



Living in Community

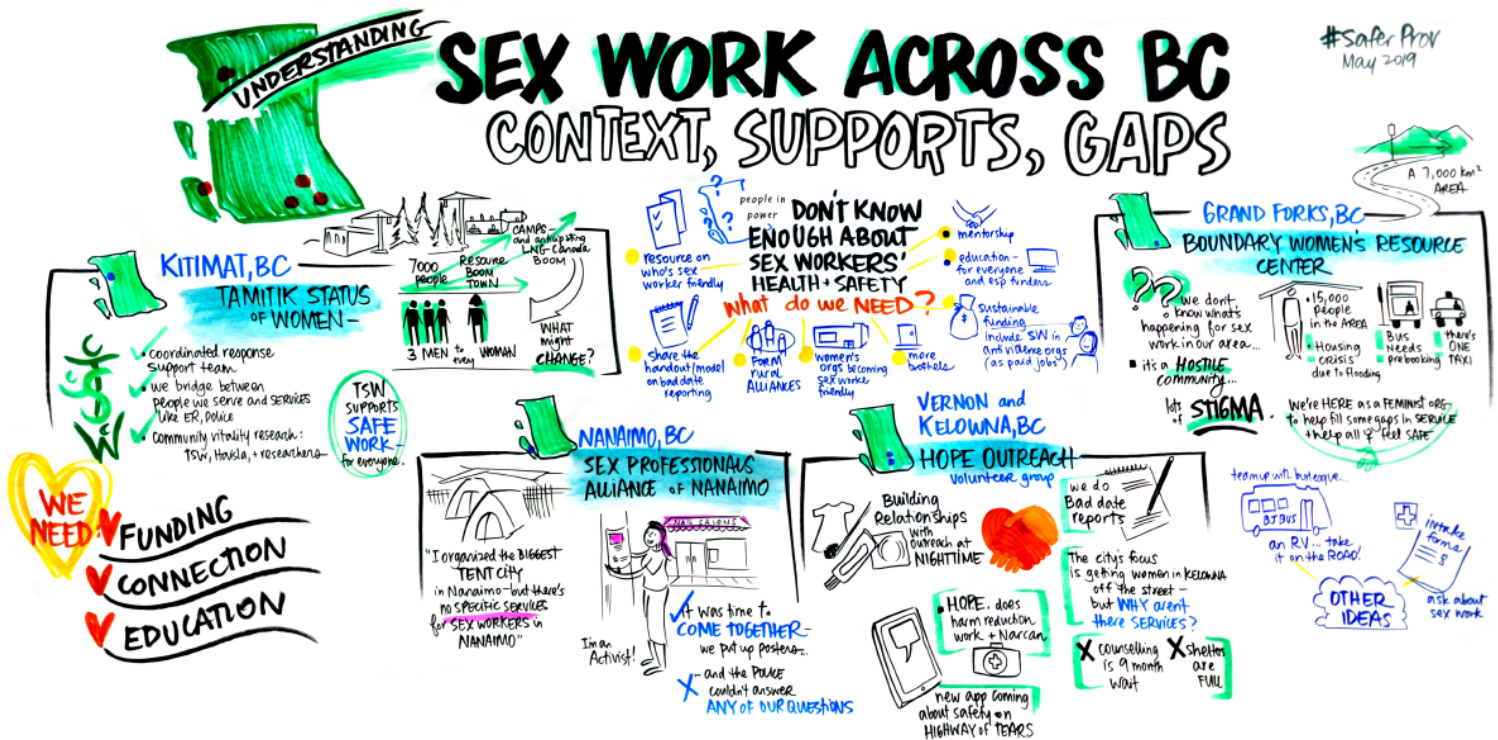
Fact Sheet #6

Sex Work in Rural and Remote Communities

Sex work happens differently in different places. The opportunities, challenges, and resources differ for sex workers in rural areas, and services for sex workers in urban centres may simply not be relevant for those in other communities.

Some people think sex work does not happen in smaller communities, so resources and services are often lacking. It may also not be safe to 'out' oneself as a sex worker in a community where everyone knows each other. Other sex workers travel around the province and may not know how to find the services that do exist in a small place. Travelling sex workers are common in areas with intensive natural resource extraction, and sex workers working in these environments often face increased risk of stigma, racism, and discrimination.

In many places, particularly northern and rural communities, not enough is known about sex work and the specific health and safety needs of sex workers.



In May 2019, Living in Community co-hosted the first conference in BC that brought together province-wide stakeholders. Attendees from across BC shared their experiences and needs, captured in this graphic recording from Drawing Change.

Identifying Sex Workers' Needs Across BC

At Living in Community's May 2019 provincial conference, more than 130 attendees from across BC gathered to discuss issues and share solutions. For many, this conference was the first time that organizations and individuals from remote locations could share their experiences with each other and identify their common needs.

Some of the needs of sex workers in rural and remote communities include:

- More regional alliances, communication, and networking among sex work organizations in smaller communities.
- A provincial bad date reporting system, which would enable sex workers who travel around the province to access important safety information in new locations.
- Better public transportation in many communities to ensure sex workers can travel safely.
- More brothels to create safe indoor spaces for sex workers to work.
- Sex work liaison positions in provincial and regional anti-violence organizations.

To address these needs, local women's organizations can step up to provide services in communities where there are no sex work organizations. Sex work organizations in larger centres can mentor these women's organizations.

BC Sex Work Support Service Network

Living in Community convenes a network of organizations across the province who provide supports and services to sex workers in their communities. Some organizations have specific mandates to support sex workers, and others are anti-violence or women's organizations that serve sex workers when no sex work-specific organization exists. Collectively, this network aims to share and learn from each other, develop mutual best practices, and build provincial-level advocacy initiatives to improve the health and safety of sex workers across all regions of the province.

By collaborating and sharing information, we can help fill the gap in knowledge of what sex workers need across the province.

Want to join the BC Sex Work Support Service Network?

**Contact us at
info@livingincommunity.ca.**

Living in Community is a unique initiative that brings together diverse stakeholders to collaboratively improve the health and safety of sex workers. We undertake public education, policy advocacy, and sharing of our unique model of collaboration with the goal of creating communities that are healthy and safe for everyone.

Learn more at: www.livingincommunity.ca