haven't even began to tell

i don't write to inspire

i don't write about finding purpose
about finding jesus
about finding self-love

i don't write about the truth
because truth is too fragile
like a particle whose location and velocity
cannot be simultaneously observed

i write instead
about the lack of counseling
that is actually competent and affordable

i write about the fake sympathy
and the lynch mob that robs me of my rage
and repurposes it to build more prisons

i write about the need for validation
even if our survival involves slashing on the wrist
not eating overeating and purging alcohol drugs
avoiding sex having too much sex

i write, in fact, about survival
through not just the abuse from the past
but survival in the society that doesn't give a fuck

i don't write survivor poems
because my story is not for your consumption
i don't write a coherent and compelling narrative
and i don't exist to demonstrate the resilience of the human spirit

i write survival poems
i survive

8 Retrieved from:
<http://eminism.org/blog/entry/115>.



PART 1 InterseXionality

SEX WORK

Transitioning,
Retiring and
EXITING



The term intersectionality was introduced into our lexicon by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1991 in response to a limited analysis that the mainstream (read: white) feminist politics of that time offered.⁹ However, we are reminded that the concept was in use already, for example the Combahee River Collective (a group of African-American lesbian activists) in 1977 put forth that when we discuss sexual oppression, we must not separate it from race and class, as they are all experienced in a concurrent and convoluted relationship.¹⁰ Andrea Smith states that women of colour possess a unique position in which they experience the impacts of racism, sexism, classism, and both the violence (individual and structural) that is perpetuated against people of colour as well as the violence against women within communities of colour.¹¹ Thus, this allows them to theorize and organize more effectively towards the goal of healthy and vibrant communities without propagating the oppression that is associated with capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy.¹² Smith builds upon Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality and the idea of inclusion, by stating that we must go beyond inclusion and, rather, re-centre our work around women of colour, women with disabilities, etc.¹³ We are reminded that patriarchy works together with race and class in order to produce "racialized capitalist patriarch[y]"¹⁴ whereby women of colour experience a greater exploitation of their labour. Building on that idea, particularly when talking about sex work, we must also...

...look at how structures such as the labour market, the legal system, the welfare system and governments interact with, perpetuate and are shaped by the ideologies of stigma, neo-liberalism, citizenship and heteronormativity, with a feminist lens that also considers the intersections of gender, class, race, ability, occupation, immigration status and presentation.¹⁵

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- 9 Amber Hollibaugh, Janet Jakobsen, and Catherine Sameh, "Desiring Change, New Feminist Solutions Series," vol. 7, New York: Barnard Center for Research on Women, and Queers for Economic Justice, 2007.
 - 10 Ibid.
 - 11 Andrea Smith, "Without Bureaucracy, Beyond Inclusion: Re-centring Feminism," Left Turn Magazine, 38, 2006, <http://postcapitalistproject.org/node/55>.
 - 12 Ibid.
 - 13 Ibid.
 - 14 Chandra T. Mohanty quoted in Elya M. Durisin, "Perspectives on rape in the Canadian sex industry: Navigating the terrain between sex work as labour and sex work as violence paradigms," Canadian Woman Studies 28, no. 1 (2009): 4.
 - 15 Tullia Law, "Not a Sob Story: Transitioning out of sex work" (master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 2011), 4, http://www.powerottawa.ca/Law_Tullia_2011_thesis.pdf.

It is important not only to understand how these systems work together to perpetuate oppression but also how we are able to resist these forces through collective action by embracing our differences and uniting in our position(s) of mutual yet diverse marginalities.

While much has been written about the disproportionate amount of violence faced by First Nations women and girls, with girls in particular being overrepresented as victims of sexual exploitation, this violence has been normalized and accepted by our society, partly through inaction from our government.¹⁶ This perpetuation of violence stems from first contact with European settlers on First Nations lands, the subsequent colonial conquest, and the later ensuing removal of children from their homes, and the impact of residential schools. Sarah Hunt argues that not only must we raise awareness but we must go to the root causes of the exploitation faced by First Nations women today, which include “poverty, isolation, discrimination and normalised violence.”¹⁷ Jodi Beniuk builds on that by reminding us that we must be able to fully understand how the tools of colonization work to create hierarchies between people and communities, and be able to grasp how it feeds into the myriad other intersecting oppressions.¹⁸ This is the point where the concept of intersectionality merges with the concept (or rather action) of decolonization. Decolonization is a process which...

...require[s] us to locate ourselves within the context of colonization in complicated ways, often as simultaneously oppressed and complicit...decolonization is a process whereby we create the conditions in which we want to live and the social relations we wish to have. We have to commit ourselves to supplanting the colonial logic of the state itself.¹⁹

Decolonization then is seen by many to be the only way to move forward to begin to heal as individuals and communities and to begin to define our lives by the way we want them to be lived rather than what has and is enforced upon us through larger structures of oppression, including, but not limited to, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

When we apply intersectionality in the context of sex work we can begin to understand why and how sex workers may experience oppression and marginalization in different ways; however, rather than constructing a hierarchy of oppression, we can begin to theorize and act in a way that acknowledges those differences and works to alleviate the structural and social components that disable some members of our community from full participation in all areas of life. For example, Leslie-Ann Jeffrey argues that the policies concerning sex workers most often work to control, regulate, and even punish some identities (nationality/race/gender etc.) more so than others.²⁰ This is often accomplished in an implicit way and is part of broader societal constructs. Best Practices Policy

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While much has been written about the disproportionate amount of violence faced by First Nations women and girls, with girls in particular being overrepresented as victims of sexual exploitation, this violence has been normalized and accepted by our society, partly through inaction from our government.

16 Sarah Hunt, “Colonial Roots, Contemporary Risk Factors: A Cautionary Exploration of the Domestic Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls in British Columbia, Canada,” *Alliance News* 33, (2010): 27–31.

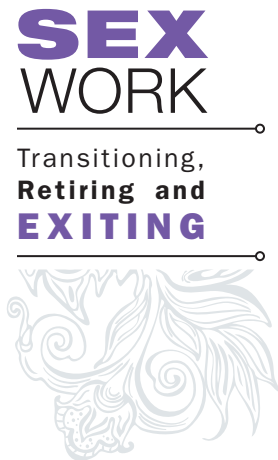
17 Hunt, *op.cit.*, 30.

18 Jodi Beniuk, “Indigenous Women as the Other: An Analysis of the Missing Women’s Commission of Inquiry,” *The Arbutus Review* 3, no. 2 (2012): 80–97.

19 Harsha Walia quoted in *Ibid.* p. 30.

20 Leslie-Ann Jeffrey, “Canada and Migrant Sex-Work: Challenging the ‘Foreign’ in Foreign Policy,” *Canadian Foreign Policy* 12, no. 1 (2005): 33–48.

Project, a policy and research driven sex worker project within the United States, along with Desiree Alliance and Sexual Rights Initiative, support this by showing that laws which deal with sex work affect communities of colour, low income communities, and LGBTQ+ folk to a higher degree with more harms caused.²¹ They further this point by stating that along with the social stigma and the criminalized aspect of sex work, it is the street-based workers, transgender and gender-non-conforming (GNC) people, migrant workers, people of colour, and youth who are subjected to the most structural and interpersonal violence.²² For us to begin to talk about transitioning out of sex work, we must begin talking about the social and structural factors that perpetuate the inequality both within as well as outside of sex work. We must also address social-structural factors such as poverty, substance use, sexual abuse, legacy of colonization, to name a few, that enable individuals to subsist within sex work under exploitative conditions and limited choices.²³ We are urged to imagine a different kind of world...



...where economic security is possible for all people, where health care is available to all, and all people's relational lives and family structures are recognized and supported. To realize this vision our hope is that sexuality, desire, and the possibility of the erotic become key engines in the mission of organizers working on a range of issues: at the intersections of street economies and sex worker rights, of labour organizing and immigration, or for disability access and reproductive justice.²⁴

While we make every attempt not to ascribe identities onto people nor box individuals in, it is worthwhile to mention how social and structural forces interact with sex work. People of colour who are also sex workers often face double the brunt of discrimination due to their occupation and the colour of their skin.²⁵ Furthermore, Robyn Maynard states that First Nations people are disproportionately over-policed, and that First Nations sex workers report that there is a dearth of culturally appropriate support networks and an increased feeling of community exclusion, a sentiment that is also echoed throughout the experiences of other racialized sex workers as well as male sex workers. Further, it is a well-documented statistic that First Nations people in Canada are at a much greater chance of living in poverty and be underemployed compared to their settler counterparts.²⁶ Native Youth Sexual Health Network²⁷ expresses the concern that despite being over-represented in statistics involving violence, police control, and poverty, First Nations people are not represented within the leadership roles of sex work organizations (along with other social service agencies) and they call for a re-centering of the power dynamics within agencies and the movement alike. Further, and particularly pertinent to this report, they

For us to begin to talk about transitioning out of sex work, we must begin talking about the social and structural factors that perpetuate the inequality both within as well as outside of sex work.

21 Best Practices Policy Project, Desiree Alliance, and the Sexual Rights Initiative, "Report on the United States of America: 9th Round of the Universal Periodic Review," BPPP, 2010.
<http://www.mulabi.org/epu/9th%20round/USA%20SEX%20WORK.pdf>.

22 Ibid.

23 Kathleen Deering, "Not in my neighbourhood: Sex work and problem of displacement," West Coast Line 46, no. 1 (2012): 18–26.

24 Hollibaugh, op.cit., p. 7.

25 Robyn Maynard in POWER, AIDS Committee of Ottawa, Ontario HIV/AIDS Treatment Network (OHTN), "The Toolbox: What Works for Sex Workers, an Expanded Toolkit of Information, Strategies and Tips for Service Providers Working with Sex Workers," ed. F. Chabot (Ottawa, ON: POWER, 2012).
http://powerottawa.ca/POWER_Report_TheToolbox.pdf.

26 Ibid.

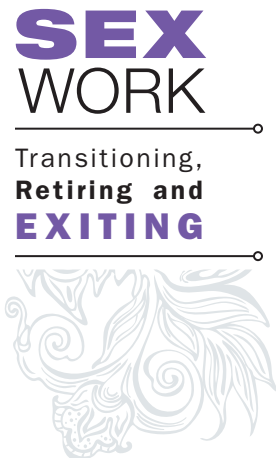
27 Native Youth Sexual Health Network in POWER, op.cit.

express their resistance to the rescue and/or saviour approaches that are enacted by social service agencies, (in)justice system, and social justice groups alike.²⁸ This is similarly true for migrant sex workers as well as youth who have engaged in transactional sex, both of whom have inadvertently become victims of the rescue industry. Recognizing the historical aspects which impact our present lives and do NOT perpetuate paternalism or colonialism is key:

...We recognize that violence and patriarchy have long been used as tools to subjugate, disempower, and undermine Indigenous people's autonomy over our own bodies. The very creation of Canada and the United States was achieved through state sanctioned sexual violence and the imposition of hetero-patriarchy...responses must be aware of the recolonizing effect of so called "helping" Indigenous people and "rescuing" sex workers.²⁹

Naomi Sayers also writes about the relationship between First Nations bodies and First Nations lands in that current sex work policies aim to advance the colonial agenda of the government of Canada within both the historic and current contexts in order to exploit First Nations lands and bodies for economic profit.³⁰ Furthermore, when we begin to address and discuss social problems in research and activism the focal point of the problem is often placed onto and assumed to lie within the First Nations individual and/or community rather than within the social-structural aspects.³¹ Sayers goes on to elucidate the point by saying that it is the settlers who are creating the First Nations problem and they are the ones who maintain it by acting to control First Nations bodies in order to further exploit First Nations land.³² Supporting this assertion, Native Youth Sexual Health Network call for a critique of the role of the state, police, and social service agencies in creating, reinforcing and allowing violence against First Nations people to take place, connecting the genocide and land theft of the past to the current sanctioned violence and exploitation through removal of people from communities and imprisonment.³³ Finally, we are reminded that First Nations people are a heterogeneous group and there are a variety of different nations and a multitude of perspectives; thus, we need to keep those differences in mind as we traverse the landscape for sex industry sovereignty where sex workers have the autonomy over their own bodies and spaces.³⁴

Various other groups of people within the sex worker population may also face significant barriers not only regarding safely working in sex work but also being able to transition out. While the above sections focused on First Nations people, migrant sex workers experience very similar issues, along



28 Ibid.

29 Jessica Danforth quoted by Erin Konsmo in POWER, op.cit., p. 32.

30 Naomi Sayers, "Exploration on Indigenous Lands and Exploitation of Indigenous Bodies," (2013) <http://www.akissforgabriela.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/NaomiSayers2013.pdf>.

31 Andrea Smith quoted in Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Native Youth Sexual Health Network in POWER, op.cit.

34 Ibid.

with a variety of different ones. For example, there is currently a lack of research available on migrant sex workers in Canada,³⁵ which adds to their invisibility and thus exacerbates their marginalization through this institutional and informational erasure. Migrant sex workers also face very specific challenges when it comes to access to health and other services, whether through perceived or actual lack of access, which is then compounded with the constant fear of being arrested and/or deported.³⁶ Migrant workers further face a “gendered construction that relies on particular rendering of racialized women as either victims of their own cultures requiring rescue by the Canadian nation or as sexual/criminal threats.”³⁷ This aids in the neo-colonial agenda of the Canadian government, reduces the agency of racialized women and/or women from the global south, and aims to strengthen security of Canada rather than focus on human rights.³⁸ Furthermore, violence against migrant sex workers and the marginal position they find themselves in is often framed as a foreign policy problem rather than one that is created by Canadian laws, policies, and practices.³⁹ On the other hand, it is also important to understand that Canada’s role abroad, particularly when it comes to global displacement, has a direct result on migration of people into Canada. However, the current lack of visibility of the exploitation that migrant women face (and migrants in general) is instead perpetuated and the globalization which forces people to migrate, one in which Canada has a large role, is further eclipsed.⁴⁰ Harsha Walia writes that there is a symbiotic relationship between the violence of capitalism and the subsequent control over migrant bodies, whereby Western imperialism dispossesses communities of their resources and land while at the same time portrays those who are forced to leave their communities as illegal and criminal.⁴¹

Male sex workers are also often invisible in the discourse surrounding sex work, and services which are tailored to men are often limited or lacking altogether; statistically they also earn less than their female counterparts, and experience an insuperable amount of homophobia (whether or not they identify as gay). This increases their marginalization and social exclusion, particularly from the communities and movements that are meant to include them, such as the sex worker and LGBTQ+ rights movements.⁴² Male sex workers, akin to migrant sex workers, are rarely in the spotlight when it comes to sex worker movements, and experience just as much informational and institutional erasure. Few studies currently exist that shed light on the particular experiences and challenges faced by this population, especially those focusing on escort work (when compared to survival level work).⁴³ Academics call for more research on and with the population of male sex workers, particularly focusing on male sex workers who use the internet to conduct business and work independently (i.e., those who are rendered most

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35 Jeffrey, op.cit.

36 Maynard in POWER, op.cit.

37 Jeffrey op.cit., p. 8.

38 Ibid.

39 Jeffrey, op.cit.

40 Jeffrey, op.cit.

41 Harsha Walia. *Undoing Border Imperialism*. (Oakland, CA: AK Press and the Institute for Anarchist Studies, 2013)

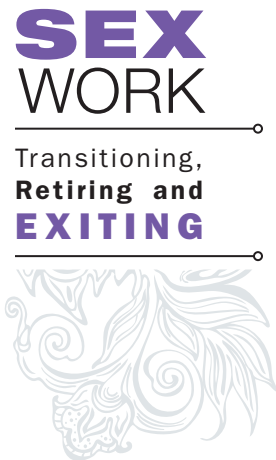
42 River Redwood in POWER, op.cit.

