

Survival Sex Workshop Case Studies as presented 12/9 by PSKS Interns

Survival Sex can be loosely defined as “needs-based sexual activity.” It is a wide variety of behaviors, situations, and concepts that affect people on many different levels. Sex trafficking is also something that can fall under this category. Often times people are forced or manipulated into sex work by emotional and physical abuse, forced drug use, kidnapping, or even sold into it by their families. Survival Sex is very prevalent among homeless youth and LGBT youth.

Different Types of “Needs-Based sexual activities:

1. Trading sex for drugs
2. Trading sex for a place to stay
3. Trading sex for money (“sex work”)
4. Adult Film Production
5. Working as an Erotic Dancer (“stripping”)
6. Webcam Modeling (“camming”)

CASE STUDIES

X, 25, is a Genderqueer Sex Worker who is homeless in Seattle. X’s decision to engage in sex work is driven by their basic needs. X also claims to enjoy sex work. X has had both positive and negative experience with disclosing their work, but tends to avoid telling people about it mainly because they are afraid of legal repercussions. . X has been raped by clients before, and stresses that people should always work with a partner to help avoid situations like that. X views STDs, kidnapping, and unstable clients as the biggest risks in sex work. X will usually ask for compensation afterwards, but if feeling uncomfortable will demand it first. X works both on the street and off the internet. X recognizes how their work negatively affects them at times, but does not want to stop as they are “Addicted to the money and the sex.”

A,23, is a female identified sex worker who is homeless in Seattle. A says that for her, working is about survival and getting for herself what is needed daily. She has been engaged in sex work since she was 13. Most of the reactions she has gotten from others about her work have been negative, and she has had rumors spread about her sex work. As a result she rarely discloses her activities to others, for fear of being judged, Looking back, she wishes she would have taken less risks when working at such a young age, and is glad that her mindset has matured. She thinks that interacting with “tricks” is the riskiest part of engaging in sex work, as she is unaware of their capabilities for violence or if they are carrying weapons. She works on the street and off the internet. She feels that she has been made stronger as a result of her experiences.