

SEX WORK & HARM REDUCTION

WHAT IS SEX WORK?

Provision of sexual services or performances by one person (Sex Worker) for which a second person (Client or Observer) provides money or other markers of economic value.

These markers of economic value may include:

- money
- food
- shelter
- drugs
- and more

SEX WORK IS AN UMBRELLA TERM INCLUSIVE OF

- Trade sex
- Porn performance
- Dancing
- Phone
- Web cam/internet
- Survival-based
- Street-based
- BDSM
- Magazine
- Film/Video
- Out Calls / In Calls
- & more

SEX WORK CAN BE LICIT OR ILLICIT



In situations of illicit sex work, risk is involved for all three parties.

SEX WORK INVOLVES A

- Worker
- Consumer
- Often times, Manager

WHAT IS SESTA/FOSTA?

What is it?

- Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act / Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act
- Bipartisan bill passed by House & Senate March 2018, signed April 2018.

How does it work?

- Makes third party sites responsible for posting ads for sex workers – legally liable for trafficking.
- Since its passage, Craigslist personals, Backpage, and other sites have been pulled down.

What's the impact?

- Makes it more difficult for sex workers to find & screen clients.
- Pushes people out into the street again – putting sex workers of color, of trans identity, and/or of undocumented status further at risk.
- Creates more competition & more risk for sex workers who are 100% street-based (& often survival-based).
- Puts people MORE at risk of being trafficked.

Revised 2020

FOR MORE RESOURCES, VISIT [HARMREDUCTION.ORG](https://harmreduction.org)

/HarmReductionCoalition /HarmReductionCoalition @harmreduction @harmreduction

**NATIONAL
HARM REDUCTION
COALITION**

WHY DO PEOPLE ENGAGE IN SEX WORK?

Choice

- Julia chooses to work as a dominatrix because the work is profitable & she enjoys it.
- Julia chooses to do sex work.

Circumstance

- Mark is marginally housed, & engages in a relationship with Peter to have a place to sleep.
- His sex work is circumstantial.

Coercion

- Leah's partner coerces her into trading sex with their supplier in exchange for drugs even though she doesn't want to.
- This is a human rights violation & not the same as consensual sex work.

SEX WORK IS WORK

Everyone who engages in sex work has personal, unique reasons for doing so.

Sex work is one of the few trades in which someone without any formal education can provide for themselves at an equal level to someone with an advanced degree.

However, sex workers who hold marginalized identities are uniquely vulnerable to racism, transphobia, xenophobia, classism, & other forms of structural violence.

HARM REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS

Drop-in center

Community organizing & Policy change

Intracommunity skill sharing

Street outreach

Don't assume! Don't try to 'save' anyone from sex work Bad date sheet

Safer drug use & overdose prevention materials

Medical & health services

Safer sex materials & education

Bad date sheet

Offer anonymous testing services

Offer hand sanitizer, antiseptic wipes, mouthwash, makeup remover towelettes

RESOURCES

St. James Infirmary:
stjamesinfirmary.org

SWOP Bay Area:
facebook.com/swopbay

SWOP Behind Bars:
swopbehindbars.org

BaySWAN:
bayswan.org

Sex Workers Project:
sexworkersproject.org