43 Patrice Corriveau and Christopher Greco, “Misunderstanding (Mis)Understandings: Male Sex Workers and the Canadian Criminal Code,” *Sexuality and Culture* 18, no. 2 (2014): 346–360.

invisible in discussions, writings, and policy changes).⁴⁴ We are further reminded that programs and policies that do attempt to foster the inclusion of male sex workers are often delivered in a manner that actually excludes potential service recipients. Examples of this would be gay-oriented services (many male sex workers do not identify as gay), services themed around homelessness and/or substance use (while it is undeniable that some male sex workers are homeless and do use substances, many do not, and thus require a different approach and framework), or most problematic service delivery models which see sex work as deviance that needs to be corrected (many sex workers choose this work as a career and thus “corrective” programs are completely inappropriate).⁴⁵ Methods which are able to reach this covert yet distinct population of self-employed male sex workers are encouraged by academics, citing internet outreach as the gold standard approach to practice.⁴⁶ This is where netreach efforts by HUSTLE as well as the aforementioned CHAPS research are instrumental in ensuring both institutional and information representation.

Sex workers who identify as gay, lesbian, or queer, are also navigating a world where, due to both their occupation and sexual orientation, they may find themselves subject to discrimination and social expulsion, which is maintained through heteronormativity and homophobia.⁴⁷ Transgender and gender-non-conforming sex workers similarly live in a world of transphobia and enforcement of gender roles, and face numerous barriers to access to housing, health and social services, legal protection, and employment.⁴⁸ While the de jure climate of Canada, and the City of Vancouver in particular, is fairly progressive in terms of LGBTQ+ rights (especially when compared to other parts of our world), the de facto situation remains one where those who transgress the gender binary or heteronormative (and arguably homonormative) patriarchy, face a powerful societal backlash through both personal and structural discrimination. These individuals may find themselves in a position of even greater marginality compounded by their involvement in sex work, and could be excluded from both the sex work and LGBTQ+ organizations and movements.

Youth who engage in transactional sex often face particular challenges as well, some of which include being denied agency and access due to their age, despite the fact that some youth do not identify as being abused and do not require saving; rather, they are making a consensual decision based on the socio-political and economic climate combined with personal life circumstances.⁴⁹ Activists suggest that services targeted at youth are usually provided by adults with little input from the youths themselves. Ensuring facilitation of youth-run and youth-driven programs is essential; these programs must not only challenge the power-over relationship that is currently



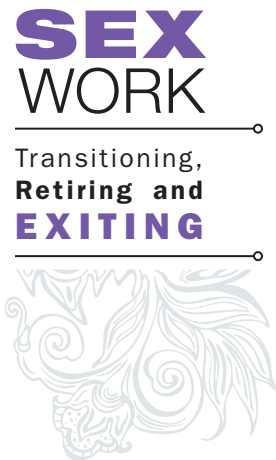
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- 44 Christopher W. Blackwell and Sophia F. Dziegielewski, “Risk for a Price: Sexual Activity Solicitations in Online Male Sex Worker Profiles,” *Journal of Social Service Research* 39, no. 2 (2013): 159–170.
 - 45 Victor Minichiello et al., “Male Sex Workers in Three Australian Cities: Socio-demographic and Sex Work Characteristics,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 42, no. 1 (2001).
 - 46 Blackwell and Dziegielewski, op.cit.
 - 47 Chris Bruckert, Fred Chabot, and POWER (Prostitutes of Ottawa-Gatineau, Work, Educate, Resist), “Challenges: Ottawa area sex workers speak out,” (Ottawa, ON: POWER, 2011).
http://www.powerottawa.ca/POWER_Report_Challenges.pdf.
 - 48 Cole Gately in POWER, op.cit.
 - 49 Phoenix McKee in POWER, op.cit.

exhibited in youth targeted services but ensure that there is both individual and structural level changes that take place according to youth needs and wants.⁵⁰ Furthermore, attention must be paid to First Nations youth, as they are over-represented in survival and outdoor sex work, yet programs are rarely designed for, not to mention by, First Nations youth who engage in transactional sex.

Sex workers who may be living with a substance use issue often experience marginalization because substance misuse may limit their choices both in terms of the sex work they engage in, as well as the ability to transition out, and they may face a double stigma due to their occupation and their substance use; individuals who use drugs AND find themselves in another position of marginality (race, sexual orientation, gender, and particularly class) are often judged more harshly by society as well as by health and social service agencies.⁵¹ Akin to those living with substance use issues, sex workers living in poverty also face an insurmountable amount of stigma and barriers to access services; they are often precariously housed and are at a heightened risk for being arrested.⁵² That being said, it is important to note that we must be careful not to dichotomize sex workers according to class, such as outdoor sex worker and high class escorts. Sex workers fall into many different economic categories and may navigate across these categories throughout their entire careers and/or lives.

While special attention was paid to First Nations people in the above description as they are over-represented in the outdoor sex work and face a number of challenges in being able to leave the industry when they wish, the above identities are not meant to construct hierarchies of oppression; rather, they aim to paint a picture of how intersecting oppressions work to further stigmatize and marginalize members of our communities. Finally, we are reminded that...

...It is within the intersections of race, class, sexual orientation, gender and poverty that stigmatization, criminalization and marginalization intersect for sex workers. We see exclusion from meaningful participation in social and economic life when sex workers are denied housing, are evicted, or are unable to secure financing because they cannot prove income. We see this when workers cannot transition out of the industry because of a criminal record or because their skills are not transferable, or because they are unwilling to disclose for fear of rejection. We see it when sex workers are silenced by researchers who speak over and for them and by courts that dismiss them as “unreliable witnesses.” We see it when sex workers’ rights are denied, because structural barriers undermine their ability to advocate for themselves, because exercising those rights engenders vulnerability to criminalization and stigma or because their truths are dismissed. We see this in the way sex workers are vulnerable to victimization because aggressors target them with virtual impunity, because they are pushed to dark and isolated areas and because law enforcement polices but does not protect.⁵³



50 Kaila Kuban and Chris Grinnell, “More Abercrombie than Activist? Queer Working Class Rural Youth vs. the New Gay Teenager” in *That’s Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation*, ed. Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (Berkley, CA: Soft Skull Press, 2008).

51 Bruckert and Chabot in *POWER*, op.cit.

52 Ibid.

53 Bruckert and Chabot in *POWER*, op.cit., p. 46.



Once we understand how social inequity affects our lives and limits our choices, and once we implicate structural factors in the marginalization of certain populations, we can begin to move away from the individualization and “responsibilization” discourses that place blame for the circumstance people find themselves in on individual choices rather than the social and economic conditions that those choices are made within. Once we embrace our collective marginalization and work together to dismantle the structures of power that suppress and repress us, we can begin to define our own lives for ourselves and begin to thrive as individuals WITHIN communities, with full recognition, participation, and equality.





“Who are
they that
stare”

by Antonette Rea⁵⁴

EXCERPT FROM

catch service release

and always keep on guard

for “Transphobia”

may slumber and slither in shadows

waiting to come alive surprise attack

hating intending to bash

trust your intuition

listen to your gut

be ready for the violent drive-bys who stop

thwart them bastard’s bashing plans

fight to protect yourself your right to be

fight for your life “Queen” of the night



“Violence within communities of colour cannot be addressed without seriously dealing with the larger attack of immigrants and Indian Treaty rights, police brutality, proliferation of prisons, economic neocolonialism, and institutional racism.”

ANDREA SMITH

Angela Davis writes that the first brothel in Vancouver was established by Birdie Stewart in 1867, thus founding the sex industry in the city.⁵⁵ Along with the sex industry came the laws that would inevitably cause a lot of damage to both sex workers and the larger community, and continue to do so today. One of such legal documents, the Indian Act, was enacted in 1876 and enabled the forced removal of First Nations children from their families and communities and into residential schools, as well as allowed for the criminalization of First Nations peoples and their displacement.⁵⁶ The Indian Act was also responsible for disrupting the status of First Nations women within their communities and the larger society as well as introducing the first laws surrounding sex work.⁵⁷ Sayers cites Boyer to show that those provisions were removed from the Indian Act and added to the Criminal Code of Canada when it was enacted in 1892.⁵⁸

A major turning point in more recent history was in the 1970s, when there was a visible sex work scene in the West End of Vancouver. The outdoor presence increased dramatically with the raids of the indoor sex work venues in the mid-1970s, and the Davie Street stroll became a burgeoning sex industry area.⁵⁹ At the time, the visible sex work scene, which was comprised largely of First Nations, Filipino, and African-Canadian sex workers, was met with fierce opposition from some community members who opposed the sex workers' now undeniable visibility.⁶⁰ In 1980, a group called Concerned Citizens of the West End (CROWE) consisting of and headed by white and upwardly mobile gay men and women, armed with a Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) attitude, began to forcibly

55 Trina Ricketts et al., *History of SexWork: Vancouver. Who we were - who we are* (Vancouver, BC: Simon Fraser University, 2005).

56 Yvonne Boyer cited in Sayers, op.cit.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

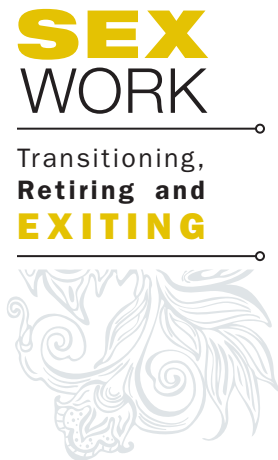
59 Becki Ross and Rachael Sullivan, “Tracing Lines of the Horizontal Hostility: How Sex Workers and Gay Activists Battled for Space, Voice, and Belonging in Vancouver, 1975–1985,” *Sexualities* 15 no. 5/6 (2012): 604–621.

60 Ibid.

remove sex workers from the West End of Vancouver in a “clean up [that] was about consolidating bourgeois whiteness through coercive boundary control and the assertion of respectability.”⁶¹ Further, this displacement of largely First Nations women replicated the colonial dispossession of land from the Musqueam, Burrard, and Squamish First Nations.⁶² It is essential to add that the fact that this was instrumented by gay and lesbian members of the community also served as a double blow as the gay movement veered toward assimilation and denounced its affiliation with those who were more stigmatized to improve its precarious status, in a phenomenon dubbed horizontal hostility.⁶³ Becki Ross and Rachael Sullivan⁶⁴ further point out that behind those actions lay the misogynist and racist attitudes of white butch-masculine gay men towards the hyper feminine and racialized female and transgender sex workers. Duggan, cited by Ross and Sullivan, called this the “new homonormativity,” which coincided with increase in home ownership, consumerism, and gentrification.⁶⁵

Almost a century after the Criminal Code was enacted, in 1985 it was amended to tighten the sex work laws (the “communicating for purposes of prostitution” prohibition was added here) and thus continued the drastic decline of safety and security of sex workers, particularly those who worked on the street.⁶⁶ Sex workers were by now displaced to more isolated and industrial areas within the East End of Downtown and the DTES, where we as a society have collectively allowed for violence, against predominantly First Nations and substance dependent sex workers, to take place.⁶⁷ It is vital to note here that while the correlation between displacement and violence does exist, women were already being targeted in the DTES and the collective inactivity of both government agents and society at large was already in place.

Today the outdoor sex work scene in the West End is largely non-existent, whereas the indoor sex industry, advertised and negotiated mostly online, is burgeoning. Ross and Sullivan remind us that the history of the sex work community of the West End was erased, with no permanent marker to commemorate the loss of community and lives of those who are missing or murdered as a direct result of the displacement from the West End, “invit[ing] reflection of the perils of collective forgetting, the institutional implantation of the whore stigma, and the myopia of liberationist social movements.”⁶⁸ And thus the gay village remains a predominantly white and masculinist blemish of forgotten history.⁶⁹ Similar to the erasure of history which takes place when the modern LGBT movement (or, arguably, more appropriately dubbed “GGGG” movement [“G” denoting gay] to account for the privilege gay, and mostly white, men enjoy at the expense of others) forgets that Stonewall (site of the Stonewall Riot, which is now viewed as a major historical event within the LGBTQ+ rights movement) was a place of meeting for sex workers, transgender people, and drug users.⁷⁰ In fact, Sylvia



It is vital to note here that while the correlation between displacement and violence does exist, women were already being targeted in the DTES and the collective inactivity of both government agents and society at large was already in place.

61 Becki Ross, “Sex and (Evacuation from) the City: The Moral and Legal Regulations of Sex Workers in Vancouver’s West End 1975–1985,” *Sexualities* 13, no. 2 (2010): 209.

62 Ibid.

63 Pat Califia cited in Ross and Sullivan, op.cit.

64 Ross and Sullivan, op.cit.

65 Ross and Sullivan, op.cit.

66 Ricketts et al, op.cit.

67 Ross and Sullivan, op.cit.

68 Ibid., p. 616.

69 David Bell and Jon Binnie cited in Ibid.

70 Melinda Chateauvert, *Sex Workers Unite: a History of the Movement from Stonewall to SlutWalk* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press Books, 2013).

Rivera, who is often cited as being the catalyst for the riot, never hid her transgender identity nor her involvement in sex work and drug use, and while it did not make up her identity, it was still eclipsed by the modern day movement, which aims to assimilate into the “straight” world for acceptability and respectability rather than dismantle systems of inequality and oppression that kept people there in the first place.⁷¹ Note: “straight” is used here to denote both sexuality and work outside of sex work.

While the physical changes in terms of the sex industry meant displacement of sex workers to more dangerous areas, it also meant that at the same time those who were less marginalized (particularly in terms of poverty, homelessness, residency, and substance use) began conducting business by way of the internet and within private/semi-private residences. The legal context, however, seemed to lag behind these changes. While this report is not explicitly arguing for decriminalization or legalization, it is vital to point out that our current legal context of sex work in Canada is rife with contradictions and has been challenged in court. While the new bill has already been drafted and disseminated, it is still the case that sex workers and sex worker organizations are currently living in limbo and face great uncertainty regarding their future. The Criminal Code of Canada still contains provisions



that make some aspects of sex work illegal, most notably sections 210 to 213, which are: running or frequenting a bawdy house or an indoor premise where sex work takes place (Section 210), transporting a person to a bawdy house (Section 211), procuring or living on the proceeds of the sex work of another person (Section 212), obtaining or attempting to obtain the sexual services of someone who is under 18 in exchange for money, clothes, shelter or anything else of value (Section 212.4), and all forms of public communication for the purposes of sex work (Section 213).⁷²

The landmark *Bedford v. Canada* case challenged three sections of the prostitution laws for being unconstitutional. Subsequently, in 2012 the Ontario Court of Appeal agreed that the ban on bawdy houses and living off the avails of prostitution are unconstitutional, but did not strike down the communication law. In 2013, the ruling was appealed at the Supreme Court of Canada. In 2014, the government responded with Bill C-36, which does not criminalize selling of sex but does make buying sex a criminal offence, along with communicating for purposes of prostitution, and advertising sexual services. While the bill must make it through parliament first in order to become law, it has already been met with fierce opposition from sex workers and organizations that work with them. The laws that were struck down are expected to expire at the end of 2014 and the current Conservative government hopes to pass the bill by that time. The current uncertain nature of the laws surrounding sex work adds to the precarious position sex workers find themselves in within the socio-political climate of Canada and compounds the difficulties sex workers face in accessing services and transitioning out of the industry, if they so wish.

71 Ibid.

72 Criminal Code of Canada



“Abject peoples are those whom industrial imperialism rejects but cannot do without...the abject returns to haunt modernity as its constitutive, inner repudiation: the rejected from which one does not part.”

ANNE MCCLINTOCK

A. Downtown Eastside Vancouver

As mentioned previously, sex workers were pushed out into badly lit and poorly populated areas of Vancouver following the “clean up” of the West End, with the DTES becoming a major hub for sex workers who engaged in survival sex work. While the aforementioned “clean up” did contribute to the situation unfolding in the DTES, it had already been established as an area where various strolls existed and where violence was already taking place. Donna Schatz writes that the DTES is locked in a convoluted relationship between poverty and exclusion, giving aid to increased levels of crime (including violence), unemployment, mental health and substance use problems, and homelessness, which must be understood from a historical standpoint.⁷³ Geographically speaking, the land we find ourselves in when we say we are in Vancouver is that of the Coast Salish peoples (including Musqueam, Squamish, and Burrard peoples) and has been for over 10,000 years.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the author purports that not only is the DTES a location of colonial land dispossession but it is the site of continued neo-colonial marginalization to this day and that...

