

NEW WESTMINSTER'S GUIDELINES TO PROMOTE SEX WORKER SAFETY

Did you know the City has Guidelines to promote sex worker safety?

These Guidelines were developed through Council motions and community input from 2021–2023, and passed by Council in November 2023. The Guidelines aim to promote the safety, dignity, and rights of sex workers in New Westminister by guiding City staff in respectful, consistent, and informed interactions.

What can your organization do?

You can ensure your practices are in line with the City's approach and ensure safety and inclusion for all.

- Know that sex workers are diverse, and include immigrants & migrants, racialized groups, LGBTQ2SI+ individuals, people with precarious housing, and substance users.
- Understand there are many reasons someone may do sex work, and focus on what they say their need of you is, rather than focusing on their work.
- Treat sex workers with respect and dignity, and uphold privacy and confidentiality.
- Do not ask about immigration status.



About Living in Community:

Living in Community (LIC) is a nonprofit and charity that has been working to improve the wellbeing of BC-based sex workers since 2003 through education and advocacy.

Learn more about sex work:

- Follow us @livingincommunitybc on Instagram, Facebook, and Bluesky.
- See our [online tools for change](#).
- [LIC's online training](#) is made for everyone and is about sex work stigma, sex work laws, human trafficking, and effective service delivery for frontline organizations.
- Check out the QR code below to find more New Westminister-specific resources.



SAFETY FOR ALL:

Resources for Sex Worker Safety in New Westminister

Before we get started...

- This pamphlet provides information about sex work: it may not be a topic you've learned about before.
- Sex work happens in all communities, and it's important to be knowledgeable about it.
- Sex work is defined as the exchange of sexual labour for money or goods among adults.
- There are many forms of sex work – the umbrella is big – and it may not be what you think it is!
- Many sex workers choose and enjoy this work.
- You likely serve sex workers at your organization or business already. This resource will help you serve them better.
- Remember that this is the bare minimum! Treat people with basic respect and dignity, always.



Sex Work: The Basics



Sex work is the exchange of money or other goods for sexual services between adults.



It includes escorting, street-based sex work, cam work, stripping, erotic BDSM services, pornography, erotic content creation, and more.



Sex workers are diverse. Sex workers are of all genders, assigned sex, and sexuality. Groups that have been historically neglected (and continue to face systemic oppression), including Black and Indigenous people, people of colour, im/migrants, gender diverse folks, people living in poverty, people who use substances, disabled people and more are targeted for violence at higher rates within the sex industry.



In Canada, selling sexual services is not technically illegal. However, buying sexual services is - making it difficult for sex workers to conduct business safely. The enforcement of sex work laws also relies on police discretion, which can be biased by stigma.

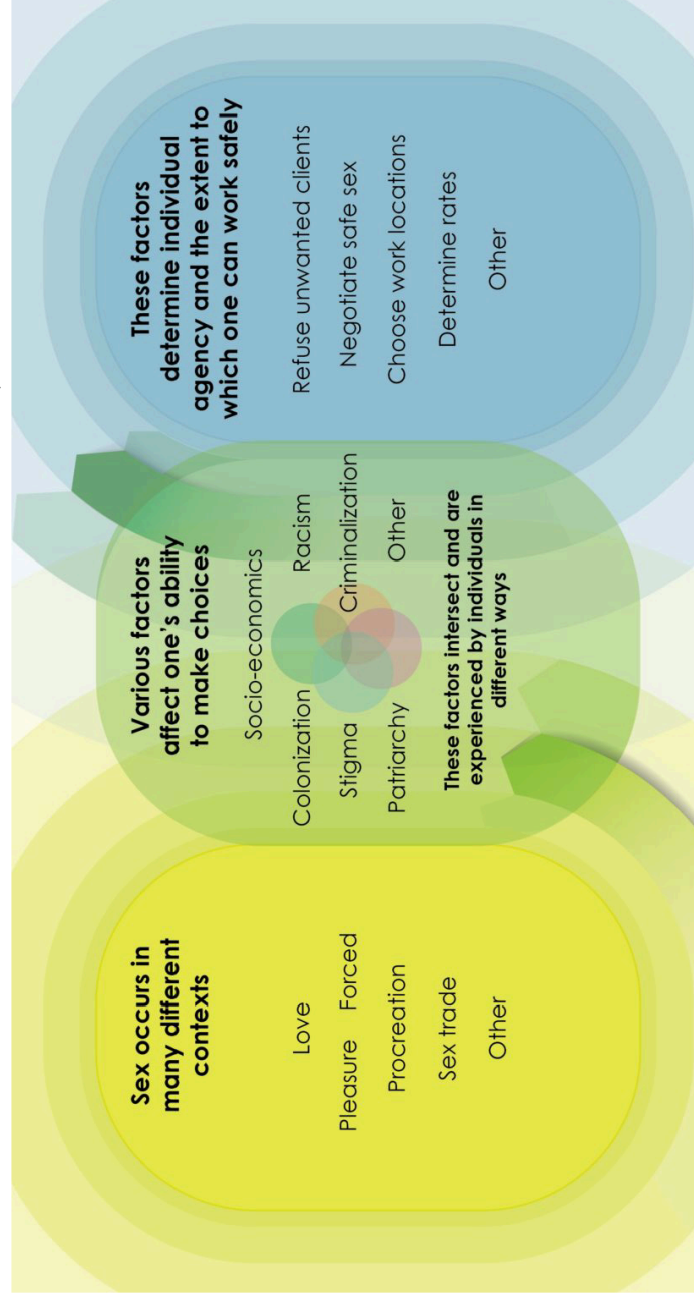


Because of stigma, criminalization, and strategic urban planning, street-based sex work is geographically obscured. Because of this, street-based sex workers experience much higher levels of violence.



It is estimated that 5% to 20% of sex work takes place on the street; 80% to 95% takes place indoors (homes, hotel rooms, massage parlours, bathhouses, etc). Sex workers who work indoors are less visible and face different issues (e.g. eviction, neighbour complaints, business licensing issues, etc).

Sex Work in Context



Stigma perpetuates violence against sex workers.