



Living in Community

DECEMBER 2023
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



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Moving From Response to Resilience: Thank you for making our conference a success!

This past October, over 160 people joined together at SFU Harbour Centre in Vancouver to meet, learn from each other, and deepen the collective movement for sex workers' rights. We were honoured to welcome and meet so many of you that are doing much-needed work to continue to push for safety, dignity, and respect for all sex workers in BC and beyond.

While our staff are still working hard at putting together our conference report – which will summarize all of the discussions held at the conference, as well as the recommendations for change that attendees made – we know that this conference made an impact. In our evaluation form for attendees, the number one benefit that respondents identified was relationship-building; people really appreciated getting the chance to meet and chat in person, especially those from rural and remote areas.

Further, 83% of respondents rated the conference as high quality or very high quality, 94% of respondents said the conference increased their network of organizations and individuals working to improve the health and safety of sex workers, and 77% of respondents said the conference will impact the way they will work with sex workers moving forward.

Watch out for our conference report coming in the new year, as well as an advocacy toolkit to engage stakeholders of all kinds in joining us in action.

Plus, stay tuned for resources from our keynote speakers which will be added to our website and social media shortly!

Happy Holidays from Living in Community!



As this year comes to a close, we want to thank all of you for being part of this movement and for supporting our work. We hope you all can enjoy some much-needed rest and warmth over this holiday season.

Our office will be closed from December 25th – January 1st, and we look forward to working with you all again in the new year.



Welcome to our new Curriculum Developer and Training Lead, Nadia Grutter!

We recently welcomed a new Curriculum Developer and Training Lead to our team: Nadia Grutter!

Nadia (she/her) is an experienced facilitator and harm reduction worker with a background in public legal education, violence prevention and response, communications, and rights-based community organizing. She cares deeply about ending the war on drugs, improving safety for sex workers, and mobilizing peer knowledge.

She is white, queer, and disabled, and occupies space on the unceded, traditional coastal homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt people, colonially known as Victoria, BC. She loves plants, sluts, and going to great lengths for her cats. She can't wait to work with the team at LIC!

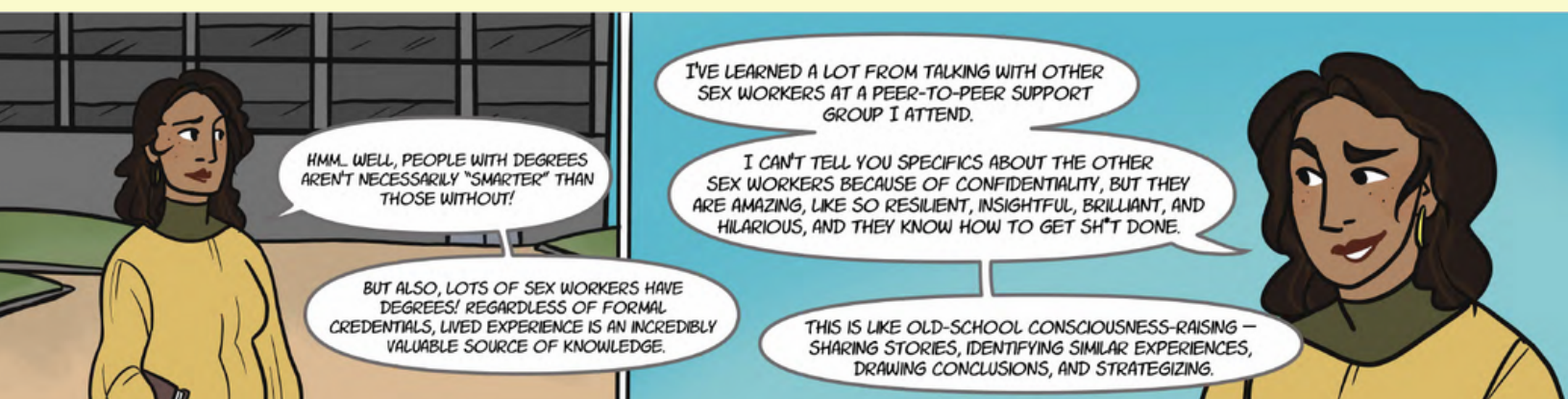
We also want to extend our deep thanks to our outgoing Curriculum Developer and Training Lead, Alison Clancey, whose leadership and strategic thinking have been instrumental to LIC's development over the years.



Resource: Comic Strip Highlighting Sex Workers as Experts

This resource from Genevieve Fuji Johnson explores the various areas of expertise and deep knowledge that sex workers have, told through a visit to a drop-in centre.

Illustrated by Addison Finch and written by Nadine Flagel, Beatrice Omboga, Kerry Porth, Kerry Waters, Natasha Mhuriro, Chris Atchison, Addison Finch, and Genevieve Fuji Johnson.



