

**A Qualitative and Ethnographic Study of
Working Conditions, Health and Safety in the Sex Industry**

Interview Guide: Men Sex Workers

The purpose of this interview is to get your perspective on how current Canadian sex work laws affect the working conditions of men in the sex industry. Our team is committed to meaningful engagement with sex workers and organizations that serve them. The questions I'm going to ask you today have been developed through consultations with men in the sex industry and staff members at 'The Corner' and the Health Initiative for Men.

The interview is designed to be more like a conversation to hear your experiences, perspectives, and stories as someone working in sex work. I'll ask some general questions in order to open up the conversation and then move onto more specific topics about your experience in various aspects of sex work, including challenges, concerns, and criminalization. Your experiences and stories are important because they'll shed light on some of the impacts that these laws have on people in the sex industry. The interview will last about one to one and a half hours. If you need to take a break or want to ask me any questions along the way, please feel free to do so. There are no right or wrong answers - you are the expert and we want to hear about your experiences. Everything you share will remain confidential and it would be helpful to be as open as you feel comfortable. This is a completely non-judgemental space. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed so that we can keep the direct voice of participants, but all names and identifying information will be removed from the transcripts. If you don't feel comfortable answering a question or don't want to answer, that's not a problem - just let me know.

To start off, I'd like to ask you to tell me a bit about your current situation and what's going on in your life Is that okay?

General Topics	Questions
Personal situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you tell me a bit about yourself? Is there anything that you would like to share about yourself and your background? ○ How are you supporting yourself financially these days? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are you currently employed? ○ What type of work do you do? ○ What are the things you like/dislike about the job? ○ Are you receiving any type of government support like income assistance or disability assistance, CERB?
Next I'd like to ask about your involvement and perspectives on the sex industry in Vancouver. Is that okay?	
Place in sex industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How long have you been doing sex work for? Has it been something you've consistently done in this time? How did you get involved doing sex work?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you feel about the term “sex worker”? Are there other terms you prefer? ○ Could you please tell me a bit about how you see the sex industry operating in Vancouver? (i.e. geographic spread, popular sex exchange sites, how widespread is participation in some way) ○ How do you see yourself fitting into Vancouver’s sex industry? ○ How do you solicit services/connect with clients? Probe for: street, online, bars, bathhouse etc. ○ Are there aspects of sex work that you like? Can you tell me about them? ○ Are there aspects of this work that you don’t like? Can you tell me about them?
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Now I’d like to ask you some questions about your gender identity and sexual orientation. Do you feel comfortable talking about that?

<p>Gender Identity / Sexual Orientation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If at all, how does your gender identity relate to your experience as a sex worker? ○ If you are currently working in the sex industry, is your gender identity the same/different when you are working as in your personal life? ○ Have you ever been in a situation where someone has threatened or otherwise made you feel unsafe because of your gender identity or sexual orientation? ○ Has this ever happened while selling sex? ○ Could you tell me about these situations? ○ Have you ever been harassed by the police because of your sexual orientation or gender identity? ○ Have you ever been discriminated against while accessing services because of your sexual orientation or gender identity?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In general, how do other men who have sex with men or LGBTQ people feel about sex work? ○ Do you feel safe and accepted in LGBTQ spaces? Why or why not?
<p>In this section, I'm going to focus on Canadian sex work laws and some of the impacts they've had on your work. Does this sound okay?</p>	
<p>Criminalization and Policing</p>	<p><i>As you know, the laws and policies around sex work can be confusing and many people who are in the industry may not know the exact laws but they do know what makes sense for them.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you tell me what you know about the Canadian sex work laws? How does this affect how you work? <p><i>If necessary use opportunity to outline the current sex work laws: In 2014, the Canadian federal government passed sex work legislation known as the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act. Under these laws, selling sex remains legal. However, these laws criminalize, or make illegal, purchasing sex, profiting off of another person's sex work, communicating for the purposes of sex work in certain public spaces, and advertising for the purposes of sex work.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are your thoughts on these laws? How have these laws affected your ability to negotiate with clients? Do these laws affect how you advertise your prices or the services that you offer? Do they impact your ability to screen clients or negotiate safer sex practices? Why/why not? ○ The current sex work laws were implemented generally with women sex workers in mind, and look at all sex workers as victims. What are your thoughts on this? Do you think the laws affect cis and trans men differently from cis and trans women? ○ How does criminalization affect the way you talk about sex work with people in your life? ○ Have you had any interactions with the police? Can you tell me more about these experiences? Have you ever experienced police harassment or violence related to sex