...dismantling the long standing politics of exclusion in the [DTES] requires a historical material framework as a primary analysis because... the social constructions of gender, race, class, age, and ability within this specific Western Canadian urban zone are mediated through existing capitalist arrangements and exacerbated through neoliberal state policy.⁷⁵

It is then that we can begin to see how social and structural factors contributed to the gendered colonial violence exemplified by the large number of missing and murdered women from the DTES. Beniuk writes that this (ongoing) tragedy is exacerbated by police negligence, and the exclusionary Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI), which was met with opposition by more than 200 women who wanted a “new, fair, just, and inclusive inquiry that centre’s [sic] the voices and experiences and leadership of women, particularly, First Nations women, in the DTES.”⁷⁶ Although lacking in many aspects, the report of the MWCI did however identify structural factors which contributed to the lack of safety and security of women in the DTES, such as inadequate housing, poverty, drug dependency, and food insecurity.⁷⁷ It further recommended building upon the Living in Community Action Plan 2007, which focuses on the safety and well-being of sex workers and the community they are a part

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73 Donna Schatz, “Unsettling the Politics of Exclusion: Aboriginal Activism and the Vancouver Downtown East Side” (Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Concordia University, Montreal, 2010).

74 Shatz, op.cit.

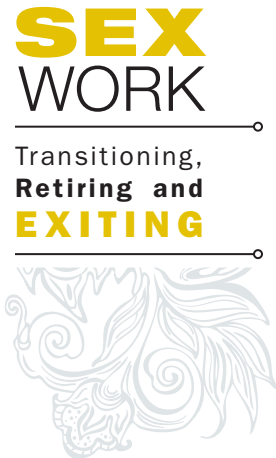
75 Ibid., p. 10.

76 Walia quoted by Beniuk, op.cit.

77 Wally T. Oppal, QC Commissioner, Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, Executive Summary (Vancouver, BC: Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, 2012).

of, which is something that this report aims to support as well. However, women in the DTES continue to face individual and interpersonal violence, with studies reporting that 98% of sex workers who work in the DTES have experienced violence as result of “bad dates,”⁷⁸ and thus remain a particularly vulnerable population.

Both despite AND because of the continued violence and marginalization that residents of the DTES community face, it has become a hub for very innovative activism and grass roots community development.⁷⁹ People in the DTES are directly involved in community development initiatives and work not only for survival but for change, Schatz writes. It is “an active and activist neighborhood with a long tradition of labor and anti-poverty organizing.”⁸⁰



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.....

78 Lisa Gibson and Tiah Goldstein, *Living in Community: Balancing Perspectives on Vancouver's Sex Industry* (Vancity Community Foundation, 2007).

79 Schatz, *op.cit.*

80 Dara Culhane quoted in Schatz *op.cit.*, p. 14.

“Progressive social movements do not simply produce statistics and narratives of oppression; rather, the best ones do what great poetry always does: transport us to another place, compel us to re-live horrors and, more importantly, enable us to imagine a new society.”

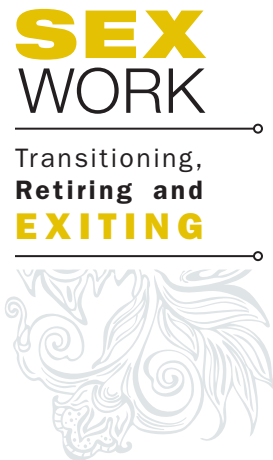
ROBIN D.G. KELLEY

B. Summary of Research

The DTES is not only a site of community organizing but of numerous research studies, most of which involve outdoor and survival sex workers. Some of the results of the research (both formal and informal) that has included the voices of sex workers in the DTES will be briefly outlined here.

In this research, housing was pinpointed as a number one priority, since the current housing and poverty-alleviation initiatives are insufficient, as evidenced by high rates of homelessness in the DTES, as well as in Greater Vancouver.⁸¹ Sex workers have called for an urgent increase in safe and appropriate housing, such as supported housing and transitional housing.⁸² Other studies have supported this and went further to indicate that sex work-only housing could be beneficial and aid in alleviating impacts of violence against sex workers.⁸³ Another study demonstrated that women who engage in sex work require long-term housing that is women-centred, staffed by women, and free from arbitrary evictions and strict guest policies.⁸⁴ Finally, women identified that 24/7 drop-ins and/or shelters are also urgently needed⁸⁵ with some suggesting the removal of shelter curfew policies to be replaced with a model which asks to women to check in once every 24 hours.⁸⁶

Along with housing, substance use services were identified as lacking or inaccessible, yet much needed,⁸⁷ including drug-maintenance therapy.⁸⁸ Furthermore, one study points to a link between the inability to access drug services and violence perpetrated against women, yet “a review of Canada’s drug strategy showed that of the \$C368 million targeted at illicit drug use, 73% [was] spent on enforcement based initiatives and only 14% [was] spent on addiction treatment.”⁸⁹ Using evidence-based and best-practice approaches to both substance use and sex work in order to facilitate access to alcohol and drug services, and thus vlessen the reliance on sex work, was identified as key.⁹⁰



In this research, housing was pinpointed as a number one priority, since the current housing and poverty-alleviation initiatives are insufficient, as evidenced by high rates of homelessness in the DTES, as well as in Greater Vancouver.

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- 81 Putu Duff et al., “Homelessness among a cohort of women in street-based sex work: The need for safer environment interventions,” *BMC Public Health* 11, no. 1 (2011): 643.
 - 82 McCreary Center Society, *Street-Smarts Program, Interim Evaluation*, 2012. McCreary Centre Society; and Gibson and Goldstein op.cit.
 - 83 Duff, op.cit.
 - 84 Lisa Lazarus et al., “Risky health environments: Women sex workers’ struggles to find safe, secure and non-exploitative housing in Canada’s poorest postal code,” *Social Science & Medicine* 73, no. 11 (2011): 1600–1607.
 - 85 Gibson and Goldstein, op.cit.; McCreary Center Society, op.cit.
 - 86 Lazarus, op.cit.
 - 87 Gibson and Goldstein, op.cit.; McCreary Center Society, op.cit.
 - 88 Kate Shannon et al., “Social and Structural Violence and Power Relations in Mitigating HIV Risk of Drug-using Women in Survival Sex Work,” *Social Science & Medicine* 66, no. 4 (2008): 911–921.
 - 89 Ibid., p. 6.
 - 90 Kathleen N. Deering et al., “The street cost of drugs and the drug use patterns: Relationships with sex work income in an urban Canadian setting,” *Drug Alcohol Dependence* 118, no. 2/3 (2011): 430–436.

Additionally, this needs to be amalgamated with improved access to education and employment opportunities, health care, and economic security (such as livable social assistance rates and minimum wage, for example).⁹¹

Due to over-representation of First Nations people within both the geographical location of the First Nations sex workers and coming from First Nations sex workers are needed.⁹² Some of these include talking circles, connection with Elders and First Nations culture(s), as well as a focus on traditional languages and arts.⁹³ Further, broader culturally appropriate services in the DTES were also identified as a need, including but not limited to, culturally appropriate housing and treatment options which involve spiritual Elders.⁹⁴ We are reminded that “resources must be directed toward First Nations communities, and health authorities should implement Indigenous-centered prevention, treatment, healing, and housing services.”⁹⁵

First Nations youth were identified as a particularly disengaged population as services aimed at them and by them are virtually non-existent. Vulnerability to violence and ill effects of drug use coupled with paternalistic, judgmental and oppressive attitudes from social service workers and organizations mean that this group is generally not served well by existing supports and thus youth AND First Nations centred interventions that take into account lived realities of racism, cultural disambiguation and gendered violence are needed.⁹⁶ As mentioned above, housing was identified as a need in virtually all studies. Youth supportive housing models may be a critical first step to engaging experiential youth in seeking additional support services.⁹⁷ We are reminded that programs must be inclusive of all sexual and gender identities.⁹⁸ Finally, integrating programs that target young people who engage in transactional sex with programs delivered through youth and First Nations agencies is recommended.⁹⁹

As mentioned previously within the report, there is a dearth of research on indoor migrant and indoor male sex workers within Vancouver. As the AESHA project served as landmark driving force for greater informational and institutional presence of sex workers within the fields of academia and social service provision, it is our sincere contention that the CHAPS and SPACES projects will serve to ameliorate the informational erasure those particular communities face. However, much more remains to be done, as systemic downfalls, such as lack of translators in the aforementioned projects, have left out some of the most marginalized participants from the research.

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91 Margot Young and James P. Mulvale cited in Ibid.

92 Gibson and Goldstein, op.cit.

93 McCreary Center Society, op.cit.

94 Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Center Society, Aboriginal Front Door Society, Community Dialogues with Aboriginal Community Members on Community Safety Issue: Summary Report (Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre, 2012).

95 Carli L. Miller et al., “Individual and structural vulnerabilities among female youth who exchange sex for survival,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 49, no. 1 (2011): 6.

96 Jill Chettiar et al., “Survival Sex Work Involvement among Street-involved Youth who Use Drugs in a Canadian Setting,” *Journal of Public Health* 32, no. 3 (2010): 322–327.

97 Miller et al, op.cit.

98 Brandon D.L. Marshall et al., “Survival Sex Work and Increased HIV Risk among Sexual Minority Street Involved Youth,” *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome* 53, no. 3 (2010): 661–664.

99 Chettiar et al, op.cit.

Thus, currently of particular importance is the need to expand services and agencies that serve migrant and indoor male sex worker populations, such as SWAN and HUSTLE, as the informational erasure and institutional erasure are in a symbiotic relationship, where one feeds into the other, and it is only through targeting both at the same time can long-lasting change take place. It is our hope that this report will serve as impetus for more funding and resources as well as greater access to services by these populations.

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Before I Found a Lesbian Feminist Doctor

by **Amber Dawn**¹⁰⁰

Relapse is a part
of your illness, understand?
Schizophrenia

You think it's clever
that you read the DSM
at the library?

The problem is the
drug use. You may have fried your
brain permanently.

Hold her down. She'll kick.
Won't you, you troublemaker?
I'll kick you right back.

This crying routine
won't earn you any sympathy.
Lights out means lights out.

We don't know just how
this medication will work
It's trial and error.


Four milligrams? No
wonder you can't stand up straight.
I'll call your doctor.

Why not go home? You
aren't stuck here like the other
patients. Call your mom.

Your bed's been given
to someone else. Respite care
is temporary.

Hi. I've been assigned
to your case. In your own words,
what is the problem?

.....
¹⁰⁰ Amber Dawn, *How Poetry Saved My Life: A Hustler's Memoir* (Vancouver, Canada: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2013) p. 43.





PART 3 Transitioning, Retiring, and Exiting

When writing about transitioning out of sex work, authors sometimes include a typology of sex workers in order to determine appropriate exiting interventions.

The typology that is often adopted splits sex workers into four groups, the first of which being sex work as a preferred career.¹⁰¹ This group of individuals enjoy the work they do and will generally include a smaller percentage of workers who want to retire from the work. Nonetheless, they may still require assistance in being able to do so, particularly through individualized services. The second group is the one for whom sex work is the best occupational choice, i.e., in our socio-economic climate, sex work offers them income and generally more autonomy over their work.¹⁰² While this group also contains individuals who may want to transition, the interventions may need to be more structural in nature (i.e., changing the social and organizational structures that hinder individuals' options to transition). The third group consists of sex workers for whom this work is a result of limited choice, and these workers may be working to finance their substance dependency and/or those who are experiencing poverty and homelessness.¹⁰³ This group also requires structural change to take place and delivery of consistent, holistic, and multi-disciplinary interventions. The last group consists of individuals who have no choice, i.e., they are exploited and may have been trafficked.¹⁰⁴ This group may require appropriate legal assistance first and foremost should they decide to and be able to exit. It is important to stress here that this group should not be referred to as sex workers, as the typology suggests, given that they are forced, coerced, and/or trafficked. Including this group in the typology may add to the erroneous conflation of trafficking and sex work, thus it is important to be vigilant of this and subsequently adopt a critical analysis when utilizing such typologies when discussing sex work. While these typologies serve to elucidate that a variety of various services are required to enable people to exercise agency in their transitioning endeavour, they are by no means static, and individuals may navigate through all four groups at some point in their life/career. Further, it must be said that just because a sex worker belongs to one of the groups, it should not automatically be assumed they will benefit from interventions that work well for that group in aiding transitioning. Services must be person-centred, individually tailored, and not forced upon the service user.

.....
101 Pat Mayhew and Elaine Mossman, *Exiting Prostitution: Models of Best Practice* (Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Justice, 2007).

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

Ideologies that shape how these services are delivered also have a typology that was introduced by Mayhew and Mossman¹⁰⁵ and include seeing sex work as an illegal activity (result: police and justice system involvement), as an immoral activity (result: rehabilitation efforts), as violence against women (result: victim status and rescue programs), as a social problem (result: addressing social support systems) along with another ideological category added by Kootstra,¹⁰⁶ whereby sex work is seen as a labour issue (result: labour organizing). While the last two seem to be appropriate ideological models for this report, viewing sex work itself as a social problem is quite problematic, and thus another ideological category would do well to see sex work as a result of social problems to sum up the experiences of survival sex workers more aptly.

Kootstra shows that there are certain considerations we must keep in mind when approaching retiring from sex work, some of which include, but are not limited to: sex workers often come back to sex work after leaving many times, not all sex workers want to leave sex work, and that social attitudes and behaviour (such as stigma, harassment, violence, discrimination) are often cited as key reasons for the desire to transition out. Sex workers often report that they stay because of financial reasons, and thus sex workers need alternative employment options that are appropriate, wanted, and well-supported (financial literacy, language classes, skills upgrading, child care, financial loans, etc.) Establishing programmes to facilitate transitions out of the industry must be individually tailored to worker's specific needs; however, structural and social factors such as poverty, lack of employment, stigma and discrimination, must be addressed.¹⁰⁷

There are also numerous and well-cited models of exiting that have been introduced over the last thirty years, eight of which will be discussed here. While many have commonalities, and some are even built upon others, there is no one model that reigns above all others. The model that is introduced by Prochaska, Norcross and DiClemente, called the Cycle of Change model, has been used for many years in aiding behaviour change (such as quitting smoking and using other substances) with well-documented successes. This is also the model that is supported by the United Kingdom Network of Sex Work Projects (UKNSWP)¹⁰⁸ as best practice. Analysis of each model along with limitations and criticisms will be presented below.

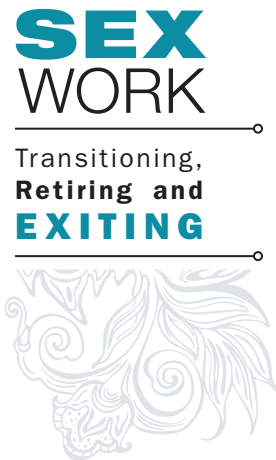
There are also numerous and well-cited models of exiting that have been introduced over the last thirty years, eight of which will be discussed here.

105 Ibid.

106 Trijntje Kootstra, Move Forward! First Results of the Move Forward Project on Career Opportunities for Sex Workers (Amsterdam, NED: SOA AIDS Nederland, 2010).

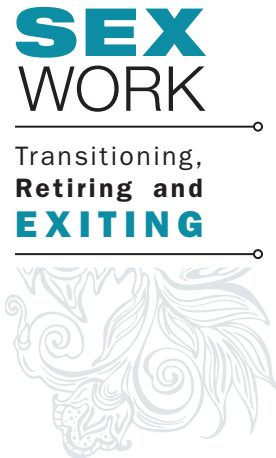
107 Kootstra, op.cit.

108 Trudy Hannington et al., Good Practice Guidance Series- (5) Working with Sex Workers: Exiting (Manchester, UK: UK Network of Sex Work Projects, 2008).



"If our vision is built on more than rage against the oppressions we name, then it needs to embody those fragile, powerful components that make us human... it matters deeply that we claim the erotic, that we assert desire as part of the centerpiece for freedom, for a new and better world...Finally, it is about all of us—in all the ways we are capable of being."

