

## What's in a name? Sex Worker

The term sex worker is used as an umbrella term for any person involved in the sex trade industry. This includes people who exchange sex for money or other goods and may work as escorts, masseuses, dancers, street level workers, phone and internet sex operators.

The Shift program recognizes that for many people sex work is work, and should be treated as a profession. With any job or profession there are positives and negatives, and benefits and shortcomings.

Historical titles like prostitute have a negative association, and fail to acknowledge that a person working in the sex trade is just that, a person.

## Safety When Working

- While working, **try** to abstain from drugs and/or alcohol. Being too high or drunk can affect your ability to negotiate with clients.
- Implement a buddy system for outcalls. Be sure someone knows where you are and when you expect to return. If your workplace does not provide this service call a friend. In a worst case scenario you can pretend to phone someone.
- Ensure that the client is the only person in the room; try to check out the area to make sure that no one else is hiding.
- Ensure that you are leaving work alone, whether it's a date's house, a club, or a parlor. Take a look around, be aware of your surroundings and walk out with a friend or security if you can.
- Ask your coworkers if they have had any experience with potential clients before you accept a date. If you or your coworkers have a bad experience share with each other or report them to our bad date line (237-8171).
- Consider taking a self-defense class

*Get the money up front, set your limits on what services you will and will not provide before the action happens. It is more difficult to negotiate after the fact.*

## Health

- Take care of yourself! Schedule time off, get massages, do things you enjoy and relax.
- Always use a condom and lots of lube for vaginal, anal, or oral sex. If you are using sex toys make sure that they are properly cleaned, and if they are shared always cover them with a condom.
- Use dental dams as a barrier between mouth and anus or vagina when performing oral sex. Check the client for any bumps, sores, or rashes before performing services.
- Create a unique work character and sell your services as such, it can help you be more marketable and will also help you separate from your job after the work day is over.

Regular health check-ups and STI (sexually transmitted infection) testing are a good idea. This will mean you are taking control of your own health. Most STI's are easily treatable with early detection. Testing can be done confidentially at the STD Clinic (403-955-6700) or through Safeworks (403-850-3755)

## Condom Negotiation

**Insist on condoms before any action happens, explain to the client that it is for both of your protection and that it makes it easier for you to relax and work.**

- Use your own condoms
- Put the condom on the client yourself
- Make condom use more enjoyable by using "fun" condoms: studded, coloured, or flavoured

**Problem:** Client claims latex allergy  
**Solution:** Use a polyurethane condom

**Problem:** Client claims he is unable to enjoy sex with a condom  
**Solution:** "Sell" the positives of condom use (i.e. longer lasting encounter)  
**Solution:** Use a Female condom

## What is Shift?

Utilizing a harm reduction and rights based approach, Shift works with adults involved in the sex trade to assist in improving their quality of life and reaching individualized goals.

Harm reduction recognizes that with most activities in life there are potential risks and dangers, but for many people abstaining from certain activities is not what they chose to do, or is not a possibility.

Harm reduction then encourages people to take actions which may reduce the harm associated with the behavior. For example, using a condom when having sex.

## What does Shift provide?

We respect the choice for people to work and we can assist you to work safer by providing:

- free safer sex supplies - condoms, dental dams, female condoms, lube
- information
- support
- advocacy
- non-judgmental counselling
- assistance with child welfare matters
- legal information
- escort/massage/dancer licensing information and assistance
- HIV/STI testing information and referrals
- housing/addictions/mental health/financial assistance

We can also provide assistance if you would like to work less or transition out of sex work.



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Hours: Monday - Friday  
8:30am - 12:30pm & 1:30pm - 4:30pm

Shift works with  
adults involved in  
the sex trade to  
improve quality  
of life and reach  
individualized  
goals.

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