	<p>work? Have you ever been arrested for a sex work-related offense? Can you tell me more about these experiences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you faced a safety concern while working, would you feel comfortable reporting it to the police? Why or why not? How confident are you that they would be able to support you? ○ Can you tell me about your experiences with the police outside of sex work? Probe for racialized policing, illicit substance use, mental health, homelessness, etc. ○ What would a responsive justice system or ‘helpful’ policing look like for you? Do you think police should ever get involved when it comes to sex work? If police should get involved what are those situations from your perspective? If police should not get involved can you describe why?
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Now I’d like to move on to your specific work environments. I’ll be asking questions about your experiences online, outside, and in indoor venues. If you do not have experience in working in those environments we can skip that section. Does that sound okay?

<p>Online Solicitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you ever solicited services/sold sex online, such as on apps or websites? Is this your preferred place to connect with clients? If you haven’t worked online, what are some of the reasons? ○ If you haven’t worked online, do you know people who have? Why do you think they work online? <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Continue if they have worked online</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you connect with clients online? Which websites/apps do you use? Why? ○ Can you tell me about your experience soliciting services/selling sex online? What are some of the benefits? What are some of the challenges? Probe for safety, police, screening clients, confidentiality/privacy/decreased stigma, ease of advertising, schedule flexibility, autonomy, community, able to advertise more broadly, able to offer niche services. ○ How do you negotiate services and prices while working online? How safe do you feel negotiating client interactions online? What would make it easier for you to negotiate online? What are the biggest barriers to safety?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are some things you think about when you write your profile or ad to find clients? Probe for: police; website censorship (i.e. due to PCEPA or FOSTA-SESTA); PPE (e.g. condoms, COVID-19); service limitations such as drug use or specific sexual acts (i.e. to reduce HIV or COVID-19 exposure) ○ What safety precautions, if any, do you take with clients when working online? Do you request or look up any information about your clients before meeting them? What kinds of online interactions with a potential client, if any, would make you to refuse to see them? ○ How do you negotiate location and other details of meeting up? Do you take any extra steps to stay safe while you're with a client (e.g. only meet at my place; only go to clients' homes; tell a friend where you're going; carry a weapon)? ○ What precautions, if any, do you take to avoid the police when working online? ○ Have you ever been removed from these sites or had your profile taken down? What precautions, if any, do you take to make sure this does not happen? What were the impacts on you if it has? ○ Has a site you regularly used ever been shut down? If yes, how has this shaped how you work? ○ If you find clients/solicit services online, do you ever provide online services as well, such as webcam work or selling online content? Why or why not? Can you tell me about this work? How does it compare with seeing clients in person?
Indoor solicitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you ever solicited services/sold sex indoors, such as at bars or bathhouses? Is this your preferred place to work? If you haven't worked in these spaces, can you describe some of the reasons? ○ If you haven't worked indoors, do you know people who have? Why do you think they work indoors? <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Continue if they have worked indoors</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you choose which bars/bathhouses to meet clients at? ○ How do you connect with clients in indoor settings? Are there difficulties connecting with clients indoors? ○ Can you tell me about your experience soliciting services/selling sex indoors? What are some of the benefits? What are some of the challenges? ○ What are some of your greatest concerns while working indoors? Probe for safety, venue staff, police, screening clients, harassment ○ Do you feel safe when you are doing sex work indoors? What are the biggest barriers to safety? ○ How do you negotiate service location with your clients? Do you take any extra steps to stay safe while you're providing services at a different location (e.g. only meet at my place; only go to clients' homes; tell a friend where you're going; carry a weapon)? ○ When working indoors, are you concerned with sex work laws? Do these laws affect how you negotiate your services and interact with clients? ○ What, if any, precautions do you take to avoid the police when working indoors? ○ Can you describe some of the strategies you use to negotiate services and prices while working indoors? What would make it easier for you to negotiate in these settings? ○ Have you ever been removed from these places or been harassed by the staff? What precautions, if any, do you take to make sure this does not happen?
Outdoor solicitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you ever solicited services/sold sex outdoors, such as at parks, the street, or in a car? Is this your preferred place to work? If you haven't worked outdoors, can you tell me why? ○ If you haven't worked outdoors, do you know people who have? Why do you think they work outdoors?