AMBER HOLLIBAUGH



A. MODELS

1. Fuchs Ebaugh (1988)

Ebaugh's model of "Role Exit" looks at the complex process which unifies the personal and the social in order to allow individuals to move from one life role and disengage from their previous one.¹⁰⁹ She describes this process happening in four stages:

1. First doubts arise when the individual begins to question that which has earlier been taken for granted and when a conscious feeling of disappointment and dissatisfaction comes to the fore;
2. Seeking alternatives is a phase characterised by vague and fuzzy alternatives which gradually become clearer and take the form of more conscious consideration and planning;
3. The turning point often occurs dramatically and in connection with an external event, but it can also come gradually, after long and mature consideration;
4. Creating the exit role which occurs when the person who has broken away frees him/herself from what remains of the old role and starts creating a new identity.¹¹⁰

Ebaugh acknowledged that while some people may progress through these stages in a linear fashion, some return to their previous role, and that each stage takes an undetermined amount of time, depending on individual and social circumstances the sex workers finds themselves in.¹¹¹

As mentioned previously, a lot of models either build upon each other (for example, Mansson and Hedin's model was built on Ebaugh's) or, at the very least, share similarities. One can see the similarities between first doubts stage and contemplation stage of the Cycle of Change Model (these will be discussed in the next section), or between the seeking alternative phase and the decision stage, as well as between turning point and action, and finally between the creating exit role stage and maintenance stage.

2. Prochaska, Norcross and Diclemente (1998)

The stages of the cycle:

Pre-contemplation: the person does not see any problem in what he or she is doing

Contemplation: the person is ambivalent and of two minds about what he or she wants to do

Decision: the person has decided to do something and is getting ready for change

109 Law, op.cit.

110 Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh cited in Miriam Saphira et al., "Exiting Commercial Sexual Activity," (New Zealand, ECPAT, 2004) p. 3. <http://www.ecpat.org.nz>.

111 Lynda M. Baker, Rochelle L. Dalla, and Celia Williamson, "Exiting Prostitution: An Integral Model," *Violence Against Women* 16, no. 5 (2010): 579–600.

Action: the person has made the change and it is all-consuming
Maintenance: the changes have been integrated into the person's life
Lapse/relapse: full return to old behaviour¹¹²

Hannington and colleagues apply the model (which was originally developed to curb smoking) to sex work, whereby in the pre-contemplation stage, the sex worker does not see any risk with sex work and accepts his or her circumstances, perhaps occasionally using drop-in services; in the contemplation stage, the worker becomes aware of some of the risks and reports dissatisfaction with continuing in the field; in the decision stage, the sex worker may contact service providers or make public the decision to change his or her engagement in sex work; in the action stage, the worker begins accessing supports such as substance use services, or exiting services if available; in the maintenance stage, the worker may be continuing regular service access and is proactive in making changes; in the last stage, which is dubbed “relapse,” the worker may disengage from services or decrease access due to increased involvement in sex work.¹¹³ The authors stipulate that understanding the cycle and knowing which intervention is appropriate at which level is important for those of us who work in aiding individuals' transitions out of sex work. For example, they state that in the pre-contemplation stage, the sex worker may experience cognitive dissonance, which could be addressed; in the contemplation stage, motivational interviewing has been shown to be extremely helpful along with positive statements, while in the decision stage, “relapse” prevention techniques are useful along with examining potential targets, provision of information and choice; in the action stage, monitoring is key; in the maintenance stage, appropriate follow up is essential; and, finally, in the “relapse” stage, exploring difficulties may be helpful.¹¹⁴

While some writers criticize the Stages of Change model in that it is too individualized and only address a singular behaviour, and that it is too linear in progress, these are readily contested. Firstly, the stages of change aims to only look at changing an individual's behaviour and is meant to be a guide to be used in counselling and other direct work with individuals; it does not and is not meant to replace the much needed social actions such as activism, community organizing, resource re-shifting, and other methods of collective action; rather, it is meant to be used in conjunction with them. Hannington and colleagues recommend that services are provided holistically and not just with an exiting mandate, allowing for an individual seeking to transition out to already be enrolled in services and thus more likely to continue with them.¹¹⁵ Further, the model acknowledges that people can and will go back to engaging in the behaviour they aimed to stop; consequently, they can begin to progress through the cycle again depending on the stage they find themselves in during the second, or third, or fourth time around. While most of the language to describe the stages is fairly value-free, using “relapse” as a stage or as a descriptor of returning to sex work is somewhat pathologizing and may be well replaced by a more neutral word such as “return” or “re-entry,” for example.



Hannington and colleagues recommend that services are provided holistically and not just with an exiting mandate, allowing for an individual seeking to transition out to already be enrolled in services and thus more likely to continue with them.

112 Hannington et al, op.cit. p. 4.

113 Ibid.

114 Hannington et al, op.cit.

115 Ibid.

3. Mansson and Hedin (1999)

As previously stated, this model is based on Ebaugh's role exit model and is comprised of five stages. First stage is when sex workers drift into sex work (through financial need, poverty, homelessness, and/or substance use issue); second stage is when the workers become ensnared in sex work (i.e., rely on sex work for survival); third stage is when sex workers begin to think about leaving the industry and is called pre-break away; in stage four, sex workers break away; after the break away stage, or stage five, they "stabilize."¹¹⁶ (Again, language that may further pathologize sex workers should be avoided.) Also in some circumstances, stage six (or re-entry) should be acknowledged.¹¹⁷ Mansson and Hedin's exit model discusses turning points which are further broken down into three groups: eye-opening events, traumatic events (such as being a victim of violence or losing one's children into care), and positive life events (such as having a child, falling in love, or finding a new job) that enable sex workers to exit.¹¹⁸ The model also acknowledges the difficulties that people face when leaving the industry, and the authors name various stigma associated with being a sex worker; working through one's previous experiences of being a sex worker, finding oneself in a (perhaps further) position of marginality, and coping with issues of intimate and personal relationships outside of work are some of those challenges.¹¹⁹

The issue surrounding this particular model is that while it focuses on increased individualization and "responsibilization," it denies agency to sex workers, and sees them as victims of exploitation.¹²⁰ The rhetoric can be noted through analyzing the words and language used within their model in both naming and describing the components of the stages, as mentioned previously.

4. Williamson and Folaron (2003)

Perhaps the least cited exiting model is one which describes the stages that occur between entry into sex work and subsequent exit: first, people become enticed by the sex work lifestyle, then learn about the culture of sex work, begin to survive (and perhaps thrive) in the field, until they find themselves disillusioned with the sex work lifestyle (in part due to experiences of violence, substance use, trauma, and legal trouble) until they finally exit.¹²¹ The model is rather less detailed in nature when compared to the ones discussed above except for the fact that it does highlight the reality that many sex workers, particularly those working outdoors, have experienced trauma (whether by way of engaging in sex work, in their personal lives, or both), reminding us that trauma-informed services are urgently and desperately needed. Adding that component to more detailed models, as appropriate, would allow for a more nuanced and holistic approach to exiting.

5. Hester and Westmarland (2004)

This model attempts to show a relationship between structural factors (such as housing, along with employment and education opportunities) and relational factors (social support) and individual factors (resilience and capital) in an attempt to ensure that agencies supporting transitioning must

116 Kootstra, op.cit.

117 Raven R. Bowen, "They Walk Among Us: Sex Work Exiting, Re-Entry and Duality" (master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, CA, 2013).

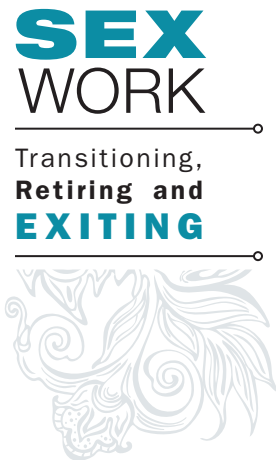
118 Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.

119 Louise Sandwith, 'Score, smoke, back on the beat': An exploration of the impact of homelessness on exiting street sex work in Manchester (London, UK: The Griffin Society, 2011).

120 Kootstra, op.cit.

121 Andrea N. Cimino, "A Predictive Theory of Intentions to Exit Street-Level Prostitution," *Violence Against Women* 18, no. 10 (2012): 1235–1252.

take all three into account.¹²² The model also shows that sex workers will move between five stages: vulnerability (which allows for entry into sex work), chaos resulting from it, stabilization, moving on, and post-exit.¹²³ The authors point out that the process of exiting is not linear and transitioning takes a long time, which means that holistic, harm reduction, and multi-agency approaches are key.¹²⁴ Homelessness and lack of access to housing is touched upon in this model suggesting that basic needs must be met before individuals are able to think about and successfully manage changing their lives.¹²⁵ While this model does acknowledge the relationship between structural, social, and individual factors, it also uses clinical language that may further pathologize sex workers.



6. Sanders (2007)

Sanders¹²⁶ created a typology of transitions based on four types: reactionary, gradual planning, natural progression, and yo-yoing. She further identified specific triggers for outdoor workers and indoor workers according to each transition type. Reactionary exits were in direct response a significant life-changing experience (whether positive or negative, and may include death, rape, pregnancy, etc.) and often did not appear to be as permanent as other types of transitions.¹²⁷ Sanders identified violence, ill health, imprisonment, and child removal, as triggers for outdoor workers in terms of reactionary exits, while indoor workers may face violence, enter a new relationship, or be discovered as a sex worker, to facilitate a reactionary exit.¹²⁸ Gradual planning is the second transition typology and focuses on sex workers using their own agency to seek out services offered by agencies, including but not limited to, drug and alcohol services; this type of transition usually limited the amount of time involved in sex work or the number of clients that the worker saw.¹²⁹ The typology indicates that the outdoor sex workers were usually triggered to engage in this type of transition by way of rehousing, welfare support, engagement with therapeutic professionals, while indoor worker were triggered by a timed transition while developing alternative career paths.¹³⁰ The third type of transition is natural progression and takes into account the experiences of sex workers who may have had enough of the lifestyle associated with sex work, and/or sex workers who may be getting older and want to retire.¹³¹ Desire for a new lifestyle free of drug use and violence was identified as the trigger for outdoor workers, whereas age and disillusionment with the working conditions (lack of regulation) triggered indoor workers more.¹³² Finally, many sex workers fall into the yo-yoing pattern of transition which denotes movement in and out of sex work, perhaps due to lack of strong and workable transitioning plan.¹³³ Among outdoor workers, failed attempts at curbing drug use or being fined by the courts increase chances of yo-yoing, while for an indoor worker population, unplanned exit was a major trigger to yo-yoing.¹³⁴ This model addresses the reasons for exit, which

Sanders created a typology of transitions based on four types: reactionary, gradual planning, natural progression, and yo-yoing.

122 Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.

123 Hannington et al, op.cit.

124 Ibid.

125 Sandwith, op.cit.

126 Teela Sanders, "Becoming an Ex-Sex Worker: Making Transitions out of a Deviant Career," *Feminist Criminology* 2, no. 1 (2007): 74–95.

127 Teela Sanders cited in Baker et al, op.cit.

128 Sanders, op.cit.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 Baker et al, op.cit.

132 Sanders cited in Hannington et al, op.cit.

133 Sandwith, op.cit.

134 Sanders cited in Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.

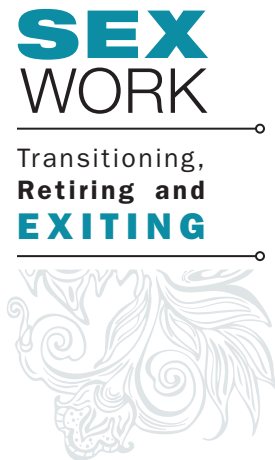
can be an important component in terms of assessing motivation and fostering transitions out. However, it does not incorporate the process which takes place before any event pressures the individual to exit, as does the Cycle of Change model, for example.

7. Westerlik (2009)

A rarely cited transitioning typology was developed by Westerlik, who focused on knowledge translation from sex work to square jobs. Westerlik identified three transitioning strategies: the first being “autonomous,” i.e., sex workers transferred their sex work experience to aid them in developing a new career path; the second was called “instrumental,” whereby sex workers used knowledge from both square jobs and sex work; lastly, the “ambivalent” group had a harder time transferring knowledge from sex work to square lives.¹³⁵ This typology concerns itself with stigma, whereby the first group acknowledged and worked through the stigma, the second group avoided it, and the last yielded to it.¹³⁶ Although this is not a model of transitioning out per se, it is included to provide insight into the fact that stigma and how sex workers are able to approach it plays a huge part in whether or not, and how successfully, sex workers are able to transition out. It is vital to mention here that this is not an attempt to place the responsibility on the sex workers themselves, rather, to understand various styles of approaching one of the biggest and most insidious factors associated with sex work (and exiting). Further, understanding intersectionality when one is applying this typology is key.

8. Baker, Dalla, and Williamson (2010)

The most recent model of transition is the Integrative Model of Exiting by Baker and colleagues who built upon the Stages of Change model introduced by Prochaska and colleagues. It contains six stages: immersion in the sex work lifestyle, awareness of a need to change behaviour, deliberate planning to exit, initial exit which may be followed by re-entry, and final exit.¹³⁷ The final exit describes a total change of identity and social networks.¹³⁸ Baker¹³⁹ and colleagues liken their immersion stage to the pre-contemplative stage within the Stages of Change model. The second stage is split into two, visceral and conscious, whereby the sex worker feels that things aren't the same anymore and then realizes the need to curb reliance on sex work, respectively; this stage is comparative to Prochaska et al's contemplation stage. The deliberate planning stage (akin to preparation stage within Stages of Change) is where sex workers take stock of resources available to them, and is characterised by information gathering. Once the workers decide to access services and begin transitioning out of sex work, should they be successful, this stage could be comparable to the maintenance stage within the Stages of Change. On the other hand, (most often) re-entry does take place and the individual may cycle through the stages again until he or she reaches the final stage, dubbed “final exit.” This model is helpful in that it does acknowledge the reality that re-entry takes places several times. Furthermore, it is specifically tailored to sex workers wanting to exit while being founded upon a time-tested model of behaviour change. While this model is promising, it may need to be built upon and evaluated within sex work exiting environments and by sex workers themselves to become as readily and widely applicable as the Stages of Change model (within parameters and context of sex work, of course).¹⁴⁰



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135 Bowen, op.cit.

136 Ibid.

137 Baker et al cited in Kootstra, op.cit.

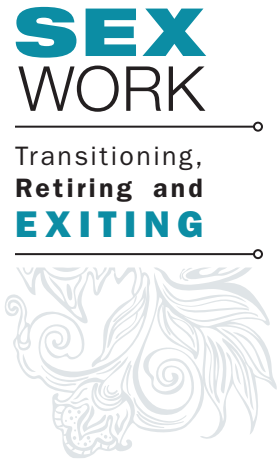
138 Cimino, op.cit.

139 Baker et al, op.cit.

140 Ibid.

In conclusion, a variety of typologies and transitioning models exist, and many offer a solid framework to use within agencies that support transitioning. The role of sex worker organizations in supporting transition out of sex work cannot be understated. Further, considering that alternate employment is one of the major factors that ensure an easier transition, sex workers who wish to exit could and should be employed at these supporting agencies.¹⁴¹

Some limitations were discussed above. Another limitation is that concepts such as relapse, yo-yoing, or re-entry fail to address that some people choose to keep regular clients; living in what Bowen has termed “duality,”¹⁴² or perhaps engage in both sex work and in a straight job as part of their transitioning strategy, or “sexiting.”¹⁴³ Bowen further reminds us that a return to engage in occasional or even part-time sex work does not necessarily mean falling victim to structural forces; rather, it could be the exact opposite—a way to resist structural factors of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.¹⁴⁴



The role of sex worker organizations in supporting transition out of sex work cannot be understated. Further, considering that alternate employment is one of the major factors that ensure an easier transition, sex workers who wish to exit could and should be employed at these supporting agencies.

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141 Bowen, op.cit.

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

“It is only when the concerns of the women who face the harshest levels of discrimination are addressed that the women’s movement will remain true to its principles of empowerment and equality for all women.”

