



SESTA/FOSTA and sex workers

NSAC 2019
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What we're
learnin'

The basics

- Sex trafficking vs. sex work
- Etiquette

CONSENT



Freely Given
Reversible
Informed
Enthusiastic
Specific



Let's bust some myths!

“It's not just young girls and big bad wolves. Lies and misconceptions about sex work can hurt women and keep negative stereotypes alive.”





Myth Busting

Myth #1

"The average age of entry into prostitution is 13."

- The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U. S., Canada and Mexico, by Richard J. Estes and Neil A. Weiner
- sent out 1,130 surveys
- 288 came back completed—a 25.5 percent response rate



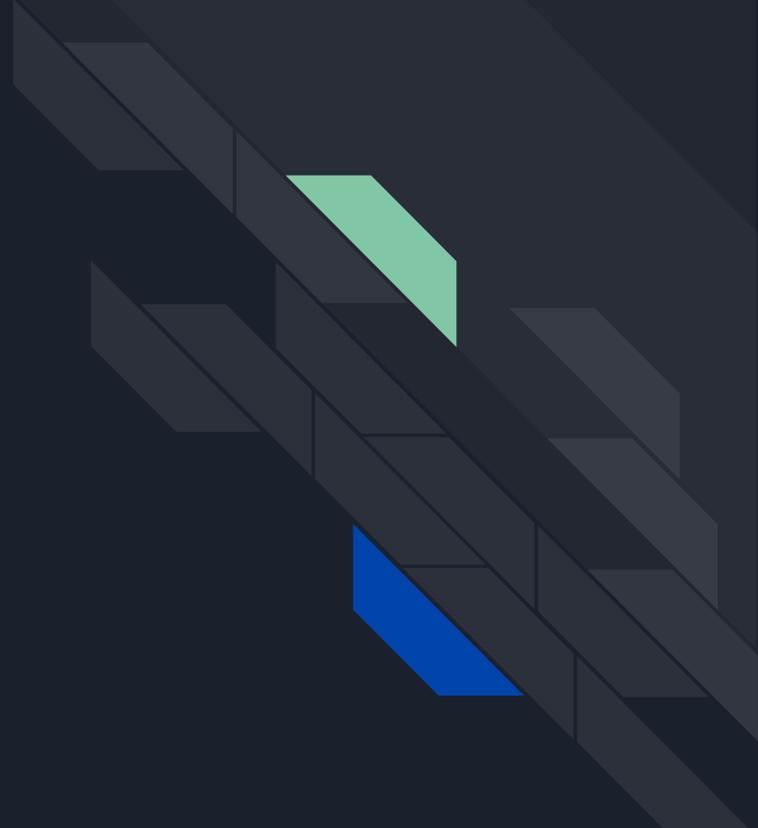
Myth Busting

Myth #2

“Human sex trafficking is the most common form of modern-day slavery.”

- Meanwhile, the International Labour Office (ILO) estimates that 22 percent of forced labor is sexual exploitation, while 68 percent is labor exploitation. Why the dramatically different results? The UNODC counts only cases that are first detected by law enforcement and then taken to court; sex crimes are more likely to make it to court because prosecutors have an easier time getting a conviction.

What is SESTA/FOSTA?



SESTA/FOSTA

- House bill
 - FOSTA
 - Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act
- Senate bill
 - SESTA
 - Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act





What was it intended to do?

- Curb online sex work
- Hold internet websites accountable for their role in enabling sex-trafficking
- Websites can now be held accountable for the content of their websites
- Craigslist personals, Backpage, Reddit forums

What is it ACTUALLY doing

- Sex work will become riskier
- Sex workers can no longer share helpful (life saving) info online



What is it ACTUALLY doing

- Many sex workers are going back to street work which makes proper vetting extremely difficult
- Predators and pimps come out to play
- Increased marginalization of already marginalized folks





SESTA/FOSTA

kills sex workers.





Two different narratives

(Nothing about us, without us)

Operator of prostitution website myRedBook sentenced to federal prison

“A Northern California man was sentenced Thursday to more than a year in federal prison for operating myRedBook, a website that offered prostitution services using explicit photos and graphic descriptions.

Ed Omuro, 53, of Mountain View, was ordered to serve 13 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release for using a facility of interstate commerce with the intent to provide prostitution...

He picked prostitution as a focus for the site because he had fondness for erotica, according to court documents.”



Two different narratives (Nothing about us, without us)

On RedBook.com:

The community didn't just give emotional support to people who couldn't find it anywhere else; workers also exchanged information about dangerous clients and tips about how to keep themselves safe from predators and law enforcement. They were also able to screen clients based on references from people who had seen the client before.

"A lot of sex workers I've talked to are really devastated by the loss of Redbook, because they've lost their online community," Williams says. "They've lost this way to share information that made them feel safer, and the reference system doesn't work as well when you don't know where the reference is coming from."



Advocates and sex workers

3.) **One in five police reports of sexual assault from an urban, U.S. emergency room were filed by sex workers.** Sex workers were younger, poorer and suffered a greater number of injuries than other victims.

7.) **Sex workers are often ineligible for rape victim compensation funds or receive reduced amounts.**

8.) **Judges, police and juries often hold bias against sex workers.**

11.) **Sex Workers are especially vulnerable to police violence, as police officers can threaten victims with arrest or stage an arrest and sexually assault victims.**

16.) **Sex workers sometimes also face structural violence from healthcare and social service professionals, but there are things agencies can do to help fight violence against sex workers.**



Safe harbor laws

“For the first time, Minnesota youth who engage in prostitution are viewed as victims and survivors, not criminals. They will be treated with dignity and respect, and directed to supportive services, and shelter and housing that meet their needs and recognize their right to make their own choices.

Sexual exploitation of youth in Minnesota is commonly overlooked, misidentified as something else and undocumented.

Minor Commercial Sexual Exploitation occurs when someone age 24 and under engages in commercial sexual activity. A commercial sexual activity occurs when anything of value or a promise of anything of value (e.g., money, drugs, food, shelter, rent, or higher status in a gang or group) is given to a person by any means in exchange for any type of sexual activity. A third party may or may not be involved.” - Via <http://www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/safeharbor/>

- Safe harbor laws were created to help protect and and serve minors who have been trafficked.
- If a V/S self identifies as a sex worker, and we find out that they are under the age of 18, it could be a mandated reporting situation.
- Crisis calls vs. Medical Advocacies



Whore's Day

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/80241732?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C5%2C0c6c465b-001f-40e3-8dab-3db166c984f3-8465874%2C%2C>



Policy in the future

- Status quo
- Safe harbor for all (Nordic Model) selling is legal, buying is not
- Full decriminalization



Resources for sex workers

<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2014/07/protecting-your-anonymity-how-sex-workers>

<https://redlightchicago.wordpress.com/18-things-every-sex-worker-should-know/>

<https://redlightchicago.wordpress.com/screening-101/>

<http://swopminneapolis.weebly.com/resources.html>

Practice scenarios





questions?



sources

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/09/is-one-of-the-most-cited-statistics-about-sex-work-wrong/379662/>

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/katherine-koster/16-facts-about-sexual-ass_b_8711720.html

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-prostitution-website-federal-prison-20150522-story.html>

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/3-myths-about-sex-work-that-harm-everyone-20160310>

Netflix video: “Follow This” Season 1, Episode 6. “Whore’s Day”