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Continue if they have worked outdoors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you connect with clients in outdoor settings? Are there difficulties connecting with clients outdoors? ○ Can you tell me about your experience soliciting services/selling sex outside? What are some of the benefits? What are some of the challenges? ○ What are some of your greatest concerns while working outside? Probe for safety, police, screening clients, harassment ○ Do you feel safe when you are doing sex work outside? What are the biggest barriers to safety? ○ How do you negotiate service location with your client? Do you take any extra steps to stay safe if you're providing a service at a different location (e.g. only meet at my place; only go to clients' homes; tell a friend where you're going; carry a weapon)? ○ When working outside, are you concerned with sex work laws? Do these laws and police affect how you negotiate your services and interact with clients? ○ Can you describe some of the strategies you use to negotiate services and prices while working outside? What would make it easier for you to negotiate in these settings? ○ What, if any, precautions do you take to avoid the police when working outside? ○ Have you ever been removed from these areas or been harassed by residents/other citizens? What precautions do you take to make sure this does not happen?
<p>In this section, I would like to ask you about your experiences with clients, and how they're impacted by the laws. As you know, there are so many misconceptions in society about the types of people who buy sex and we'd really like your perspective on this. Is it okay to talk about this?</p>	
<p>Clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In really general terms, can you tell me a little bit about your clients and the kinds of people they are?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you have regular clients? What is your relationship like with them? How are they different from clients you don't know/one-time clients? ○ The new sex work laws criminalize the buying of sex. Can you tell me about your experiences with this? From your experience, to what extent are clients targeted by police? Are your clients scared of being detected by police? How does this show? How does this shape your transaction/date? ○ How do you think your clients feel about the laws? ○ How does criminalization affect your interactions with clients? Does it affect the kinds of clients you have? How you screen/select clients? <p>Are your clients being targeted more, or in different ways compared to in the past (pre-PCEPA)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you tell me about your experience with client violence? Is violence something you're concerned about? Have you had violent interactions with clients? What was the outcome of this incident? ○ Can you tell me about other negative experiences with clients? What were the outcomes of these incidents? Probes: What are your experiences with being verbally abused or threatened by a client? What are your experiences with being robbed by a client? What are your experiences with being pressured or forced to do a sex act you weren't comfortable with or didn't agree to?
<p>Now I would like to ask you a few general questions about what your ideal working situation would look like. Is that okay?</p>	
<p>Ideal sex work situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What does your ideal sex work situation look like? Probe for: working alone, working with others, having a manager or someone who helps with booking; location details – home, client's home, formal licensed venue, public space; PPE access (i.e. condoms); advertising/solicitation avenues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What does it mean to be safe while doing sex work? Does it vary depending on where you're working? Are there tools, which you may or may not have access to, that make it safer? ○ What would need to be in place for you to feel safe when working?
<p>For this section, I'm really interested in understanding the relationship between housing situations and sex work. Does this sound okay to you?</p>	
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you tell me about your housing situation? Have you ever exchanged sex with someone for a place to stay? What was that experience like? ○ How has your housing situation affected your experience as a sex worker? Are there aspects of your housing situation that make doing sex work difficult or dangerous? Are there aspects that make it easier or safer? ○ How has selling sex affected your housing situation? Has your work affected the types of places you've lived? Have you ever faced housing discrimination because of sex work? Have you ever been evicted because of sex work? Are there housing policies where you live that make it difficult for you to work? ○ Do you think sex workers who are homeless or unstably housed face distinct challenges while working? Do you think these men have specific safety concerns? ○ How do you think the police interact with men sex workers who are homeless? Do you think sex workers who are homeless or unstably housed have more interactions with police? Why/ Why not? ○ Do you think sex workers who are homeless or unstably housed face discrimination or barriers when accessing or trying to access health care? Why or why not?
<p>Now I'd like to move on and ask you some questions about substance use. I want to remind you that everything is confidential and whatever you say will remain anonymous. How does that sound?</p>	
Substance Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you tell me a bit about your experiences with drugs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Illicit vs. Alcohol, Cannabis ○ Stimulants or hallucinogens ○ Non-injection? Injection?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you ever use drugs/alcohol prior to selling sexual services? ○ Do any of your clients use drugs/alcohol when they're with you? ○ What are the benefits of using these substances while you sell sex? Probe: Do you experience mental/emotional benefits? Physical? ○ What are the drawbacks? ○ Have you ever exchanged sex for drugs? Other goods, gifts or services? Can you describe what happened? ○ Can you tell me a bit about how drugs affect sessions with your clients? ○ Who purchases them? Who pays for them? How does this work? ○ Are there any safety strategies that you rely on for a safer date when drugs or alcohol are involved? e.g. Pouring own drink, keeping an eye on own drink, not accepting drinks from clients. ○ Have you ever been targeted by police for your substance use? Can you tell me about that experience?
<p>For the next couple of sections, I'd like to ask you questions about your health. In this first section, I'm going to be asking about your mental health, emotional wellbeing, and community connections. Does that sound okay?</p>	
<p>Mental Health and Stigma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you ever felt discriminated against, shamed, or judged as a sex worker? Can you tell me more about these experiences? Can you tell me about any other discrimination you might experience? [Probe: some people talk about judgement around other MSM, HIV stigma, discrimination due to poverty or substance use, racism, stigma from family or friends] ○ Can you tell me about where you go to, or who you talk to, for emotional support? Are you able to talk to people in your life about sex work? Is there anything that makes it difficult to talk to others about sex work?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you access mental health services (e.g. counselling; crisis lines), do you feel like you can be honest with health providers about your sex work? Do you think people who work in these types of types of mental health services need more training about men who do sex work? Or men who have sex with men? ○ How has your sex work has affected your mental health? How has your mental health affected your sex work? ○ In general, what are your relationships with other sex workers like? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you have any social connections with other sex workers? ○ Is this something that you have purposefully sought out or avoided? Why or why not? ○ In general, what are your relationships like with other men who have sex with men, such as gay, bi, or queer men? How connected do you feel with LGBTQ communities and spaces?
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Now I'd like to focus on your sexual health and wellbeing. Again, everything is confidential. Is that okay?