SUNERA THOBANI

SEX WORK

Transitioning,
Retiring and
EXITING



B. SERVICES REQUIRED

Through an analysis of numerous sex work research studies, it was clear that to promote transitioning out of sex work, access to services is key. This section will attempt to address the services that sex workers have identified as needs, in terms of both human rights and to facilitate their ability to lessen their reliance on sex work and increase agency and choice. It is important to remember that many barriers exist to transitioning out of sex work. For some of the most marginalized sex workers, it is often lack of safe/appropriate housing, substance use/misuse (and other mental health concerns), and inability to access services.¹⁴⁵ While all three are experienced most often by those in the survival sex industry, the last point applies to indoor workers as well. Further, while indoor workers are normally not homeless, the precarious legal nature of sex work makes them at risk for homelessness should their job come to the attention of the landlord, and/or police, for example. All of these key provisions of transitioning support, along with several others that were identified by sex workers of varying socio-material classes, will be discussed below. It is important to remember that only holistic provision of services can aid individuals in transitioning and that exiting programs should be provided as part of larger delivery of services, including harm reduction services.¹⁴⁶ Further, single focus on exiting can deter sex workers from engaging in services.¹⁴⁷ Provision of sex work transitioning programming while supporting those who still want to engage in sex work is rooted in the concept of social justice, whereby one group should not benefit at the expense of others, and must be incorporated as part of agencies’ mandates.

It is important to remember that only holistic provision of services can aid individuals in transitioning and that exiting programs should be provided as part of larger delivery of services, including harm reduction services.

a. Housing

As mentioned previously, those sex workers who are precariously housed, homeless, or at risk of homelessness, are some of the most marginalized within the industry. It is with this in mind that this section begins with housing. Housing is a basic human right and a well cited social determinant of health; however, the rates of homelessness in Vancouver (as well as in Canada in general) contradict the image Vancouver and Canada enjoy internationally of a well-developed, industrialized nation with a high quality of life.

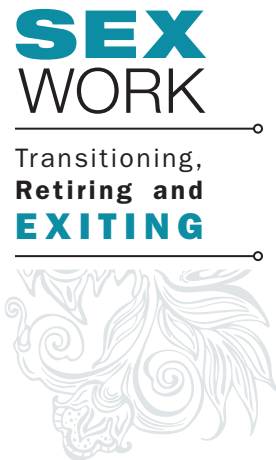
145 Juhu Thukral and Melissa Ditmore, *Revolving Door: An Analysis of Street-Based Prostitution in New York City* (New York, NY: Sex Workers Project for the Urban Justice Center, 2003); and UK Network of Sex Work Projects. UKNSWP Submission to: “Home office review of local effective practice” (Manchester, UK: UKNSWP, 2011); and Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; and Kootstra, op.cit.

146 Linda Cusick et al., “‘Exiting’ Drug Use and Sexwork: Career Paths, Interventions and Government Strategy Targets,” *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* 18, no. 2 (2011): 145–156.

147 UKNSWP, op.cit.

Sex workers call on the government to increase access to safe, affordable, and stable housing.¹⁴⁸ Good practice guidelines state that sex workers as a population must be recognized as a priority group in the local homelessness/housing strategy.¹⁴⁹ The City of Vancouver's Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Protecting Vulnerable Adults & Neighborhoods Affected by Sex Work: A Comprehensive Approach and Action Plan¹⁵⁰ states that housing services for homeless, youth, sex workers, and those leaving the industry must be improved in both quality and quantity; further, it dictates that a Housing and Homelessness Strategy must focus on improving not only the quality of services but coordination between housing providers.

Literature focusing on transitioning point to the fact that exiting sex work is facilitated once the individual has safe and supportive accommodation.¹⁵¹ Some specific models are also outlined in the literature, one of which being the Housing First model,¹⁵² which would work well for homeless or sex workers at risk for homelessness and is already being employed in Vancouver. Another model, which is not necessarily exclusive of Housing First, which was suggested by Thukral and Ditmore is scattered-site housing, whereby rental units throughout the city are found and made available, rather than focusing on one large building.¹⁵³ Improving already existing services, however, is also needed. Redeveloping single room occupancy (SRO) hotels to ensure safe, affordable, and supported housing for sex workers is another model that can augment the above suggestions.¹⁵⁴ Specialized housing for sex workers (both in the form of shelter and transitional housing) which is 24-hour staffed, low-barrier, free of arbitrary and exclusionary policies, and supports transitioning along with provision of other essential services, such as harm reduction, permanent housing support, substance use support, and case-management, is recommended throughout the reports.¹⁵⁵ It is essential that such services also be open to male and transgender sex workers.¹⁵⁶ Thukral and Ditmore¹⁵⁷ say that the participants in their study felt there should be a shelter whose sole purpose is to serve transgender people, while McIntyre¹⁵⁸ states that the majority of the participants in her study reported that they felt they would be able to abstain from engaging in sex work if able to access a safe residential space for male sex workers that would approach their unique needs through a male lens (which is often missing in literature on sex work). Finally, indoor sex workers are often rendered invisible when

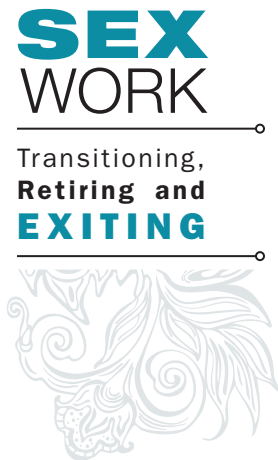


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- 148 Celia Benoit and Alison Millar, *Dispelling Myths and Understanding Realities: Working Conditions, Health Status, and Exiting Experiences of Sex Workers* (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, 2001); and Jo Cunningham, *Street Sex Workers in Preston: An Evidence-based Study* (Preston, UK: Foxton Center Publication, 2011). <http://www.thefoxtoncentre.co.uk/content/wpcontent/uploads/2013/06/StreetlinkStudy.pdf>; and Norma Neal et al., *Street based sex workers needs assessment survey: Toronto, Barrie & Oshawa* (Toronto, ON: Street Health, Regent Park Community Health Center, 2014); and Sandwith, op.cit.
- 149 Hannington et al, op.cit.
- 150 City of Vancouver, *Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Protecting Vulnerable Adults & Neighbourhoods Affected by Sex Work: A Comprehensive Approach and Action Plan* (Vancouver, BC: City of Vancouver, 2011). <http://livingincommunity.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2011/09/Preventing-Sexual-Exploitation-and-Protecting-Vulnerable-Adults-.pdf>.
- 151 Julie Bindel et al., *Breaking down the barriers: A study of how women exit prostitution*, Executive Summary (London, UK: Eaves & London South Bank University, 2012); and Sue McIntyre, *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men - Western Canadian Edition* (2009). <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/child-sexual-exploitation-under-the-radar-western-canada.pdf>; and Gibson and Goldstein, op.cit.; and Thukral and Ditmore, op.cit.; and UKNSWP, op.cit.; and Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.
- 152 Thukral and Ditmore, op.cit.
- 153 Ibid.
- 154 Living in Community Steering Committee, *Living in Community: 2014 Action Plan Update*, 2014.
- 155 Sandwith, op.cit.; Cunningham op.cit.; Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; City of Vancouver, op.cit.; Hannington et al, op.cit.; Gibson and Goldstein, op.cit.; Neal et al, op.cit.
- 156 Living in Community, op.cit.
- 157 Thukral and Ditmore, op.cit.
- 158 McIntyre, op.cit.

it comes to provision of housing, due to the belief that some may experience discrimination when attempting to secure accommodation, or may be at risk for losing their housing due to engagement in the sex industry. Of particular concern are migrant sex workers, who as newcomers to the country experience additional barriers to securing housing (such as lack of knowledge about housing in Canada, availability and suitability of housing, lack of money and/or credit, among others).¹⁵⁹

b. Substance Use

Because some sex workers engage in sex work to fund their (and sometimes their partner's) substance use, access to appropriate, non-judgemental, and supportive substance use services is essential in being able to lessen their reliance on sex work. Literature suggests that in addition to housing, access to substance use services for sex workers is vital.¹⁶⁰ A continuum of services is key, starting with harm reduction services, such as needle exchange, to long-term residential recovery support, provided in an individually tailored way.¹⁶¹ The need to fast track services also cannot be understated, as sex workers who use substances and want to curb their reliance on both sex work and substances are a high priority group.¹⁶² Flexibility in terms of service provision was also identified as being highly important; this means that outpatient or drop-in drug services must be open late hours, not punish clients for continued use or inability to adhere to strict and inflexible rules like attendance requirements or discharge for missed appointments.¹⁶³ Another key component of working with sex workers who use substances is to ensure that their partners can access drug services at the same time.¹⁶⁴ Vancouver studies have identified that detox beds that are specifically designed to meet the needs of sex workers are essential;¹⁶⁵ in addition, specialized detox beds and rehabilitation facilities that cater to young men exiting the industry are also necessary.¹⁶⁶ *Living in Community*¹⁶⁷ calls for the creation and expansion of harm reduction services for sex workers, along with provision of a continuum of substance use withdrawal management services (such as counselling, detox, and residential services). Cunningham writes that having a doctor who is able to prescribe methadone based at organizations currently serving sex workers would also be helpful, as some sex workers are unable or unwilling to engage in more formal substance use service environments.¹⁶⁸ Hannington and colleagues expand on the idea by showing that having qualified substance use specialists at sex work agencies could facilitate immediate assessments and fast-track access to services.¹⁶⁹



Literature suggests that in addition to housing, access to substance use services for sex workers is vital.

159 Hieu Van Ngo, *Cultural Competence: a Guide for Organization Change* (Calgary, AB: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008).

160 Cunningham, op.cit.; and Neal et al, op.cit.; and Cusick cited in Sandwith, op.cit.

161 AVA and DrugScope, *The Challenge of Change – Improving Services for Women Involved in Prostitution and Substance Use* (London, UK: AVA, DrugScope, 2013).

162 Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; and Cunningham, op.cit.; and Sandwith op.cit.

163 Cunningham op.cit.; and UKNSWP op.cit.; and AVA and DrugScope; and Sophie Pinkham and Kasia Malinowska-Sempruch, *Women, Harm Reduction and HIV* (New York, NY: International Harm Reduction Development Program of the Open Society Institute, 2007).

164 European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers (TAMPEP), *Institutional Strengthening and Support for HIV Prevention Activities (3): Skills, Training and Good Practice Tools* (Amsterdam, NED: TAMPEP International Foundation, 2007).; and European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers (TAMPEP), *Work Safe in Sex Work: A European Manual on Good Practices in Work with and for Sex Workers* (Amsterdam, NED: TAMPEP International Foundation, 2009).

165 Gibson and Goldstein, op.cit.

166 McIntyre, op.cit.

167 *Living in Community Steering Committee*, op.cit.

168 Cunningham, op.cit.

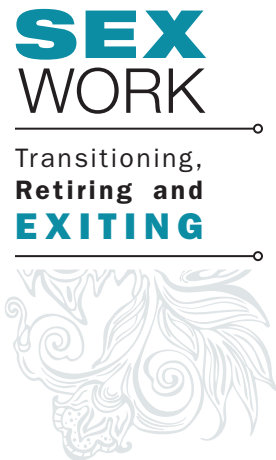
169 Hannington et al, op.cit.

c. Mental Health

The aforementioned professional could also conduct psychiatric assessments and facilitate access to mental health services should the need be identified.¹⁷⁰ While mental health concerns may go hand in hand with substance use, some sex workers require only mental health support. Hannington and colleagues support this by stating that delivering counselling within sex work agencies, particularly on a drop-in basis, would allow sex workers to access this service without normally associated barriers (inflexible rules and inappropriate times, for example) and this can facilitate greater access to services outside the sex work agency by way of pre-established formal care pathways (treatment team, inpatient, outpatient, etc.) depending on individual needs.¹⁷¹ Bindel and colleagues suggest that specialist support must be provided to women who have experienced trauma and/or have been victims of violence, and call for consideration of funding of a specialized mental health care provision service for sex workers.¹⁷² While access to formal mental health services is essential, sex workers may often face other issues that require professional attendance (by way of counselling, for example) without the need for psychiatric involvement; some of these issues include low self-esteem, feelings of guilt, identity formation/renegotiation, as well as dealing with life changes (to name a few).

d. Other Health

Timely access to health services is also essential, particularly when it comes to outdoor sex workers, who are at risk for a variety of health problems and face a disproportionate number of barriers in terms of access.¹⁷³ A reorientation of services is in order, one that allows for the marriage of the social and the clinical, in order to engage all community members and ensure optimal and healthy lives. This can only be achieved through health service providers focusing on clients as individuals within their communities, rather than treating symptoms alone or targeting clients without regard for their broader social networks.¹⁷⁴ Because this is difficult to achieve at one geographical location or by one agency alone, there must be increased partnerships and collaboration along with improved modes of referral, including services such as substance use, mental health, social services, primary care, sexual health and more.¹⁷⁵ Other reports further this by suggesting that government services along with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must work beyond (and potentially through) ideological differences in an attempt to create a culture of non-judgemental, open, transparent health services for sex workers.¹⁷⁶ Essential services include access to a general practitioner (GP) along with primary care by way of nurses (drop-in and outreach).¹⁷⁷ It cannot be stressed enough that the provision of services must be non-judgemental and non-discriminatory, as sex workers face an inordinate amount of stigma, particularly those belonging to other social positions of marginality.¹⁷⁸ For example, newcomers to Canada report a wide assortment of barriers when attempting to access



170 Cunningham, op.cit.

171 Hannington et al, op.cit.

172 Bindel et al, op.cit.

173 Neal et al, op.cit.

174 UN Division for the Advancement of Women, Report to the Division for the Advancement of Women, Best Practices Policy Project (New York, NY: UNDAW, 2005).

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/ngocontribute/BEST%20PRACTICES%20POLICY%20PROJECT.pdf>.

175 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime HIV/AIDS Program, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care for Female Injecting Drug Users (Vienna, Austria: UNODC HIV/AIDS Unit, 2006); and van Beelan et al. (eds) Research for Sex Work (Amsterdam, NED: Department of Health and Culture, Vrije Universiteit Medical Center, 1998).

176 TAMPEP, op.cit.

177 Hannington et al, op.cit.

178 Neal et al op.cit.; Chettiar et al, op.cit.

health care services.¹⁷⁹ Health is an important factor in terms of being able to transition out of sex work; given our abysmal disability support rates and lack of appropriate, well-delivered services, sex workers may remain stuck in the industry even if they wish to move on.

e. Education and Employment

Access to education and employment by sex workers is limited for a variety of reasons. While stigma is a big one, some sex workers reported having criminal convictions that prevented them from transitioning out was an issue, as well as lack of knowledge surrounding resumé preparation and interview skills, and gaps in resumé while engaging in sex work.¹⁸⁰ Literature suggests that sex work agencies providing transitioning support could develop service agreements or contracts with employment training agencies and adult learning organizations to develop collaborative relationships and increase access.¹⁸¹ Partnerships with local businesses could also be established to provide training and support to those who are trying to exit sex work.¹⁸² Further, the City should engage these individuals in its supported employment program, as outlined in its action plan for vulnerable adults.¹⁸³ Resources must be allocated towards these endeavours, as they are not a short-term project, and should be specifically targeted at low-income and communities of colour.¹⁸⁴ Of particular importance are immigrant and migrant communities, as they experience significant difficulties within the education system. While some immigrants possess university degrees (and yet are still over represented in service/sales occupations), many report inability to access educational opportunities (whether higher education or language training), and statistics show that many students who are migrant/immigrant never complete high school education.¹⁸⁵ Immigrants/migrants also experience much lower employment AND lower pay rates than their Canadian born counterparts (despite being statistically more educated, as mentioned above) and report high levels of discrimination when seeking employment.¹⁸⁶ Migrant youth are of particular concern, as they not only struggle with lack of educational opportunities, but are also significantly underemployed and underpaid when compared to Canadian born youths.¹⁸⁷ Further, those migrants who belong to a sexual and/or gender minority face lower pay rates, and unfair treatment by employers and the state alike.¹⁸⁸ Statistics suggest that lack of opportunities for newcomers may be costing the Canadian economy \$4.1 to \$5.9 billion each year, and that should foreign-born workers enjoy the same opportunities as Canadian-born workers, Canada would see an increase in around \$13 billion in personal income, and increase the labour force by 400,000 workers.¹⁸⁹



Literature suggests that sex work agencies providing transitioning support could develop service agreements or contracts with employment training agencies and adult learning organizations to develop collaborative relationships and increase access.

