THE MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF SEX WORKERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES AIMED AT THEM

Sex workers have the same right to health as everyone else. However, the field of public health often neglects the health of specific marginalized populations. Sex workers are often stigmatised as ‘vectors of disease’. This approach reinforces discriminatory behaviour and health care providers. Sex work is fundamental if the right to health is best upheld when sex workers are meaningfully involved in all stages of service improvement.

SERVICE PROVIDERS AND SERVICE USERS

Sex workers are not only beneficiaries of programmes, but are involved at all levels in the programme and service design.

The Keys to Meaningful Involvement:

- Board (decision-making)
- Programme advisory committee
- Monitoring and evaluation committee

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- Active collaboration with sex workers.
- Use drugs
- Perform various types of sex
- Have different education levels
- Are young adults who are sex workers
- Are ineligible for many governmental services
- Are ineligible for mobile sex worker services

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Tommendary for sex work, HIV transmission and same-sex sexual activity.
- Recognise sex work as work.
- Expand rights and opportunities for sex workers.
- Support the formation of sex worker organisations and increase funding and capacity of existing ones.
- Healthcare providers should actively build trust and partnerships with sex workers and sex worker-led organisations.
- Provide equitable compensation to sex workers who are meaningfully involved in the implementation and management of services.

FOR GOVERNMENTS, POLICY MAKERS, AND HEALTH SERVICE PROGRAMMERS:

- Decrease sex work, HIV transmission and same-sex sexual activity.
- Recognise sex work as work.
- Provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education.
- Support the formation of sex worker-led organisations and increase funding and capacity of existing ones.
- Healthcare providers should actively build trust and partnerships with sex workers and sex worker-led organisations.
- Provide equitable compensation to sex workers who are meaningfully involved in the implementation and management of services.

FOR SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS:

- Increase the capacity of sex worker-led organisations and train members in advocacy.
- Support the formation of sex worker-led organisations and increase funding and capacity of existing ones.
- Healthcare providers should actively build trust and partnerships with sex workers and sex worker-led organisations.

Where possible, prioritise sex workers’ right to health. This should be done with both governmental and non-governmental organisations. Sex workers and organisations should actively collect data on the violations of their rights and report findings to government and public health officials.

SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS:

SEX WORKERS CALL FOR MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH SERVICES AIMED AT SEX WORKERS!