Sexual Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How has sex work affected your sexual health and wellbeing? ○ What strategies do you use, if any, to reduce your risk of STIs/HIV? Are these strategies different with paying partners? Regulars? ○ How do you negotiate safe sexual practices with clients? What are some of the challenges you face? Can you describe some of your strategies, if any, to help with negotiation? ○ When working, has there been a time where having a conversation about sexual health or STI/HIV resulted in a situation where you felt unsafe? Could you tell me what happened? ○ Where do you usually access sexual health services? ○ Can you tell me about your experiences accessing sexual health services? Are there any barriers or difficulties? What makes it easier?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you ever felt discriminated against or judged when accessing these services because of the work you do? Have you ever experienced homophobia while accessing these services? Transphobia? Have you experienced any other forms of discrimination when accessing sexual health services? (e.g. racism; classism; drug use). <p><i>PrEP is a medication that is used as an HIV prevention strategy for those who are HIV-negative. When taken regularly and with the support of a health care provider, such as a doctor or nurse practitioner, it can reduce the chances of becoming HIV-positive. Many gay, bi, queer, and other men who have sex with me can access PrEP for free using their care card after consulting with a doctor. Getting on PrEP also requires regular, minor follow up with your care provider.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you think about PrEP? Do you think there are any barriers to accessing PrEP for MSWs? Is PrEP common among men in the sex industry? ○ Have you ever tried to access PrEP and been unable to, for any reason? What were the barriers? <p><i>GetCheckedOnline is a new way to get tested for sexually transmitted infections (STI), including chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, syphilis, and Hepatitis C in British Columbia. It allows you to create your own lab form, go to a participating LifeLabs to give your samples, and get your results online or over the phone without having to see a doctor or a nurse.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you ever, or would you ever, use this resource? Why or why not? If you have, what has your experience been with it? Would you send a friend there?
<p>This next section is about your access to health services and other social services in Vancouver. We want to know more about your experiences accessing these services, including any challenges. How does that sound?</p>	
<p>Social services and healthcare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are some of the services in Vancouver that you access? Health, clinics, mental health, housing, food, drop in spaces, sexual health, etc. How have your experiences been accessing these services? ○ What is your experience accessing doctors and nurses? Are there places you prefer to go to for care? Have you ever felt unsafe or discriminated against accessing services because of