179 Hieu Van Ngo, op.cit.

180 Juhu Thukral and Melissa Ditmore, *Behind Closed Doors: An Analysis of Indoor Work in New York City* (New York, NY: Sex Workers Project for the Urban Justice Center, 2005).; Gibson and Goldstein, op.cit.

181 Hannington et al, op.cit.; Bindel et al, op.cit.; Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.

182 Living in Community Steering Committee, op.cit.

183 City of Vancouver, op.cit.

184 Best Practices Policy Project, op.cit.

185 Hieu Van Ngo, op.cit.

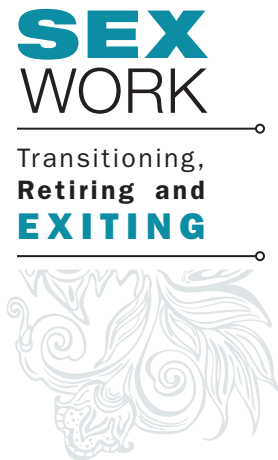
186 Hieu Van Ngo, op.cit.

187 Ibid.

188 Sonia Correa, Rafael de la Dehesa and Richard Parker, *Sexuality and Politics: Regional Dialogues from the Global South* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Sexuality Policy Watch Project [ABIA – Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association], 2014).

189 Hieu Van Ngo, op.cit.

Research suggests some considerations to keep in mind when attempting to circumvent some of the aforementioned barriers, such as offering courses and employment opportunities later in the day and providing rewards in shorter time frames, likening sex work hours and ability to make cash (i.e., tips) to jobs in the hospitality industry.¹⁹⁰ Some examples of such endeavours include *Autres Regards* in France, which started an accredited program for peer educators and sex workers whereby they received formal qualifications that were recognized externally, and *Fenarete* in several European countries, which also ran an accredited training program to facilitate employment of peer educators in social and health care environment.¹⁹¹ Another example is the *Foxton Centre* charity shop which provided supported employment to women who wanted to transition out of the industry, in a compassionate environment where it was recognized that women may lead chaotic lives and not penalizing them for such.¹⁹²



f. Financial

While it cannot be stressed enough that current welfare rates do not provide enough money for individuals to lead healthy lives, some may not even have access to that safety net and thus an advocate (peer) who is able to support individuals in accessing financial assistance is key.¹⁹³ Additionally, the current minimum wage also hinders individuals' ability to sustain healthy and stable lives, thus increasing their reliance on sex work as a source of income. Further, individuals involved in sex work who want to leave the industry may have debts or financial difficulties; thus, incorporating financial advice in the delivery of transitioning programs is essential, for example, having debt counsellors deliver workshops at sex work agencies or expanding to a financial management course delivered over a period of time.¹⁹⁴

g. Legal

Due to the criminalized nature of sex work, some sex workers face legal barriers to transitioning out of the industry. Provision of anonymous legal advice is essential.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, any criminal records relating to sex work laws must be expunged for any possibility of successful exiting to take place.¹⁹⁶ The waiting time for processing criminal pardons (or full erasures/seals of records) must be reduced along with having the fees for this process waived in order to facilitate easier exit.¹⁹⁷

Provision of anonymous legal advice is essential.
Furthermore, any criminal records relating to sex work laws must be
expunged for any possibility of successful exiting to take place.

190 Saphira, op.cit.

191 TAMPEP, op.cit.

192 Cunningham, op.cit.

193 Hannington et al, op.cit.

194 Ibid.; and Bindel et al, op.cit.

195 Deborah Brock et al., "Migrant Sex Work: A Roundtable Analysis," *Canadian Women Studies* 20, no. 2 (2000): 84–91.

196 Best Practice Policy Project, op.cit.; and Bindel et al, op.cit.; and UN Division for the Advancement of Women, op.cit.

197 City of Vancouver, op.cit.

“We want the feminist movement to stop punishing us for our strengths, stop rewarding us for our pain, stop gaining privilege on the back of our needs, and to listen when we speak. We will continue to speak out about our rights, you need to hear us. If you deny our experience, you deny our existence. We already organize for ourselves.”

ELENA JEFFREYS

SEX WORK

Transitioning,
Retiring and
EXITING



C. BEST PRACTICE APPROACHES

While the above section focused more on which services are needed, this section will attempt to illuminate the process(es) and approaches to delivering services to sex workers, as outlined in best practice reports and sex worker led research. One important consideration is that we need to be able to move away from individualized understandings of sex work and begin to understand it within larger systems, keeping in mind structural factors and intersectionality.¹⁹⁸ However, that being said, the services themselves must be individually tailored to fit specific needs of the client, and be entirely voluntary.¹⁹⁹ Further, transitioning programs must be delivered within a coherent and holistic approach that also employs prevention of harm and harm reduction.²⁰⁰ Specific projects should be long-term in nature, inclusive, holistic, and rooted in concepts of social justice and empowerment.²⁰¹ Mayhew and Mossman outline some specific best practice principles to keep in mind when delivering transitioning programs, including but not limited to: outreach based, holistic, voluntary, key-worker model, public education, patient and non-judgemental.²⁰² Some of these and others as identified in research are outlined below.

a. Multi-agency partnerships

Collaborating between agencies (both NGOs and governmental) was identified as the number one key approach to offering transitioning options to sex workers. While collaboration between sex work agencies is considered best practice, it must be expanded further to create formal (i.e., written in policy) and long-term ties, referral systems, low-threshold access, and umbrella-structure that allow for coordinated and integrated responses with other NGOs and social service agencies.²⁰³ Kootstra outlines specific needs of a multi-disciplinary approach which include services that provide education and vocational training, social support and activities, practical support (finance and housing for example), employment training, mental health and other health services.²⁰⁴ Collaborating with governmental services is also key in order to deliver comprehensive services.²⁰⁵ Special considerations include ensuring that all populations are served well, for example, creating inter-agency partnerships that respond to needs of male sex workers through a male sex work liaison officer

198 Cunningham, op.cit.

199 Hannington et al, op.cit.

200 Ibid.

201 POWER, op.cit.

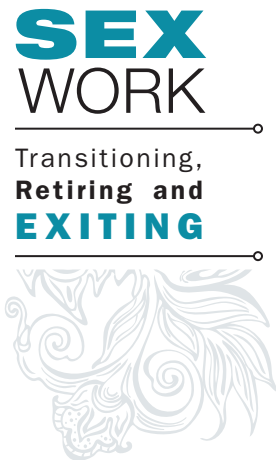
202 Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.

203 Melissa H. Dittmore, When Sex Work and Drug Use Overlap: Considerations for Advocacy and Practice, Report. (London, UK: Harm Reduction International, 2013); and TAMPEP, op.cit.; and Hannington et al, op.cit.; and Bindel et al, op.cit.; and Sandwith, op.cit.; and Kootstra, op.cit.; and UN Division for the Advancement of Women, op.cit.; and Pinkham and Malinowska-Sempruch, op.cit.; and UKNSWP, op.cit.; and Cunningham, op.cit.

204 Kootstra, op.cit.

205 World Health Organization, UN Population Fund, Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, Global Network of Sex Work Projects, and the World Bank, Implementing comprehensive HIV/STI programs with sex workers: Practical approaches from collaborative interventions (Geneva, CH: WHO, 2013); and TAMPEP, op.cit.

or coordinator is recommended.²⁰⁶ Further, partnerships with First Nations organizations and re-shifting some leadership roles to those agencies will allow for services to be based on First Nations knowledge and experience.²⁰⁷ It is important to note that because of stigma and discrimination, this step will be difficult and require resources and time. Additionally, it must be ensured that these efforts are effective; thus, constant feedback and evaluation are key.²⁰⁸ Lastly, while these collaborative multi-agency partnerships are the gold standard for facilitating transitions out of sex work, it is essential to maintain balance in that the needs of individuals who choose to remain in sex work are not ignored or detracted from.²⁰⁹



b. Holistic interventions

A multi-disciplinary approach ties in well with the mandate of providing holistic services which recognize (and embrace) the variety of identities and needs among sex workers. Much of the literature points to the fact that sex workers identified holistic support as a key component of service provision (whether through case management, person-centred approach, or other innovative approaches) and is well supported by best practice guides.²¹⁰ Holistic provision of services takes into account the myriad various issues that individuals may be facing, and that only by addressing all of them can long-lasting change begin to take place. For example, focusing on only substance use while ignoring employment desires, or immigration concerns, may not evoke long-term change. Holistic interventions are akin to the concept of intersectionality, as they acknowledge that we live complicated and intricate lives where all of our experiences, concerns, desires, needs, wants, limitations, abilities, passions, and worries interact with and within each other. Addressing the individual along with the social conditions they find themselves in is also key, and should be done as a gold standard when providing services. Finally, providing services in a holistic manner does not mean that it must be done at one location or by one agency. Multi-agency approach is essential here, and the establishment of long-term collaborative and trusting relationships is encouraged.

c. Sex worker led

Service provision, whether or not focused on transitioning or even solely on sex workers, must be shaped by needs and concerns identified by sex workers themselves.²¹¹ When agencies are focused solely on delivery of services to sex workers, non-tokenizing involvement of sex workers in all stages of programming (planning, development, delivery, evaluation) is essential.²¹² This can be achieved through policies which guarantee a percentage of experiential board and staff members.²¹³ Because of the fact that services must be holistic in nature and that sex workers live with and within a

206 Tara Grimes and Bernice Donoghue, "Such a Taboo...": An Analysis of Service Need and Service Provision for Males in Prostitution in the Eastern Region (Ireland: Irish Network Male Prostitution (INMP) & East Coast Area Health Board, 2001).

207 POWER, op.cit.

208 Indoors Project, *INDOORS: Support and Empowerment of Female Sex Workers and Trafficked Women Working in Hidden Places*, ed. L. Favet (Marseille, France: Autres Regards, 2008).

209 TAMPEP, op.cit.

210 Louise Clark, *Street Sex Workers' Experiences of Accessing Health Services*. Report for the Department of Health (London, UK: The Griffins Society, 2008).; and William Spice, "Management of Sex Workers and other High-Risk Groups," *Occupational Medicine* 27 (2007): 322–328.; and UKNSWP, op.cit.; and Neal et al, op.cit.; and Thukral and Ditmore, op.cit.; and Kootstra, op.cit.; and Indoors Project, op.cit.; and Lousley, op.cit.; and Saphira, op.cit.; and Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; and Cimino, op.cit.; and Mensah and Bruckert in POWER, op.cit.

211 Spice, op.cit.; UKNSWP, op.cit.; Kootstra, op.cit.; WHO, op.cit.; McIntyre, op.cit.; POWER, op.cit.

212 UKNSWP, op.cit.; Bowen, op.cit.; WHO, op.cit.; TAMPEP, op.cit.

213 Raven R. Bowen, *Pathways: Real Options for Women to Reduce Reliance on Survival Sex*, (Vancouver, BC: Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education [PACE] Society, 2003).

myriad of other identities and positions of marginality, care must be paid to also include sex workers with lived experience of mental illness and substance use, male and transgender sex workers, First Nations, and other racialized workers, as well. Academics remind us that meaningful involvement of individuals who use(d) substances in leadership roles is essential when providing services to substance users,²¹⁴ yet substance use often remains a negative rather than a positive criterion when hiring employees for such roles. It is important to remember that one does not need to be “rehabilitated” to provide service and leadership in agencies which work with sex workers, substance users, or individuals living with a mental illness; while having experiential peer support from those that have left the industry is helpful, having exited must not be a criteria for hiring of staff (more on peer support in the next section). It must be noted that hiring staff based solely on involvement in sex work can result in a tokenized position, which ultimately yields detrimental results for both the agency as well as the worker. Ensuring that the worker has effective skills in terms of social service provision, good understanding of and experience in the work the agency is involved in, as well as aligned values and goals, will allow for meaningful participation and a mutually beneficial working relationship. Hiring experiential staff, as evidenced above, is only one step in ensuring meaningful sex worker involvement. Kootstra writes that sex work organizations must be expanded in order to collectively advocate for sex worker rights (including the right to exit sex work and the right to engage in it).²¹⁵ Sex worker organizations must be respected as partners by not only other NGOs but by larger systems of power, such as governmental social and health services and law enforcement.²¹⁶ To ensure that all of these processes are appropriate and do not reinforce and perpetuate the marginal positions many sex workers find themselves in, regular evaluation (by sex workers) must be done.²¹⁷

SEX WORK

Transitioning,
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Kootstra writes that sex work organizations must be expanded in order to collectively advocate for sex worker rights...

d. Peer support

The above section focused on ensuring that interventions are sex worker led, while this section attempts to highlight the findings from research that point out that service must also be delivered by peers for it to be successful. Direct support from peer workers who have lived experience with sex work and thus know firsthand some of the issues many sex workers face was identified by best practice reports and sex worker led research as a gold standard.²¹⁸ For those sex workers who may be migrant, immigrant, or First Nations, a cultural mediator may be helpful to alleviate any discord in values.²¹⁹ Pinkham and Malinowska-Sempruch remind us that employing staff members who reflect client backgrounds (racial/national/sexual identity, etc.) is key.

e. Outreach basis

Outreach (including netreach) is key in providing services to sex workers, including transition support. Outreach removes a lot of the barriers sex workers face in terms of access to services, as it flexible and takes the services directly to the client. Much has been written on the effectiveness

214 Pinkham and Malinowska-Sempruch, op.cit.

215 Kootstra, op.cit.

216 WHO, op.cit.

217 Indoor Project, op.cit.

218 Neal et al, op.cit.; and Kootstra op.cit.; and Ditmore op.cit.; and Thukral and Ditmore op.cit.; and McIntyre op.cit.; and Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; and Woodman cited in Law, op.cit.; and TAMPEP, op.cit.

219 European Network for HIV/STD Prevention in Prostitution (EUROPAP/TAMPEP), HUSTLING FOR HEALTH: Developing Services for Sex Workers in Europe, EUROPAP (London, UK: Dept. of Epidemiology and Public Health, Imperial College School of Medicine, 1998).

of outreach to reach populations that are not served well by traditional models, particularly when it comes to sex workers, and is considered to be the best practice across both sex worker specific services as well as all other social service delivery models.²²⁰

Netreach is of particular importance due to the fact that most of the sex industry is currently advertised and negotiated online, whereby outdoor work, massage parlours, and escort services (to name a few) are being replaced with virtual communities by way of chat rooms, social networking sites, and dating sites/apps (to name a few).²²¹ Just as with traditional outreach methods, netreach aims to reach those populations that do not access services, or are considered “hard-to-reach,” and is based on the ideology of meeting the clients where they are (physically and behaviourally).²²² Additionally, just as with traditional outreach, netreach requires formation of a trusting relationship between staff and clients.²²³ Netreach goals are mostly synonymous with those of traditional outreach in that they aim to increase access to services (counselling, health care, and other community services, for example), facilitate information sharing, and encourage preventative strategies.²²⁴ Those programs that are tailored to specific populations may have more concrete goals, such as initiating relationships with hard to reach sex workers, reducing isolation by fostering trusting relationships, and improving integration into the larger community.²²⁵ Social isolation within immigrant and, even more so, migrant communities is well cited, and thus social support is essential.²²⁶ Some important things to keep in mind when considering provision of services via netreach include developing guidelines and trainings on how to conduct netreach ethically and responsibly and do so in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.²²⁷

f. Awareness raising

While outreach aims to address the fact that sex workers may not access (whether by choice or not) formal services, the need still remains to reduce barriers to access. One of the biggest barriers that is well-documented is stigma surrounding sex work (at times compounded by stigma around drug use, mental illness and other experiences of marginalization). Awareness training to service providers was identified as a strong need to increase uptake to services and thus promote ability of individuals to transition out of sex work. Training service providers (by sex workers) to ensure non-discriminatory, non-judgemental and sensitive attitudes to the experiences of sex workers is necessary for improved access to services.²²⁸ McIntyre adds that gender non-conformity education would also be an essential adjunct.²²⁹



220 Cherkosh et al., Good Practice Guidance Series- (2) Working with Sex Workers: Outreach. (Manchester, UK: UK Network of Sex Work Projects).; and UKNSWP, op.cit.; and Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; and Cunningham, op.cit.; and WHO, op.cit.; and Kootstra, op.cit.; and Thukral and Ditmore, op.cit.

