SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS.

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM VIOLENCE & EXPLOITATION?

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS. IGNITY, JUSTICE.

RESOURCE GUIDE BY BUTTERFLY (ASIAN & MIGRANT SEX WORKERS’ SUPPORT NETWORK) 2019
How do I protect myself from violence & exploitation?

Some of us may fear seeking help from law enforcement or service providers because of the discrimination and stigma that we face, the criminalization of sex work, the fear of being charged by bylaw officers, precarious immigration status as well as the potential risk of arrest and deportation.

*Remember: Being a sex worker or selling sex is not illegal in Canada

You should be protected from violence or exploitation like every member of society. You should be able to access support and advocate for your rights.

Contact us to support you and your co-workers.
Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network)
416–906–3098
butterflysw.org

Sex work does not inherently involve violence or exploitation. Like other jobs, sex workers may have good days and bad days at work, but violence and exploitation are never an acceptable part of any job. Unfortunately, mainstream attitudes in our society towards sex work can make us feel like these are normal parts of our job. It is very important to learn your rights to help yourself or your co-workers in case of violence or exploitation while working in massage parlours, holistic centres, body rub parlours, hotels, in–call locations or other sex industry jobs.

Understanding your rights helps you to protect yourself and your coworkers.

* Keep your own record of hours and dates you worked
* Your employer should not withhold your documents, e.g. ID or passport (keep them yourself)
** The Employment Standards Act laws (e.g. minimum wage, work hours, leaves and holidays) still protect you even if you do not have permission to work in Canada
How do I prevent workplace violence & harassment?

You have the right to protect yourself from workplace violence and harassment. You should be protected from violence and harassment like every member of society.

- No one can use any physical force or threaten you with physical harm.
- No one should harass you by teasing, yelling, bullying or sending offensive jokes or materials, or intimidating you.
- You should not be subject to harassment or sexual violence of any kind in the workplace, whether it comes from an employer, a manager or a colleague, clients or law enforcement (bylaw, immigration and policy) officers.

SEX WORK IS NOT VIOLENCE. VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT (E.G. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT) ARE NOT PART OF THE JOB.

- Consenting to provide sex services does not mean you accept violence against you.
- You always have the right to reject any unwanted sexual contact.

You are protected by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). This means that you have the right to:

- know about health and safety hazards
- participate in keeping your workplace healthy and safe
- refuse work that you feel is unsafe

*Domestic or sexual violence leave provides workers with a job-protected break from work when they or their children are facing domestic or sexual violence (after 13 weeks of consecutive employment). This means that you would have your job back afterwards.

You are protected by the Criminal Code.

You are legally protected from assault, bodily harm, sexual assault, theft, robbery, trafficking, kidnapping and forcible confinement.
Temporary work permit (TRP) for victims of trafficking.

If you have been trafficked, you may be able to apply for a Temporary Work Permit to stay in Canada temporarily (the length of the permit is usually 6 months to 1 year) to collaborate with law enforcement agencies or testify against your trafficker in order to receive the permit.

ACCESS WITHOUT FEAR POLICY IN TORONTO

Toronto has been deemed “Access City Council, which was implemented to reaffirm its commitment to undocumented residents (people without a valid student, tourist or work visa, refugee status, who are not permanent residents or citizens, or who otherwise do not have immigration documentation to be in Canada) of Toronto to ensure that all residents are able to access municipal and police services regardless of immigration status in Toronto regardless of you immigration status tried to disclose you immigration status to city officials, police or service providers (even if you are being asked).
Getting help from service providers

We encourage you to talk to service providers about your concerns related to disclosing your identity and/or information being shared with other services providers and law enforcement. It is important to discuss this before you disclose information, consent to share information with others, or signing any form. Remember, you have the right to object to the sharing of your information — including sharing information among service providers. Some organizations are not able to provide anonymous and confidential services. Ask in advance whether this is possible.

Know your Rights! Safety, Dignity, Justice!

SEX WORK IS WORK.
SEX WORKERS ARE ENTITLED TO SAFETY, DIGNITY, EQUALITY, AND JUSTICE.

FILING COMPLAINTS AGAINST LAW ENFORCEMENT

COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE
Office of the Independent Police Review Director
416–246–7071 / oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca
www.oiprd.on.ca

COMPLAINTS AGAINST BYLAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS
The Customer Service Improvement Team,
City of Toronto
311 / mlsfeedback@toronto.ca
City Hall, 100 Queen St. W., 16th floor, West
Tower, Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

* You can give your feedback anonymously but you have to disclose your identity when you file the formal complaint

Ombudsman Toronto
(you must go through the city internal process first)
416–392–7062 / ombudsman@toronto.ca
www.ombudsmantoronto.ca

No one has permission to violate our rights, and that includes law enforcement. You may file a complaint if you experience any misconduct, harassment, or violence from bylaw enforcement or police.

SOME OF US MAY BE SCARED TO FILE A COMPLAINT. YOU MAY CONTACT BUTTERFLY TO DISCUSS YOUR OPTIONS, INCLUDING CARRYING OUT THE COMPLAINT COLLECTIVELY AND ANONYMously.
Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network)
416–906–3098 / www.butterflysw.org
- Outreach and hotline services
- Leadership–building, trainings, and networking
- Accompaniment, interpretation and translation services
- Emotional, social, health, and legal information, services, and support
- Emergency and crisis support (e.g. violence, arrest, or detention)
- Research, publications, public education, lobbying and advocacy

The services and supports are anonymous. You do not need to provide any legal name or private information

WORKERS’ ORGANIZATION
Workers Action Centre
(for confidential and non–judgmental support on workplace issues)
www.workersactioncentre.org

SUPPORT FOR WOMEN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE
Assaulted Women’s Helpline

LEGAL AID
Legal Aid Ontario
To find out if you qualify for legal aid support (financial support when you need a lawyer or legal advice)
COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS
Some clinics provide legal services to people in specific areas. To find out which legal clinic is closest to, enter your postal code here: https://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/contact/contact.asp?type=cl. While there are many clinics around the Greater Toronto Area, we have included a list of legal clinic partners with Butterfly.

Barbra Schlifer Comemorative Clinic
(for women who have experienced abuse)

Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic
(non English-speaking: Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian communities)
416–971–9674 / www.csalc.ca

Downtown Legal Services
416–934–4535 / www.downtownlegalservices.ca

Parkdale Community Legal Services
416–531–2411 / www.parkdalelegal.org

South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
(for people who self-identify as South Asian, including Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Tamil, Bangladeshi, Indo-Caribbean, mixed race, and others)
416–487–6371 / www.salc.on.ca

OTHER INFORMATION
Ministry of Labour

Emergency
Call – 911
BUTTERFLY
A Ian & Igrant
Sex Workers Support Network

OUR MISSION

Butterfly’s work is about building community with immigrant sex workers: a place where we can share love, care, laughter, and tears. It is what gives us the strength to support each other, resist oppression, grow together, and actualize our dreams.

- Building solidarity
- Enhancing access to legal rights, health, social, and labour services
- Promoting equality and eliminating racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, stigma, and isca inion against Asians, Igrant, and sex workers
- Facilitating the voices of sex workers being heard
- Advocating for legal and policy change (inclusion of sex work and abolishment of immigration prohibition of sex work policy)

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