	<p>the work you do? Have you ever experienced homophobia while accessing these services? Transphobia? Have you experienced any other forms of discrimination when accessing health services? (e.g. racism; classism; drug use).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there services you need but can't access? Can you tell me about these? Probe: healthcare, counselling, guaranteed minimum income, hormone therapy, other income assistance, substance use treatment, supportive housing. ○ Are there services specifically for sex workers that you access? Probe for the Corner, Hustle/HIM, Pace? Others? Can you tell me about your experience with these? What do you like about going there? How is it different than accessing other support services? Are there any barriers to you accessing sex worker specific services? ○ Is it important to you that agencies have staff that have experience in doing sex work? Do you feel more comfortable with staff of a certain gender? Men, women, transgender? ○ Do you think there are adequate services for men sex workers in Vancouver? What other services would you like to see offered?
<p>Given what's been going on with the pandemic, we're really interested in knowing how Covid-19 has affected people in the sex industry. Is it okay if I ask you some questions about how this experience has been for you?</p>	
<p>COVID-19</p>	<p>How have you been affected by Covid-19?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How has your work been affected during the pandemic? Has the pandemic affected your income/the number of clients you see? Are you seeing more of your regulars/less one timers? Have you changed the services you offer? Are you charging a hazard surcharge? Are there any extra safety measures you've taken? ○ Has Covid-19 changed the services that clients are asking for? How has it changed price negotiations? Where you work? ○ How has Covid-19 affected your access to services? (Social services, doctors/clinics, sexual health services, etc.) Since the pandemic started, have you had difficulty getting the care you

	<p>need? Are there any services you need but haven't been able to access? How has this affected your health?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Have you accessed any COVID19 specific supports offered by the government? Probe for: Increase in social assistance by \$300 for 3 moths, CERB, expedited EI, Increased child benefit, Rental rebate (\$500), Emergency Worker benefit \$1000, safe drug supply, new housing option.○ If yes, what was the process like? Can you describe any challenges that you have faced accessing these supports? Was there anything that made it easier for you to access this?○ If no, can you describe some of the reasons why you have not accessed these supports?○ How has your income and financial situation been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic? How are you able to meet your needs during this time? Are there things you need but can't afford? Could you describe what some of those items/activities are? e.g. personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, hand sanitizer), food, clothing, transportation, childcare, travel, medical services/medications, substances, housing, kid's toys/entertainment/education etc.○ If you needed to self isolate for 14 days, as per public health recommendations, would you be able to do this? What would your major concerns be about self-isolating?○ In your experience, are there groups of people who you think have been particularly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? Can you tell me a bit more about who you think has been impacted a lot by this pandemic? Probe for: people who are homeless, people who use drugs, people who work frontline jobs, including peer workers, grocery store clerks, people living in SROs etc. Also probe for ethnicity and gender identity○ What would you need to feel safer during this time?
<p>We're almost done now, so thank you very much for answering these questions. Before we go though, I just want to get a few final thoughts from you.</p>	

Final thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If you were receiving a universal basic income similar to CERB (\$2000/month) would you still do sex work? Why or why not?○ What do you need to improve your experience in the sex industry?○ Do you have any advice for someone in a similar situation?○ This requires a little bit of imagination. If you woke up tomorrow and everything was exactly how you wanted it to be, what are some of the ways in which you could tell? What would you see, feel, hear that was different?○ Is there anything else that you would like to add?
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