221 Supporting Women's Alternatives Network (SWAN), Netreach - Online Outreach Program: Policy, Environmental Scan & Work Plan (2014).

222 National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD), National Guidelines for Internet-based STD/HIV Prevention – Outreach (2008).

223 Ibid.

224 Ibid.

225 SWAN, op.cit.

226 Correa, de la Dehesa and Parker, op.cit.

227 NCSD, op.cit.

228 Thukral and Ditmore, op.cit.; and TAMPEP, op.cit.; and WHO, op.cit.; and Lousley, op.cit.; and Cunningham, op.cit.; and Neal et al, op.cit.; and UKNSWP, op.cit.; and Clark, op.cit.

229 McIntyre, op.cit.

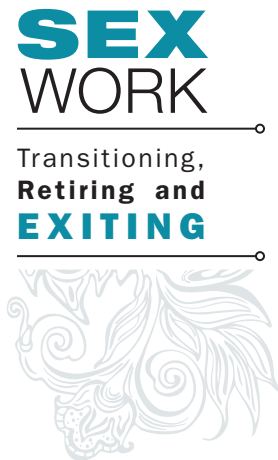
g. Practical considerations

Some of the barriers to access are more practical in nature and yet are major concerns in terms of sex workers' ability to get support in order to transition out of sex work. Some of the more common ones identified in the literature will be explored here. One of the most common barriers to access is opening hours; sex workers need services to be available based on the hours that they work (when appropriate, 24-hour services are key) and regular 9–5 opening hours serve as an added layer of inaccessibility.²³⁰ Further, rigid rules such as punitive measures for missed appointments, for example, further deter sex workers from accessing services and must be re-evaluated.²³¹ Location of services is also another consideration that may aid or hinder access.²³² If providing transitioning services, the location should ideally be accessible yet away from triggers.²³³

Another important consideration is provision of child care, in order to ensure programs are available and accessible by mothers, child care is highly important.²³⁴ Pinkham and Malinowska-Sempruch also remind us that we must ensure that residency status and financial status are not barriers to individuals' access to support services.²³⁵ One of the major gold standards in provision of services is ensuring confidentiality, and when appropriate, complete anonymity, as stigma and the criminalized nature of sex work often make it impossible for individuals to engage with services, should this not be promised and provided.

h. Examples of models

Various models to engage sex workers and enable them to transition out if they so wish exist across the globe. Some that could be tailored to the context of Vancouver are highlighted here. One 25 in Bristol, UK provides person-centred exit services with one-on-one case management to help women (their target is outdoor female sex workers) to transition out, by delivering drop-in training courses, substance services with fast-track assessments, and housing assistance.²³⁶ Another example is Adhodaya Samithi in Mysore, India, which started a restaurant staffed by sex workers, with profits supporting home care programmes for sex workers who are living with HIV.²³⁷ SHOP in the Netherlands provides outreach transition support which delivers career tests and arranges for housing and financial assistance, through one-on-one support.²³⁸ Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Programme in Nairobi, Kenya works to train sex workers as paralegals who then go on to educate other sex workers on their rights and provide them with legal advice.²³⁹ GENESIS in Leeds, UK offers a Support and Options worker who provides one-on-one intensive support to women in order to access training, education, as well as practical assistance along with drug and mental health services.²⁴⁰ Davida in Brazil created a sex worker fashion line called Daspu



Another important consideration is provision of child care, in order to ensure programs are available and accessible by mothers, child care is highly important.

230 UKNSWP, op.cit.; and POWER, op.cit.; and Neal et al, op.cit.; and Hannington et al, op.cit.; and Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; and TAMPEP op.cit.; and Thukral and Ditmore, op.cit.; and Lousley op.cit.

231 Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; and Lousley, op.cit.; and UKNSWP, op.cit.; and Hannington et al, op.cit.

232 Neal et al, op.cit.; and POWER, op.cit.; and TAMPEP, op.cit.

233 Kootstra, op.cit.; and McIntyre, op.cit.; and Lousley, op.cit.

234 Pinkham and Malinowska-Sempruch, op.cit.; and TAMPEP, op.cit.; and Neal et al, op.cit.

235 Pinkham and Malinowska-Sempruch, op.cit.

236 UKNSWP, op.cit.

237 WHO, op.cit.

238 Kootstra, op.cit.

239 WHO, op.cit.

240 UKNSWP, op.cit.

which is now part of fashion week in Rio and São Paulo.²⁴¹ It is vital to point out that Vancouver is already delivering top-notch services to sex workers as evidenced by the agency analysis above, yet funding is limited, and thus the ability to carry out services or provide additional programming is hindered. One example of a service which can be expanded to provide outreach exit support is the already established Mobile Access Project (MAP) Van by PACE and WISH, whereby a transitioning liaison can offer initial access to transitioning programs. Similar services could be provided by outreach (including netreach) programs delivered by SWAN and HUSTLE. Another example is provision of a rapid response service by a nurse and/or social worker to crisis instances that sex workers find themselves in, in order to provide primary care, harm reduction supplies, crisis counselling and psychiatric assessments, emergency assistance, advocacy, and transitioning supports by way of fast track to services. With cuts to the outreach nurse services, this can fill the gap both in terms of primary health care as well as transitioning support. Ultimately, any model introduced must be sex worker initiated, approved, and developed.

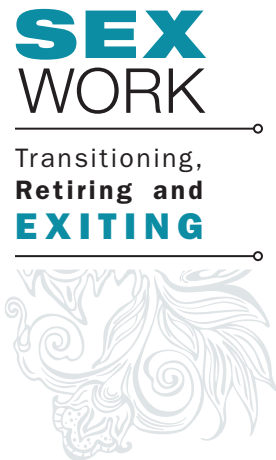
While it is undeniable that what is most important, starting from the larger sex work rights movement to the more targeted provision of transitioning support, is human capital, individual as well as collective. Furthermore, in our current socio-political climate of individualization, fiscal conservatism and neo-colonialism, funding and resources are essential. In fact, funding for transitioning opportunities has already been identified as part of the strategic direction of the City of Vancouver.²⁴² When it comes to best practice for funding exiting projects, the literature points to the need for ensuring that funding goes directly to sex worker organizations and communities, which can then choose to employ their own staff (including nurses, doctors, and social workers), and be able to direct the delivery and content of services in a manner that is appropriate for them.²⁴³ Furthermore, ongoing and long-term government funding has also been identified as an essential and requisite best practice component.²⁴⁴

i. Conclusion

While programs which aim to provide support to sex workers and reduce reliance on sex work are essential, it is also important to remember to challenge the larger societal and structural components that allow for an environment of inequality and lack of recognition. Mobilization for redistribution through community led interventions is essential. Community led interventions are defined as:

Interventions strategized and implemented in partnership with the community to address structural issues to reduce individual and community vulnerability through a process of active participation and ownership building (within and outside the programme) where the community becomes mobilised and empowered by changing existing power relations at all possible levels²⁴⁵

Sex worker movements should also see to align themselves with other movements that advocate for human rights (for example drug users' rights or transgender rights) which would enable a stronger collective response to address structural inequalities.²⁴⁶ While other movements (such as queer and



241 Kootstra, op.cit.; and WHO, op.cit.

242 City of Vancouver, op.cit.

243 WHO, op.cit.

244 Mayhew and Mossman, op.cit.; and TAMPEP, op.cit.

245 Chris Evans et al, "What Makes a Structural Intervention? Reducing Vulnerability to HIV in Community Settings, with Particular Reference to Sex Work," *Global Public Health* 5, no. 5 (2009): 449–461.

246 WHO, op.cit.

feminist, for example) should not only aim for inclusion of sex workers within, but rather strive for a re-centering of sex workers within their politics. The work is already being done and as we stand on the precipice of change, we need to remember to be courageous, innovative, and supportive of those whose goal is social justice and substantive equality for all:

There are a number of local grassroots organizations that are rethinking the traditional non-profit and social service models...They are breaking down hierarchical models and replacing them with transparent decision making processes or collective models. They are committed to a world where all people have access to life's basic needs, where all are empowered to make change, and where everyone is able to live and love freely and safely. Together, we are working hard to change the landscape.²⁴⁷

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Sex worker movements should also see to align themselves with other movements that advocate for human rights (for example drug users' rights or transgender rights) which would enable a stronger collective response to address structural inequalities.

.....
²⁴⁷ Hollibaugh et al, op.cit., p. 26.



Look past the dope

and on to the wounds that continually weep within.

Drugs are but a reflection of damage left unrepaired.

Unmask to heal the trauma and pain.

Wounds protected by tightly woven crushed emotions,

buried so deep they may escape conscious thought.

EXCERPT FROM

Haunting Dreams Part 2

by Antonette Rea²⁴⁸

Where to go? How to ask,

when not knowing?

Delicately tread the professional,

willing to sacrifice, guide and assist the unfortunate souls,

who've slipped through society's cracks

and landed in the depths of addiction, prostitution,

victims of society's misgivings.

We must heal to be victims no more and take control of mind,

learn how to let the surrounding events of each day affect me.

Live your life,

be happy,

be positive,

connect with the power of love,

Understanding realized.





PART 4 Recommendations

"The double standard is a bitch...[and] the hooker catches shit from all ends. She provides services made necessary by the inbred hypocrisies and contradictions of the System, and is then condemned by that same System for her behaviour."

ELLEN STRONG

A. Government (Federal, Provincial, and Municipal)

1. Provide on-going and sustainable funding to each agency within the Sex Work Exiting and Transitioning Consortium to develop their own exiting and transitioning program based on the values and mandate of their specific agency, the needs of the population they work alongside of, and the particular considerations that are required within that context.
2. Fund sex work organizations with a nuanced understanding of the work they do; ensure that funding does not limit their ability to carry out both micro and macro level work. Further, ensure that funding is provided without a "trafficking" label attached, in order to inhibit the conflation of sex work with trafficking.
3. Ensure that sex workers are a priority group within the homelessness and housing strategy for the City of Vancouver.
4. Establish safe and appropriate housing for sex workers both within the DTES and in the larger Vancouver area. Housing should be provided across the spectrum of models, including but not limited to: housing first model, scattered-site housing, transitional housing, and 24-hour shelter. Ensure that sex workers are not only recipients of these services but that there is meaningful participation in their operation (staff positions, including positions of leadership).
5. Ensure separate housing is established that addresses the needs of key populations. These include: women, men, transgender people, youth, and First Nations people. This means these groups are represented in leadership roles and are able to deliver services in a way that is defined by them.



6. Fund a series of substance use services directed at sex workers. These include but are not limited to: GP who can provide scripts and be based at sex work agencies and a facility which provides detox beds, along with second stage recovery support. Ensure that the partners of sex workers can access services as well in order to promote recovery. Make sure that services are also offered outside the DTES area and/or lack visible connection to both sex work and substance use, to promote access.
7. Fund a mental health and substance use recovery centre that is sex worker specific, and staffed by professional, non-judgmental, and experiential staff.
8. Allow for erasure of all criminal records relating to sex work laws, in order to promote ability to transition out. Reduce waiting times for this process and waive the fee.
9. Establish Vancouver as Sanctuary City. Ensure that access is not left up to the discretion of individuals (whether police officers or health care and social service providers).
10. Actively oppose bills that hinder access, such as Bill C24 or Bill C31.
11. Provide emergency housing loans specifically to sex workers who are at risk for homelessness, in order to diminish their reliance on sex work to house themselves and to promote ability to exit the industry.
12. Allow for removal of court imposed restrictions (“no-go zones”) for sex workers to ensure adequate access to community resources and services.
13. Examine current law which hinders access to services by youth through age-related barriers, and ensure that the best interest of the youth is at the forefront of all legislative measures. For example, mandatory reporting of youths who engage in transactional sex as a child protection concern not only strips the youths of their agency but also dissuades them from accessing services, or being upfront about their involvement in the industry. Social and health services must be provided to the youth without guaranteed involvement of the Ministry of Child and Family, or guardian notification.
14. Ensure representation of minorities (racial, sexual, gender, country of origin, along with other positions of marginality) within all levels of government.
15. Ensure Canada’s signing on to International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families.
16. Ensure regularization of migrants in order to prevent detention and deportation.
17. Allow for the increase in BOTH minimum wage and social assistance rates to lessen individuals’ reliance on sex work to be able to provide basic necessities such as housing, food, health care, education (to name a few) for themselves and their families.

“As the broader discourse on sexuality and power continues to engage with questions of state power, marginality, and normativity, [sex worker movements] will remain critical for pushing the edges of what we conceive, imagine, and practice.”

SVATI P. SHAH

SEX WORK

Transitioning,
Retiring and
EXITING



B. Social Service Agencies

- 18.** Re-examine your policies and procedures to ensure that they do not limit access to services. The most common ones include hours of operation (sex workers may benefit from evening hours), inflexible rules (set appointments and punitive measures for missed appointments), inappropriate or unsafe for gender and sexual minorities (rigid gendered housing or bathrooms), lack of anonymity, other exclusionary policies (most often substance use). A one-size-fits-all approach (for example one adopted by WorkBC) has been shown to be less effective than holistic and person-centred approaches within marginalized communities. Ask sex workers what these are in your particular circumstance and continuously seek input and evaluation from them.
- 19.** Create a collaborative working group with government representatives and leaders from other social/health service agencies in the city that would be able to diligently work together to ensure equity and access, on a long-term scale. It is a good idea to ensure that there is a sex work liaison who is representative of each agency (i.e., male liaison and First Nations liaison, for example) within this working group. This working group can address issues of bad experiences with social service and/or health care providers in order to hold the service providers accountable.
- 20.** With government funding, hire a GP who can be based at a sex work agency to provide methadone scripts to individuals who need them. Further, hire a mental health and substance use specialist who is able to provide assessments and fast-track to appropriate services and crisis counselling—this can be on both a drop-in and outreach basis.
- 21.** Employ a dedicated housing and financial officer for each agency to provide assistance to individuals who require access to either or both.
- 22.** Hire and train sex workers to deliver awareness raising training to social and health service providers (target services such as housing/mental health/drug and alcohol/employment and education). Expand the program to deliver awareness training to nursing, social work, and medical students. Expand to deliver workshops to high school students as preventative measures. Ensure that this de-stigmatization training does not further stigmatize sex workers (as victims, etc.)
- 23.** Ensure all programs have free child care on site, to improve uptake of sex workers who are parents.
- 24.** Establish a key person for each agency (see Appendices for sample table) to ensure that services are delivered in a non-judgemental manner.

25. If providing services to a specific group, such as male sex workers, for example, ensure that provision of services is done by self-identified males.
26. Ensure that long-term efforts seek integration of services, in order to improve sense of community and camaraderie, as well as foster social change by way of human capital.
27. Provide translation services which are appropriate and readily available, by way of trained and trusted translators who can build relationships with the sex workers who may require such services.
28. Ensure cultural sensitivity when providing ALL services. This is not limited to ethnic cultures, but also various sub-cultures (for example, one must be aware of the language and mores within sex work or more specifically within MSM sex work). This can be resolved by hiring experiential staff and also providing training to current staff.

SEX WORK

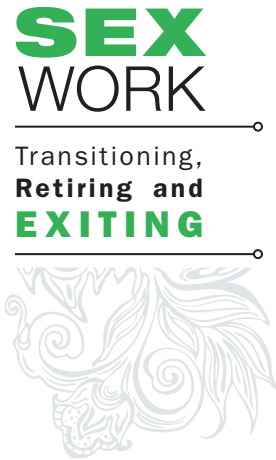
Transitioning,
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Through an analysis of numerous sex work research studies,
it was clear that to promote transitioning out of sex work,
access to services is key.

“Across movements we resist/fear centering the body – centering the complex and marginalized bodies – in the work. If we can’t talk about and organize around bodies in the most complex ways we can’t talk about/organize around sex/sexuality/desire. Questions of the body, sex and desire, influence my work every day. The body is a prime location for targeting, oppression, and marginalization. I work with communities that experience this inside their bodies every minute of every day. Yet I also find that there is a deep desire to talk about and generate strategies for collective resilience, joy and liberation. This is where so many [queer people of colour] are drawn into talking about sex/desire/sexuality. The body is both a location of oppression as well as a place of liberation and desire.”

