

SEXUALIZED EXPLOITATION

A Quick Reference

SERVICE PROVISION

People with lived experience have indicated that staff and services should be:

1 INFORMED ON THE ISSUE

People with lived experience want service providers to be informed on Sexual Exploitation, Sexualized Human Trafficking and Sex Work—They don't want to feel like they have to explain or educate service providers on the realities of the laws, culture and their experiences.

How? At least one staff person should be trained and knowledgeable specifically about sexual exploitation.

2 FOCUSED ON SAFETY

People with lived experience will have a variety of safety considerations depending on the situation they are experiencing or want to leave. They do not want to have to rely on police to keep them safe. They require safety plans that are flexible and specific to their situation.

How? Ensure that all aspects of programs and services place safety at the centre of participation and have specific security protocols in place.

3 PARTICIPANT-DIRECTED

People with lived experience want to be a part of the decision-making. They don't want staff and agencies telling them what to do or dictating how they should feel.

How? Use active listening to consider the needs of the whole person and allow them to direct you on their needs. Do not impose ideological language on their experiences.

4 HOLISTIC AND COLLABORATIVE

People with lived experience require a variety of supports which no single agency can provide. They want agencies to collaborate with each other to assist them. They do not want to bear the burden of continual self-referral which can be complicated and demoralizing.

How? Establish collaborative relationships with other service providers and determine how your services will work together. Reduce the amount of times people have to tell and relive their stories.

5 EMPOWERING AND STRENGTHS-BASED

People with lived experience want to be in control of their own lives and often do not want to be viewed as victims. They do not want to feel like they are being controlled by service providers or that they need to be rescued.

How? Learn about individuals' interests, skills and strengths. Hold regular check-ins and celebrate client achievements.

6 PEER SUPPORTED

People with lived experience want to see themselves in agencies and service providers. Peer supporters can establish trust and provide hope to clients of alternative futures.

How? Peer supporter staff and volunteers should be involved with agencies and the development, delivery, and evaluation of services.

7 TRAUMA INFORMED

People with lived experience often have many forms of trauma with which they live.

How? Ensure that all staff are trained in trauma informed care and acknowledge that one's experience and display of trauma may be unique and complex.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND DUTY TO REPORT

If you have reasonable suspicion that anyone under the age of 16 may be involved in a sexually exploitative relationship, (or a youth has disclosed they are involved in such a relationship), a duty to report, as outlined in the Children and Family Services Act, is required. The duty to report abuse by a person other than a parent or guardian applies to children under the age of 16.

There is also a duty to report when there is reasonable suspicion that youth aged 16-18 may be abused by a parent or guardian. There is no legal obligation to report youth age 16-18 who may be involved in a sexually exploitative relationship with a third party, except where children under the age of 16 may also be at risk. The youth, age 16-18, can choose to consent to their own participation in an investigation.

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OUR POSITION

There is a spectrum of exploitation that occurs within the sex industry. YWCA Halifax believes all people have the right to dignity, safety and well being in their lives. Our role is to support their efforts towards attaining dignity, safety and well being, as they define it for themselves.

