

Impacts of Community Participation on Sex Workers' Sexual Health

How sex workers come together in criminalized environments



Despite decades of advocacy by sex workers & allies, ongoing criminalization of sex work and occupational stigma hinder sex workers' ability to collectivize & access support services.

“Community participation” has been shown to enhance sex workers' occupational health, safety & wellbeing around the globe.



What does community participation look like?

Using, volunteering or working in:

- Sex worker drop-in services & outreach
- Peer-led mobile outreach, distribution of PPE & harm reduction supplies
- Advocacy, support & peer-education
- Bad date reporting, “spotting” & mutual aid



Our findings

- Indigenous sex workers & trans women had higher odds of sex work community participation
- Racialized, im/migrant sex workers were less likely to report sex work community participation, due to compounding criminalization as sex workers & im/migrants
- Sex workers who engaged in community participation faced **44% lower odds of STIs**

How can we support sex workers' health, safety & wellbeing?

- Scale-up community-led initiatives that are low barrier, culturally safe, anti-racist & linguistically diverse
- Increase sustainable funding for rights-based sex work community organizing
- Decriminalize all aspects of sex work