LISA WEINER-MAHFUZ



C. Transitioning Programs at Sex Work Agencies

29. Create an umbrella structure of transitioning support with other sex work agencies (beginning with the Sex Work Exiting and Transitioning Consortium in Vancouver and over time possibly expanding to provincial, national and international contexts), which ensures accountability, transparency, and meaningful sex worker involvement. This can be ensured by creating a steering committee which should be able to oversee creation of sex work transitioning programs of each agency to guarantee it is done according to sex worker needs, and increasing sex worker representation with the board of directors and other leadership roles within the agency.
30. Hire a transitioning liaison for each agency to provide case management services. Expand the positions as needed to ensure that if employing a key worker model that each staff has a manageable load of clients. Ensure liaison is experiential and representative of various lived experiences of marginality.
31. Consider building upon the transitioning liaison role and, with government funding, hire and train a group of peer support workers which have experience in sex work (but also represent lived experienced of all various service users, for example those with mental illness, those who use substances, and First Nations/other racialized workers).
32. Consider partnering with a post-secondary institution to allow for this training to be externally recognized (for example as a Transitioning Worker Certificate).
33. Increase current provision of support to either inform people of transition services or to provide those services as a key component, for example, increasing MAP Van services to provide exiting support.
34. Develop a fast response mechanism to those who wish to exit in times of crisis, by hiring a nurse and/or social worker (mental health and substance use specialist) to provide outreach primary care and crisis counselling, with the possibility of access to a 24-hour sex work shelter, fast track to other services, or long-term supports (such as housing, whether stand alone or recovery based).



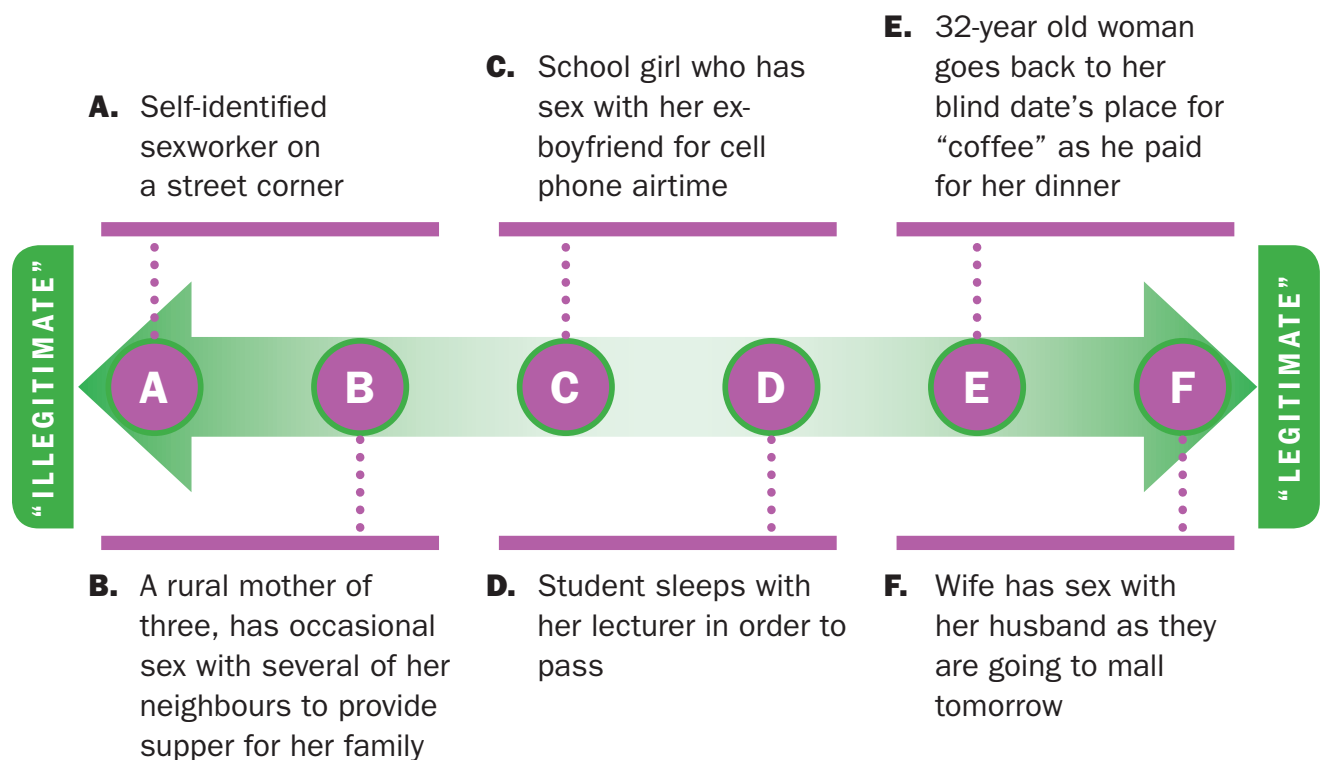
35. Create an employment and education liaison position that is able to develop strong partnerships (in the forms of written contracts) with employment training agencies and adult learning agencies to promote access by sex workers. This liaison should also work to develop partnerships with the City and local businesses to promote sex worker employment. He or she can deliver practical workshops on topics such as resumé writing. Ensure this is done in a culturally appropriate manner and available in various languages. Examples include: job search, resumé writing, and interview skills (these should be specifically tailored to migrant workers, as they face the most difficulty within the Canadian labour market).
36. Ensure services are provided by way of netreach to reach those workers who are not served well by traditional methods of outreach and service delivery in general.
37. Ensure that if services are provided at a physical location, it is non-recognizable (i.e., ensure anonymity) and outside of areas which some people may not enter for various reasons (stigma, fear for security/safety, triggers, and more) such as the DTES, for example.
38. Remain flexible in terms of service provision at all times, due to the complex nature of sex work, flexibility is key; it also accounts for possibility of “duality,” “sexiting,” and “yo-yoing.”

“You can’t win a revolution on your own. And we are nothing short of a revolution. Anything else is just not worth our time.”

JUSTINE SMITH

Appendices

APPENDIX A • Sex for Reward Continuum²⁴⁹



249 ADAPTED FROM: Marlise Richter, "Sex Work as a Test Case for African Feminism," BUWA! A Journal on African women's Experiences 2, no. 1 (2012): 62–96.

APPENDIX B • Services for Sex Workers Template

SEX
WORK

Transitioning,
Retiring and
EXITING



Agency:

Contact Name/Position:

Contact information:

Address:

Phone:

email:

website:

Services:

Access criteria:

Sex work aware: YES ☐ NO ☐ Culturally aware: YES ☐ NO ☐

NOTES

Agency:

Contact Name/Position:

Contact information:

Address:

Phone:

email:

website:

Services:

Access criteria:

Sex work aware: YES ☐ NO ☐ Culturally aware: YES ☐ NO ☐

NOTES

Glossary²⁵⁰

SEX WORK

Transitioning,
Retiring and
EXITING



Advocate: An individual who works towards fighting oppression and supports social equity, ending intolerance and bringing awareness to certain issues.

Bad Date: Refers to instances of harassment and/or violence that is directed at a sex worker by a client.

Bawdy House: A term that denotes an indoor place where sex work occurs, mainly used in a legal context.

Bisexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to persons of both one's own and the opposite gender.

Brothel: A house, apartment, or other property, where sexual services are sold.

Cisgender: A person for whom gender identity, gender expression, and the sex he or she was assigned at birth all align (e.g. man, masculine, and male).

Client/Customer/Date: Those who purchase sex. Sometimes also referred to as john or trick.

Colonialism: The exploitation and forceful acquisition of lands and resources by one nation over another. In Canada, colonial expansion resulted in the decimation of native communities, disconnection of native peoples' from their lands, histories, cultural identities, languages and traditions, producing continuing inter-generational trauma.

Decriminalization: Refers to the removal of laws pertaining to sex work from the criminal code, such as those regarding communication and keeping bawdy houses (in the context of Canada). It is not to be conflated with legalization, as decriminalization professes that no laws (whether municipal, provincial, or federal) should be in place.

Exiting: The process of transition that people undergo as they move away from, or find alternatives to, working in the sex industry. Exiting is often seen as a negative word to describe the transition process, as it is usually only applied to sex work, thus perpetuating the stigma associated with the industry. However, it is used throughout this report (interchangeably with transitioning) in order to encapsulate various experiences and viewpoints on the process, and to keep in line with language used in research.

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²⁵⁰ Some definitions were borrowed from Living in Community <http://livingincommunity.ca/>; Stella <http://chezstella.org/>; and POWER <http://www.powerottawa.ca/>.



Experiential: Persons who self-identify as currently working in, or having worked in the past to support themselves in part or in full through paid labour in sex work. Experiential can also denote experiences with (im)migration, mental health and substance use issues, and/or belongingness to a certain marginalized group such as racialized workers, members of a sexual/gender minority, and in the context of sex work, males.

Gay/Homosexual: Someone who is sexually, romantically, physically, and/or spiritually attracted to someone of the same gender. While applicable to both males and females, it is more often used to talk about men, whereas lesbian is usually only used to talk about women.

Gay-for-pay: Those who may identify as heterosexual in their private life, but who will perform same sex acts for payment. A more clinical term MSM (men who have sex with men) is also often used to denote the activity rather than an identity.

Gender Expression: The external display of gender, through any number of chosen avenues, including dress, demeanor, social behaviour, behaviour, etc. Measured along the spectrum of the masculinity and femininity binary.

Gender Identity: The personal understanding and acceptance of an individual's gender, and how one identifies or labels oneself.

Gentrification: Residential displacement of lower income areas for the purposes of increasing land value profits; negative effects include disruption of local cultures, and a focus on a growing culture of consumption rather than community health.

Harm Reduction: A reality-based ideology and approach that seeks to reduce the potential harms of high risk behaviors in order to improve safety and quality of life, often preferred to the essentialist and rigid criminalization versus abstinence dichotomy.

Heterosexual: A person who is attracted to someone of the other gender, often referred to colloquially as straight.

Homophobia: Fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, or discomfort with gay people.

Indoor Work: Sex work where the client contact occurs in an indoor setting, often negotiated online or advertised in media, and includes private escorting, massage parlour and strip club work and more.

Intersectionality: The study of and theoretical paradigm pertaining to intersections between forms or systems of oppression, domination or discrimination, and how they interact on multiple levels to contribute to and reinforce systemic inequality and injustice.

LGBPTTQQIIA2S+: Any combination of letters attempting to represent all the identities in the sexual and gender minority community; this near-exhaustive combination (but not exhaustive) represents Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Inter-gender, Asexual, Two-spirited. LGBT or LGBTQ+ is used in this report for simplicity.

Massage Parlour: An establishment where clients can purchase a massage, with additional sexual services.

Migrant: A person who moves across borders. Typically denotes somebody who moves for work (whether seasonal or permanent) but includes all those who migrate for any reason. Migrant serves as an umbrella term and can include refugees, immigrants, those without legal status/documents, those with temporary/conditional permits, and others.

Netreach: A method of outreach that is internet based (may include websites, chat rooms, social media, personal communication, and much more). It is used to reach a population that remains rather invisible in terms of street and/or business presence, and aims to build relationships in order to engage individuals who may need access to services.

Outdoor Work: Client contact is established in an outdoor setting. Not advertised, and often conflated with survival sex work.

Queer: A term which was historically derogatory, and used to identify LGBTQ+ people. Today, “queer” has been embraced and reclaimed by some members of the LGBTQ+ community and is a symbol of pride, a word often used to represent a variety of individuals who fall outside of the gender and sexuality norms. Identifying as queer often also represents a political identity, with an anti-assimilation and pro-liberation stance.

Sex for Favours/Transactional Sex: Exchange of sex for gifts, services, necessities (such as food or shelter) or any desired items. Often it is not defined under the sex-work umbrella, due to the lack of monetary transactions, and lack of “sex worker” self-identification for individuals who participate in transactionary relationships. See ‘Sex for reward continuum’ illustration in Appendices.

Sex Industry: Describes all forms and aspects of sex work and encompasses a variety of individuals, including sex workers throughout the entire spectrum (see below), their clients, and third parties.

Sex Work: A term that was coined by Carol Leigh (aka Scarlot Harlot) in 1978. Specific to the work in the sex industry, it denotes exchange of sexual services for money. It is often used to legitimize the industry and to treat sex work as labour.

Sex Worker: Someone who works in the sex industry. Historically derogatory words and phrases associated with sex work, some of which are reclaimed by their communities, include: prostitute, hooker, whore, ho, streetwalker, hustler.

Sex Work Spectrum: Sex work represents employment in a wide variety of jobs in adult entertainment/sex industry, including but not limited to: adult film, erotic performances and dance, peep shows, in and out escort services, print pornography, web cam work, phone sex, fetish work, bondage/dominatrix/sadomasochism (BDSM), some forms of waitressing/bartending, street-level sex work, milk maid services, massage and bodywork, and hustling. (Also see Appendices for example of “Sex for reward continuum”).

Sexual Orientation: The type of sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction one feels for others, often labeled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people one is attracted to.

Stigma: Attitudes and judgements attributed to certain behaviours, traits and activities which are considered socially or culturally disruptive or that challenge the “status quo”/power relations in society. Stigma involves perpetuating prejudice and stereotypes, by blaming and shaming an individual for their transgressions, resulting in loss of status.

Stroll: Area where someone works on the street. Referred to as the “stroll” not only because many outdoor workers shift around to find clients, but also historically due to the need for movement to avoid vagrancy charges. Distinctions between “low” and “high” strolls denote income variation possibilities for different workers.

Survival Sex Work: Often used to describe sex workers, who due to a multitude of systemic factors, personal circumstances and structural oppressions such as (but not limited to) poverty, homelessness, addiction, mental health issues and histories of abuse, have extremely restricted options and as a result dangerous working conditions. Often analogous to outdoor sex work. Exists within a context of systemic constraint that exists on a continuum of power and privilege.

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Third Parties: Other individuals who are involved with commercial sex industry transactions, facilitation, organization, supervision and control of sex work. Often conflated with “pimps,” but does include agencies, agents, assistants, drivers, security staff, event planners, receptionists, managers and more. In the Canadian context, encompasses all those who “profit from the avails of sex work.”

Trafficking: “Trafficking in Persons” encompasses efforts to recruitment, transport, transfer, harbour or receive of persons by the means of the threat of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, and abuse of power over a vulnerable individual, for the purposes of exploitation. Trafficking should not be conflated with sex work, even if sexual in nature.

Transgender: Refers to an umbrella term often used to describe all people who do not identify as cisgender. Preferred to the term “transgendered,” as the suffix “ed” may be seen to denote that something happened to the individual to make them transgender. Some individuals identify as transsexual, transvestite, MtF (male to female), FtM (female to male), gender queer, drag queen/king, two-spirited and more. Trans* is also sometimes used to encompass the variety of identities that pertain to gender.

Two-Spirit: A term traditionally used by First Nations people to recognize individuals who possess qualities of, or feel connected to, both genders, or those that do transgress the gender binary.

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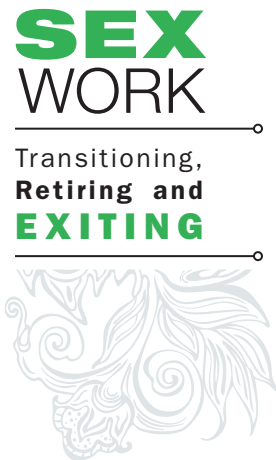
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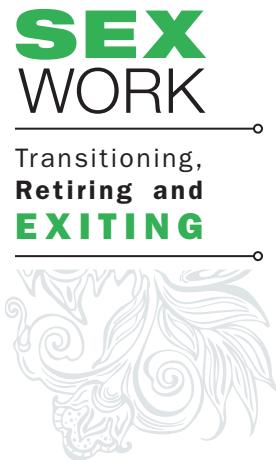
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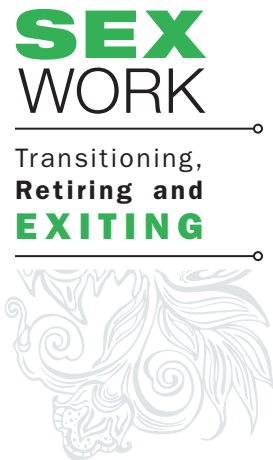
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