[Read and download the full comic at www.anunusualacademic.com.](http://www.anunusualacademic.com)

LIC in the Community: Municipal Updates

Recently, LIC has been involved in several municipal advocacy initiatives in the Lower Mainland.

In late November, New Westminster City Council unanimously passed new guidelines to promote sex worker safety. We and several others participated in the City's working group earlier this year to develop and advise on these guidelines, and we are so pleased to see the City take a human rights-based approach to supporting those working in the sex industry in New Westminster. Next, we look forward to potentially delivering training for City staff, alongside PACE Society.



SWAN Vancouver, along with advocates, sex work support organizations and researchers, is calling for Richmond city councillors to oppose actions against massage parlours and escort businesses that would harm and endanger workers.

Image from SWAN Vancouver

The following week, the City of Richmond took a very different approach, as a Councilor passed a motion at a community safety committee meeting to find a way to use City bylaws to close down massage parlours. In response, we joined an effort led by SWAN Vancouver and supported by several other local organizations and individuals to call for City Council to instead take a rights-based approach to supporting and respecting those working in massage businesses.

Finally, we also recently spoke in the City of Vancouver's 2024 Budget consultation. While the draft budget proposed some important investments and actions – such as addressing the housing and homelessness crises; increasing the number of public washrooms available, in various neighbourhoods; investing in needed social services such as libraries, neighbourhood houses, and community centres; and implementing more peer led mental health and harm reduction services, in more communities across the city – it also proposed increasing the budget for the Vancouver Police Department to hire 100 new police officers. LIC opposed this and instead called for meaningful investments in public services that address the root causes of violence and vulnerability.



BC Network Member Feature: BC Coalition of Experiential Communities

The BC Coalition of Experiential Communities recently joined the BC Sex Work Support Service Network. Read below to learn more about their work:

The BC Coalition of Experiential Communities (BCCEC) is a regional democratic organization of sex workers who are activists mandated as a mechanism for the voices of experiential people to support the development of legislation and policies, peer driven programs and services, and work toward the elimination of oppressive systems and forces that create harm within the sex industry.

The BCCEC began in 2002 and formalized as a group after meetings held in 2005 in Prince George where then member Crystal Capostinsky was working to establish the New Hope Society. 2024 will mark 22 years of the BCCEC.

The BCCEC have focused efforts since then on improving the day to day lives and safety of all sex workers no matter their gender or location in the sex industry. Male, female, trans or fluid...indoor or outdoor...exotic dancers, hustlers, content creators and full contact sex workers are all welcome in the BCCEC.

BCCEC Members vote on priorities and collectively work to ensure the voices of the sex working community are at the forefront of any and all policy, practice, and law discussions which could impact our lives and safety. It is our hope to bring our model of "one sex worker, one vote" to sex workers across the country.

Our most recent work includes working to address Housing Exclusion and engaging gender diverse BIPOC sex workers in development of BC's Anti Racism Legislation.

The BCCEC continues to work under direction from our community to address numerous community concerns such as:

- Barriers to outreach and services
- Exclusion of male sex workers' priorities
- The BC Prosecution Service Policy and Practice
- Lack of meaningful services for sex trafficking survivors
- Licensing and Development Permits
- Work Place Safety Complaints Process development
- Health and Safety Certification of Business Owners
- Financial Exclusion
- On-line Exclusion
- AI Against Human Trafficking
- Ethics complaints against researchers
- Health Exclusion
- Ancient Criminal Records Removal
- Government of BC Human Trafficking On-line Training Issues
- Reforming the Police Act
- Countering False Information
- Decriminalization
- Response to Canada's 4th Report to the Universal Periodic Review at the UN
- Human Rights protections for sex workers
- Defining the Ultimate Safe Sex Work Space.

The BCCEC is project driven and consists of members who have over 130 years combined experience in advocacy, direct service delivery, and management, as well as over 160 years experience in all facets of the sex industry. Our members live in all areas of our region, both urban and rural. The BCCEC have hosted all stakeholder meetings which included police, government, sex workers, civil society, academics and support services locally, provincially, nationally and internationally throughout our history and continue to find ways for sex workers to bring their concerns to the tables of power.

The formation of our Arts Collective, BC Survivors Collective, Housing Exclusion Collective, BIPOC Sex Workers Collective and reviving the BC Coalition of Experiential Men under the BCCEC umbrella will ensure our members' voices will continue to grow louder in the face of all the issues impacting our community for another 20 years.

To learn more, contact: Synder – BCCEC/ BCCEM starr.entertainment.101@gmail.com or Susan – BCCEC susie@nakedtruth.ca. You can also visit www.bccec.wordpress.com or www.nakedtruth.ca.